

## Patient information

### Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT)

Active Cycle of Breathing is a technique which uses breathing exercises to remove phlegm from the lungs. It is sometimes used alongside other clearance techniques such as postural drainage or chest percussion.

ACBT can be performed. Initially you should start in sitting – your physiotherapist will advise you whether you should use an alternative position.

ACBT uses an alternating depth of breathing to move phlegm from the small airways at the bottom of your lungs to larger airways near the top where they can be cleared more easily with huffing/coughing.

ACBT should only be carried out following instruction by your physiotherapist.

#### General rules

- ◆ Try to maintain a good breathing pattern with relaxed shoulders and neck
- ◆ Try to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathing out should be slow, like “sighing out”. This minimises any wheezing.

The cycle is:

#### Breathing control (also called abdominal / diaphragmatic breathing)

- ◆ Rest one hand on your abdomen, keeping shoulders and upper chest relaxed and allow your hand to rise gently as you breathe in. (If you imagine air filling the abdomen like a balloon this may help)
- ◆ Sigh out gently
- ◆ Ensure shoulders remain relaxed
- ◆ Over a few seconds, gradually increase depth of breathing while maintaining relaxation

Breathing control is an essential part of the cycle to allow rest.

## Deep Breathing Exercises

- ◆ Take 3 – 4 deep breaths in, allowing the lower chest to expand
- ◆ Try to ensure neck and shoulders remain relaxed
- ◆ At the end of the breath in, hold the air in for 3 seconds
- ◆ Let the air out gently

## Huffing

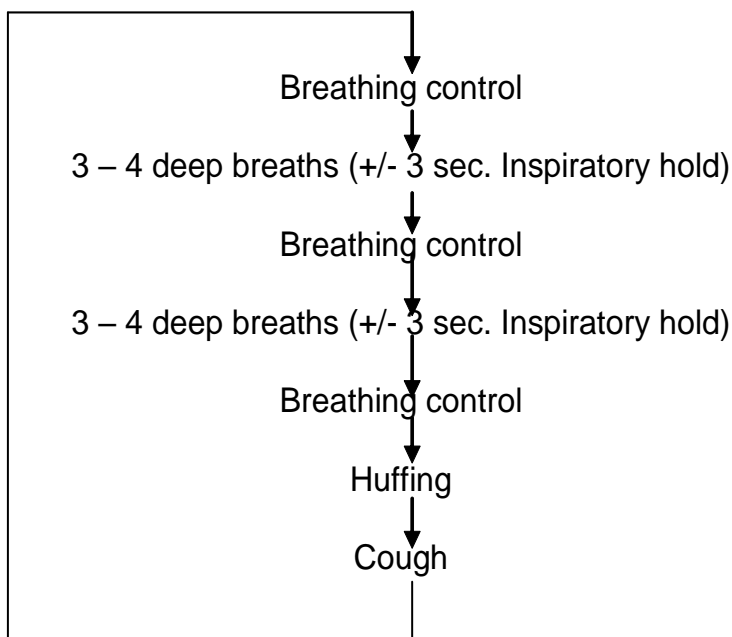
- ◆ Take a half-breath in and blow air out steadily through an open mouth and throat. Squeeze air out using tummy muscles too.
- ◆ Follow this with breathing control
- ◆ Repeat
- ◆ As phlegm moves into larger airways take a deep breath in and blow air out again through an open mouth

## Cough

Only cough when you can hear phlegm when you huff.

- ◆ Breathing control
- ◆ Repeat the cycle until your chest is clear or as advised by your physiotherapist.

A typical cycle consists of:



The number of times/breaths may vary depending on how breathless you may be or on the quantity of secretions. Your physiotherapist will advise you on how often these exercises should be carried out.

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