

## Physiotherapy Department

# Breathing Control

Breathing control is a technique aimed at people with lung conditions who lack control over their breathing. Breathing control is gentle breathing, using the lower part of your chest, with relaxation of the upper chest and shoulders.

People who experience problems with their breathing frequently use the tops of their lungs to breathe, which is the most inefficient way of breathing and actually makes breathing harder.

### Technique

First, get into a comfortable position where you are relaxed and well supported (this will be different for different people, but ask your physiotherapist if you are not sure).

Then place one hand on your stomach

Feel your hand rising as you gently breathe in through your nose (imagine a balloon inside your abdomen is inflating)

Let the air out gently – making sure this is not forced.

If able, slowly try to increase the depth of your breathing whilst maintaining relaxation.

Patients often find this technique difficult to achieve, mainly because for years they have been breathing in a different way. However, with practice people generally improve, but don't rush it.



## Advice

### Do

- Practise in a comfortable position in either sitting or standing
- Find a quiet place free of distractions
- Concentrate on keeping the shoulders relaxed
- Practise breathing control when you have some time to yourself
- Try to make sure there are no interruptions when practising
- Practice for a few minutes every day and try using this exercise to control your breathing during activities that make you breathless
- It's not easy to do, but keep persevering!

### Don't

- Hold your breath whilst performing breathing control

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6183 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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