

# Breathlessness

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
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## What is breathlessness

It is a sensation or feeling short of breath. From time to time it is healthy and normal – but sometimes it can be a sign of something more serious.

Getting out of breath is a normal process. It can be a natural response when your body needs more oxygen or when you do something that requires physical effort.

Evidence suggests that how breathless you feel does not always match up with how well you are getting air into your lungs. This is because it is not just lung function that affects how out of breath you feel.

## What causes breathlessness

How much oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) your body needs depends on what you are doing. For example, if you are walking upstairs or carrying bags, your lungs need more oxygen. To get more oxygen you will breath quicker, giving a feeling of breathlessness. Breathlessness is a normal bodily reaction.

## Remember - If you are unwell

1. You may need to use your blue (reliever) inhaler more often.
2. Allow yourself more time for day to day activities (washing/ dressing).
3. Use your breathing techniques throughout the day.
4. You may need more time to clear your chest in the morning.
5. Your body will need more rest to recover from infection/ exacerbation.
6. Contact your COPD team or GP for a review if you experience any of the above for 2 days or more.
7. Use spacer with reliever inhaler to get more of the drug and help slow and control breathing.

## Notes

## For further information

If you require any further information or advice regarding your oxygen, please contact your oxygen service, GP or COPD/ respiratory nurse:

The Oxygen Service can be contacted on 0151 430 1553, 9am –5pm, Monday – Friday (if you are known to St Helens Integrated Community COPD service, 8.30 am–7pm, 7 days a week), they will be able to discuss your enquiry and help with any problems.

## Further advice may be obtained from:

St Helens Integrated Community  
Respiratory service  
Lowe House HC  
WA10 2DJ

Tel: 0151 430 1553  
Email: [sthelens.copd@nhs.net](mailto:sthelens.copd@nhs.net)

## Breathing Techniques

- Active cycle of breathing technique (ACBT)
- Huff (like your steaming a mirror)
- Hold each deep breath 1-2 seconds.

## Active cycle of breathing technique

The Active Cycle of Breathing Techniques (ACBT) is a breathing technique.

Performed to help you clear excess pulmonary secretions and to generally improve lung function.

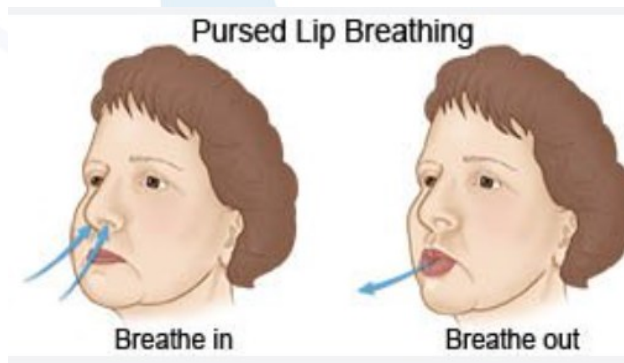


Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT) - The Irish Physio Student ([google.com](http://google.com))

## Pursed lip breathing

Pursed lip breathing is a breathing technique which can be used to make your breaths more effective by making it slower and more controlled.

Breathe out with your lips pursed, as if you are whistling. This slows down your breathing and helps to make your breathing more efficient. It is ideal to use when recovering from exertion.



[Breathing Techniques - What You Need to Know \(drugs.com\)](https://www.drugs.com/conditions/breathing-techniques-what-you-need-to-know)

## Blow as you go

- Breathe out when you are making an effort, for example:
- Stretching your arms above your head.
- Reaching for something on a shelf.
- Bending down.
- Going up a step or stairs. Standing up.
- OR during the hardest part of any action - **blow as you go!**

Getting out of breath is normal. It is a natural response when your body needs more oxygen and energy when you do something that requires physical effort. Sometimes this type of breathlessness is long term and people experience it most days and is called chronic.

## Further information

If you require further support please contact St Helens Community COPD team.

