

Patient information

Staying active during your hospital stay and period of self-isolation at home

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to help you stay active during your hospital stay, manage your symptoms and return to previous function when you go home.

When we are unwell, our bodies need time to recover and fighting an illness uses a lot of energy. It is normal to feel fatigued and become deconditioned after an illness. However if you are able to complete some basic exercises either in your bed or bedside chair then this can help with your recovery.

What will this booklet include?

Breathlessness management: Advice and techniques on how to manage your symptoms.

Cough management: This section is divided into different types of cough and methods to help.

Activity management: Exercises, pacing and energy conservation during and after your illness.

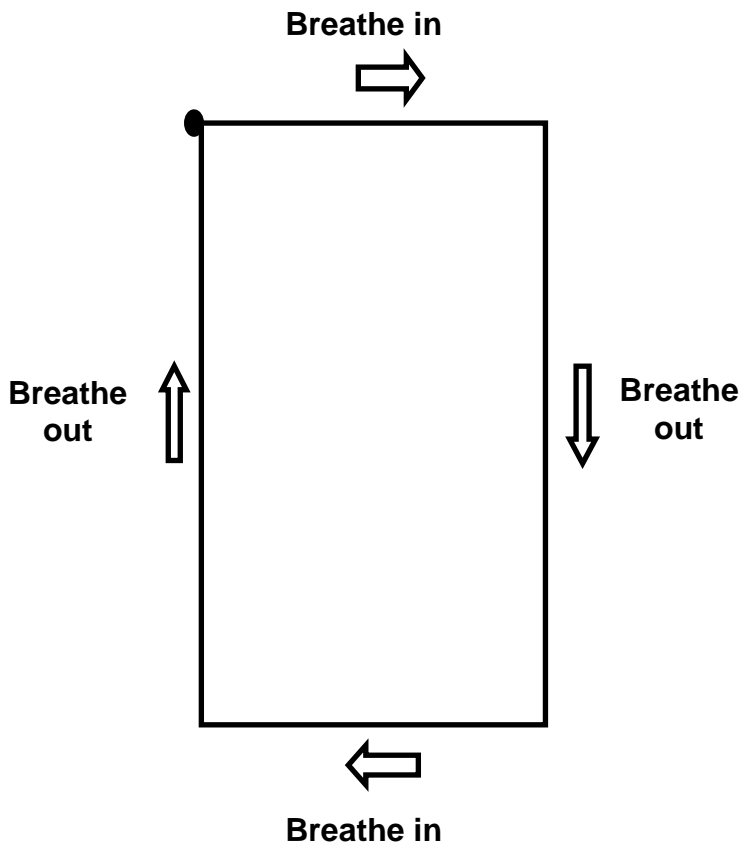
Breathlessness management

When breathing is difficult, there are several 'positions of ease' to help you to get control of your breathing with minimum effort.



Additional breathlessness techniques

1. Window breathing



- Look at a window or picture on a wall.
- As you breathe in, your eyes should follow the short side.
- Then breathe out along the longer side.
- Continue around the window.
- Repeat until you feel calm and relaxed

This breathing technique is helpful for getting your breathing into a more rhythmical pattern (breath in slightly shorter than your breath out).

It is also very helpful as a distraction technique for when you have an episode of breathlessness or anxiety.

2. 'Smell the rose and blow the candle'

This technique helps you to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. This helps you to pace the speed of your breathing. Again, try and adopt the window breathing technique when you are doing this.

Cough management

Your cough may be dry, with an irritation or tickly sensation. This is quite common but it can be distressing. The cough can be triggered by many factors such as talking, laughing, certain smells or sudden changes in temperature of activity.

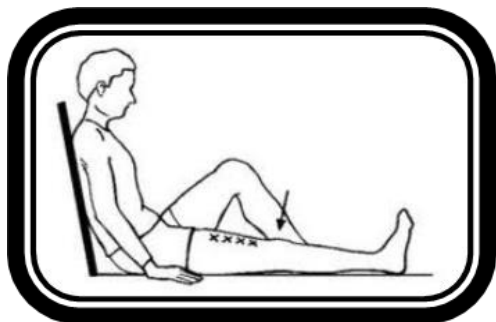
This technique may help you manage this type of cough:

1. At the first sign of a tickle or as soon as you cough, or feel you are about to cough, put your hand over your mouth.
2. Swallow once.
3. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then start breathing again, taking slow smooth breaths for at least 30 seconds, whilst keeping your hand over your mouth.
4. Tell yourself that you are not going to cough.
5. Finally, take a smooth, normal sized breath, through your nose and take your hand away from your mouth.
6. If you still feel a tickle in your throat, repeat the exercises from the beginning until the tickle has subsided.

