

Patient information

Exercising for lung health

What is pulmonary rehabilitation?

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a programme of exercise and education prescribed to people with long-term lung conditions.

Benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation

It has long been recognised that gentle exercise is beneficial to people who struggle with their breathing as it can:

- Increase your strength, endurance and balance
- Increase your general fitness and therefore improve your ability to managed daily tasks
- Teach you to pace yourself and therefore help reduce your feelings breathlessness
- Help you to become less fearful of breathlessness
- Teach you how to develop, or improve, coping strategies
- Help to reduce anxiety and boost your mood
- Help to improve your knowledge of your lung condition so that you can manage your symptoms more effectively
- Reduce the frequency of exacerbations and chest infections and help you to recover from them more quickly
- Help to reduce hospital admissions

The exercises you will be prescribed can be carried out in either sitting or standing, depending on your level of ability. They can also be adapted for people who struggle with joint problems.

Your exercise programme will be designed specifically to your needs.

Education is a particularly important part of the course as it aims to give you a better understanding of your lung condition and how to manage it. The education sessions usually cover topics on lung anatomy, types of lung conditions, signs and symptoms of a chest infection, breathlessness and how to manage it, inhalers, anxiety and relaxation and nutrition.

You will be provided with leaflets on these topics which you can keep for future reference.

Please note: If you need any of our patient information leaflets in large print or an alternative language please contact our team via the CCC (see back of this leaflet for details) and we would be happy to help.

How can I be referred?

You can be referred for a pulmonary rehabilitation course by your GP, consultant, physiotherapist or respiratory nurse. However, if it hasn't been mentioned to you, then please ask to be referred!

Alternatively, you can now refer yourself to our service via www.physioselfrefer.co.uk/snee where you can fill out and submit the form online, or you can telephone **0333 0433 966** and we will submit the details for you.

Once you have been referred to our service, you will be sent a letter to inform you that you have been placed on a waiting list for the next available course. Please be aware that sometimes some of our waiting lists can be longer than others and this can vary from venue to venue.

How long do the courses last?

Each pulmonary rehabilitation course lasts for six weeks, and you will be required to attend / take part twice per week (a total of 12 sessions).

Due to the volume of people being referred to pulmonary rehabilitation we advise only one course per year, unless otherwise requested by your GP, consultant, physiotherapist or respiratory nurse.

Initial assessment

You will be required to undergo an initial assessment prior to taking part in a course which will include checking your medical history and medication. You will also be

required to carry out a physical assessment (which will include taking your blood pressure, oxygen levels and completing a sit to stand test and / or a walk test). This assessment should take approximately one hour to complete.

You are very welcome to invite a friend or family member to be present during your assessment.

If you have been prescribed ambulatory oxygen, then you will be required to use this during your assessment so please bring it with you.

If you have a GTN spray, blue inhaler or walking aid then please also bring these with you.

Following your initial assessment, you can expect to start your pulmonary rehabilitation course within four weeks.

What happens if I am not suitable to take part a pulmonary rehabilitation course?

If during your assessment there are underlying health issues or physical issues which mean that it would not be safe for you to exercise, then you may still benefit from us referring you to one of the following:

- Respiratory Physiotherapy Clinic which are based at satellite clinics across the West of Suffolk. You can be referred to these clinics for advice or taught techniques to help with chest clearance, breathlessness management, cough suppression and other such issues.
- Other community led support services such as OneLife Suffolk and Breathe Easy support groups. The Lung and Asthma UK (formally known as the British Lung Foundation) is also available for telephone support and online advice.

For those of you who are scoring an MRC of 1, and are only getting breathless on strenuous exercise, we would recommend signposting you to:

- Our respiratory exercise group if you are struggling to get back into regular exercise
- The MyCOPD app to exercise at home
- 'Exercise on Prescription' classes held at your local Abbeycroft Leisure centre.

Types of pulmonary rehabilitation courses

All of our pulmonary rehabilitation courses are run by a physiotherapist and an

Assistant Rehabilitation Practitioner.

Face-to-face courses: These courses are usually held in local community centres or leisure centres. In West Suffolk they are currently available in the Haverhill, Sudbury, Mildenhall, Brandon, Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds areas.

Each class is approximately two hours in length and consists of an hour of gentle exercise, followed by a session of education. They are usually attended by up to 16 people of varying abilities and ages.

Face-to-face classes are unique as they give you the opportunity to meet other people with similar breathing problems, who may be trying to cope with similar daily challenges.

****Please note that you are required to provide your own transport to and from these classes****

If you need more details about access to our venues, please contact our team via the CCC (see back of this leaflet for details) and we would be happy to help.

Home exercise programmes: These programmes can be completed from your own home. You will be required to complete your exercises twice per week, on two separate days, and you will be supplied with education leaflets which you can read as you go along. You will be telephoned once a week by your physiotherapist or an assistant to review your exercises and progress them as is appropriate. They will also be able to discuss any questions you may have regarding the education leaflets.

Virtual classes: These classes can be completed from your own home. They are run 'live' and require you to have access to a PC, laptop, tablet or Smart phone. You must have your own e-mail address, access to wifi and your device must have a working webcam and microphone in order for you to take part. There will be a maximum of six patients joining each session and the class will last a maximum of two hours. This will include an hour of gentle exercise followed by an education session. Please note that these classes only run if we have six or more patients requesting them.

Please note: If you have been prescribed ambulatory oxygen therapy you **must** wear this whilst exercising in any of the above three courses.

Final assessment

Once you have completed a pulmonary rehabilitation course you will be required to complete a final assessment to see how you have progressed. This assessment will be of the same format as the initial assessment and will take about 30 minutes to

complete.

The results from both assessments will then be forwarded to your GP, consultant or respiratory nurse.

What happens after the course has finished?

You are strongly recommended to continue some form of exercise after you have finished a course of pulmonary rehabilitation, in order to maintain the improvements made.

This may be in the form of you continuing with your own exercise regime at home, but for those that prefer, we can refer you on to your local leisure centre where they run specific classes for people with medical conditions.

Can I attend these courses again?

Yes. You can be referred for a course of pulmonary rehabilitation once per year, should you wish to attend again. Just ask your GP, consultant, respiratory nurse or physiotherapist to refer you again. Alternatively, you can self-refer via our website.

Useful contacts

For pulmonary rehabilitation enquiries:

Suffolk Community Healthcare Care Co-ordination Centre (CCC)

Tel: 0300 123 2425

For physiotherapy enquiries:

Physiotherapy department

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Hardwick Lane, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2QZ

Tel: 01284 713300

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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