365 days year, 7 days a week  
0151 430 1553

## British Lung Foundation

Breathe Easy St Helens support group  
Wesley Methodist Church, Corporation Street, The Lounge, St Helens, Merseyside, England, WA10 1LF

0300 003 0555  
[cpm-tr.communityrespteam@nhs.net](mailto:cpm-tr.communityrespteam@nhs.net)

**Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership** is a company limited by guarantee 01863614 (England and Wales).

[Asthma + Lung UK \(asthmaandlung.org.uk\)](https://asthmaandlung.org.uk)

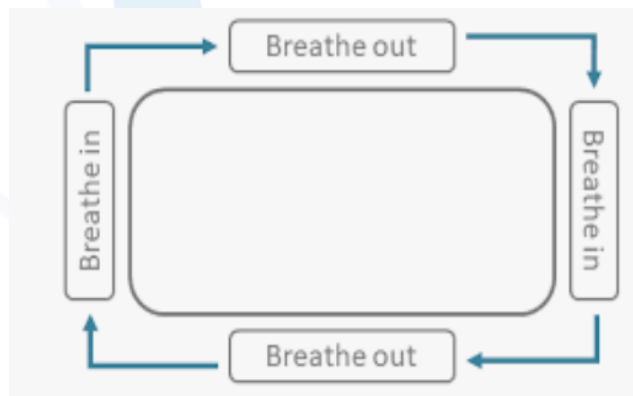
Helpline 0300 222 5800

[www.BreathingPoint.co.uk](https://www.BreathingPoint.co.uk)



## Rectangular Breathing

This technique can help you to recover from anxiety, panic attacks and breathlessness.



Ways to ease breathlessness - Supporting breathlessness  
([supporting-breathlessness.org.uk](http://supporting-breathlessness.org.uk))

Focus on an item in your room, for example a picture frame of your TV frame, etc.

Follow the side of the rectangular object with your eyes clockwise breathe in through your nose on the short sides and breathe out through pursed lips on the longer sides.

Focus on making the breath out longer than the breath in to help to regulate your breathing, continue following this technique around the rectangle until your breathing feels relaxed and you are in control of your breathing.

## Positions of ease

Use these positions to ease breathlessness.

If you cannot sit down try to find something to lean against or rest on.



## Fan Therapy

Fan therapy can help you control episodes of breathlessness using a small-hand held fan. The battery operated three-bladed fans are preferable. When breathless, turn the fan on and hold it approximately 15cm away from your face.



Aim the draft of air towards the central part of your face so you feel the air around the top of your lip and the sides of your nose. You should feel the benefit after a couple of minutes. Continue to practice your breathing control and pursed lip breathing as appropriate in this time.

## Thumb squeeze

This technique uses an acupuncture point which can help our nervous system to relax and reduce anxiety.

Using two fingers, squeeze the webbing between the thumb and index finger for four to five seconds and then release

Repeat as needed throughout the day.



## Relaxing your shoulders

Relaxing and dropping your shoulders can help you to relax the muscles that help you to breathe (accessory muscles).

## Diaphragmatic breathing

It is important to try and incorporate this breathing technique into your daily routine as this is a more efficient way to breathe, which will help you to relax and gain control of your breathing.

1. Sit in a well supported position where your back is rested, you can sit upright in bed, sit in an armchair or lay flat with your knees bent.
2. Make sure your head, neck and upper body are relaxed.
3. Place one hand on your upper chest and one hand below your rib cage, just above your belly button, allowing you to feel the movement of your diaphragm.
4. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling your stomach pressing into your hand, counting as breathing in 1, 2, 3.
5. Exhale using pursed lips, counting as you breathe out 1, 2, 3, 4 and feel as your abdominal muscles tighten, keeping your upper hand completely still.
6. You should feel little movement from your upper chest, and your stomach should rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.
7. Your breathing should feel effortless and quiet.