

Therapy

Breathing Techniques for Breathlessness - Calming Hand

Introduction

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

Calming Hand

The Calming Hand is a particularly helpful tool when you suffer with feelings of panic. It also works well with episodes of breathlessness, when you feel like your breathing is out of control.



1. **Recognition/ Acceptance:** Firstly, recognise the signs that you are starting to panic. Hold your thumb firmly and remind yourself of what to do next to regain control. This will help to calm your breathing.
2. **Sigh out:** Sigh out, as this relaxes your shoulders, arms and upper chest (remember to flop and drop). If possible, try to breathe out for longer than you breathe in.
3. **Inhale:** Take a slow and gentle relaxed breath in, focusing on filling your lungs with air.



Patient Information

4. **Exhale:** Take a slow and gentle relaxed breath out, until your breath comes to its natural end. Relaxed breathing helps to relieve the sensation of breathlessness.
5. **Stretch hands, relax and stop:** Stretch and relax your hand, as a reminder that you can and will regain control. Hand stretching is helpful when having an episode of panic; you can do it without anyone around you knowing.

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After completing the Calming Hand coping strategy, your feelings of panic and/ or breathlessness may not go away instantly. You may need to repeat steps 1-5 again. It may take longer for the panic to go away. When the panic settles, it is advisable to practice Breathing Control.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your exercise, please ask a member of staff for advice 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 **024 7696 6013** and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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