Management of reduced activity

Exercises you can do in bed

Aim to complete some of these exercises 1 - 2 times a day.



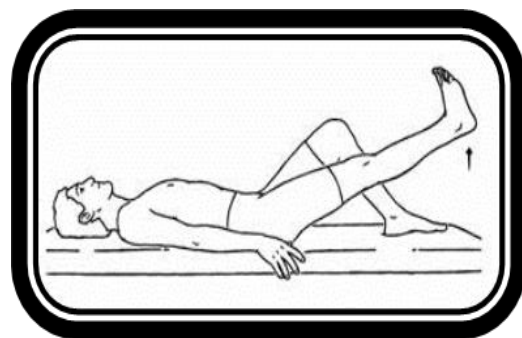
1. Sit on your bed, with your back supported.

Push one knee down into the bed if you are trying to squeeze water out a sponge.

Hold for 10 seconds then relax. Repeat 5 - 10 times with each leg.

2. Complete this exercise in the same position as above exercise.

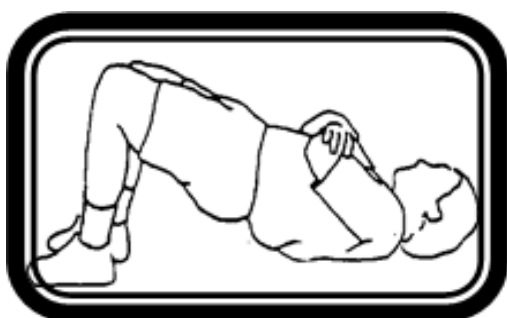
Push your knee into the bed as in exercise 1 and then gently lift your leg a few inches off the bed whilst keeping it straight. Aim to hold for 5 - 10 seconds. Repeat 5 - 10 times with each leg.



3. Lying on your back, bend both knees up so your feet are flat on the bed.

Push through your heels and at the same time squeeze your bottom cheeks together. This should then lift your bottom off the bed.

Hold this position for around 5 – 10 seconds. Repeat exercise 5 – 15 times.



Exercises you can do in chair



4. Sitting in the chair, make sure you are comfortable.

Slowly straighten out one knee so that it ends up being straight out in front of you. Hold this position for 5 - 10 seconds then relax. Repeat 5 - 10 times on each leg.



5. Sitting in your chair with a back support, slowly lift each knee towards the ceiling. Try and not push through your arms.

Complete slow marching on the spot for 2 minutes as able.

This exercise can be progressed into standing when you feel able.

Exercises you can complete by your bedside



6. Hold onto your chair, or raise your bed so you can lean on it. Stand with feet hip width apart.

Slowly bend your knees to a comfortable level. Hold for a few seconds and return to starting position.



7. Hold onto a chair, or raise your bed so you can lean on it. Stand with your feet hip width apart and make sure you are balanced.

Slowly raise yourself up onto your toes, hold for a few seconds and return to starting position.



8. Hold onto a chair, or raise your bed so can lean on it. Stand with feet hip width apart and make sure you are balanced.

Start lifting your knees and march on the spot, if you are feeling comfortable with doing this slowly, you can increase the speed.

Pace yourself

Pacing yourself allows you to be more in control of your breathing. Try and plan your day with the following tips:

- **Don't rush your tasks:** Allow plenty of time for each task.
- **Pace yourself:** Cut bigger tasks down into smaller manageable parts. Allow for plenty of rest periods between each task. Does this task really need to be done today?
- **Prioritise tasks:** Which tasks can wait until you feel less breathlessness?
- **Adapt tasks:** Can you sit down to complete the task? Is there a simpler way to complete the task?
- **Delegate:** Can someone help you with the task?

Energy conservation when you go home

Here are some tips to help you conserve energy and in turn gradually build up strength and overall stamina.

- Exercise little and often.
- Take regular short breaks and pace yourself when doing functional activities.
- Eating regular small meals is more beneficial, as eating large meals uses more energy both for eating and digesting food.
 - * It helps keep sugar levels constant so you don't have periods of very high and then very low energy.
- Is there an alternative to carry out an activity?
 - * eg on-line shopping

Useful websites

Fitness Studio NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

Get fit for free

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/>

Suffolk Wellbeing Hub

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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