

Therapy Department

Breathing Techniques for Breathlessness: Breathing Control

Introduction

Breathlessness is an awareness of difficult or uncomfortable breathing. This can be an unpleasant and upsetting sensation. It is important to remember breathlessness in itself is not harmful and you will recover your breathing. The purpose of this information is to introduce a technique called Breathing Control to help recover your breathing.

Breathing Control

Breathing Control is a gentle breathing strategy to help with breathlessness, anxiety and panic. You should practice regularly for 10-15 minutes when you feel relaxed. Practising little and often should help make it second nature when you lack control over your breathing. It focuses on making your breathing more efficient by breathing from your tummy (abdominal breathing), using the lower chest rather than the top of the lungs and shoulders. It is completed in the following way;

- Start in a comfortable and well supported position, with shoulders relaxed, chest open and elbows by your side
- Place hands on your tummy, just above your belly button
- Breathe in gently through your nose, focus on drawing air right to the bottom of your lungs and allow your tummy to rise (imagine a balloon



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inside your tummy is inflating)

- It is important to only take in the air that you need, it is not about taking a deep breath
- Breathe out gently through your mouth, like a sigh, not forced, through pursed lips if it helps, and let your tummy fall until the breath comes to its natural end
- Always focus on the breath out; the breath in will take care of itself. This is especially important if you are feeling anxious
- Gradually try to make the breaths slower
- Closing your eyes may help you focus on your breathing and relax

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your exercise then please ask a member of staff for advice. **You can contact the Therapy Department on 024 7696 6013.**

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact the Therapy Department on 024 7696 6013 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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