

What is pulmonary rehabilitation?

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a course of gentle supervised exercise and education designed to help people with your lung condition get fitter, cope with their symptoms and understand their condition better.

Evidence shows that attending a pulmonary rehabilitation course can help you manage your condition, prevent flare ups and hospital admissions, and can improve your quality of life.

Ask a member of the DAIRS team, or your GP or practice nurse to refer you.

Contact details

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

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0300 019 8483



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Living with a lung condition: physiotherapy techniques to manage your condition



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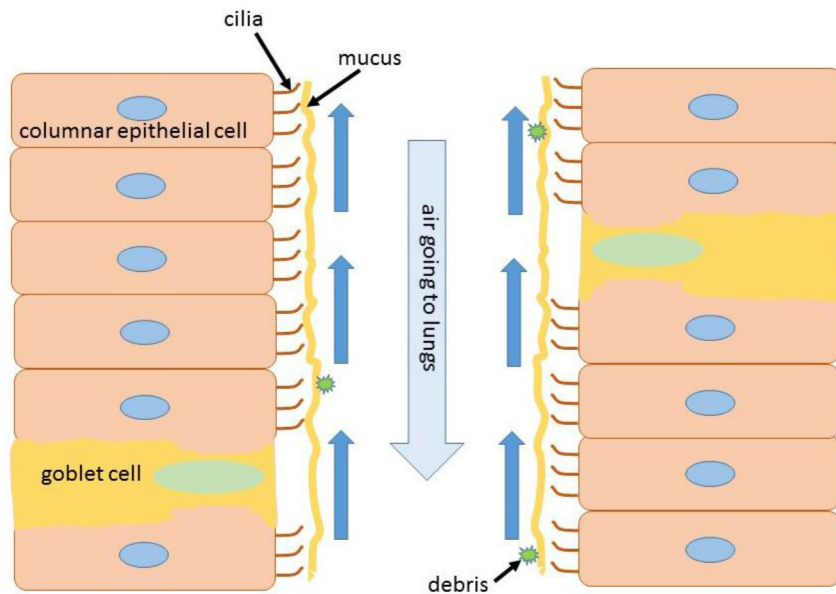
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What are the physiotherapy techniques to manage your lung condition?

- Airway clearance
- Contenance advice
- Staying active and pulmonary rehabilitation

What is airway clearance?

Many people with your lung condition have trouble clearing sputum or phlegm. Tiny hairs called 'cilia' line your airways and they 'waft' your phlegm up for you to cough out. It is a natural cleaning mechanism of the lungs.



With certain lung conditions your 'cilia' do not work as well. Consequently, your phlegm doesn't move up your airways that easily. Every day you will need to help the phlegm move to prevent developing a chest infection.

do pelvic floor exercises lying, sitting, or even standing at a bus stop.

The knack:

- This means contracting and holding your pelvic floor muscles prior to and during anything strenuous.
- You should try to do this prior to and during coughing and sneezing as this can help reduce leakage.

If you suffer with incontinence you may want to ask your doctor to refer you to a continence specialist. The NHS has also developed an app called 'Squeezy' which provides exercises and reminders. You can download this at a small charge in your mobile's app store.

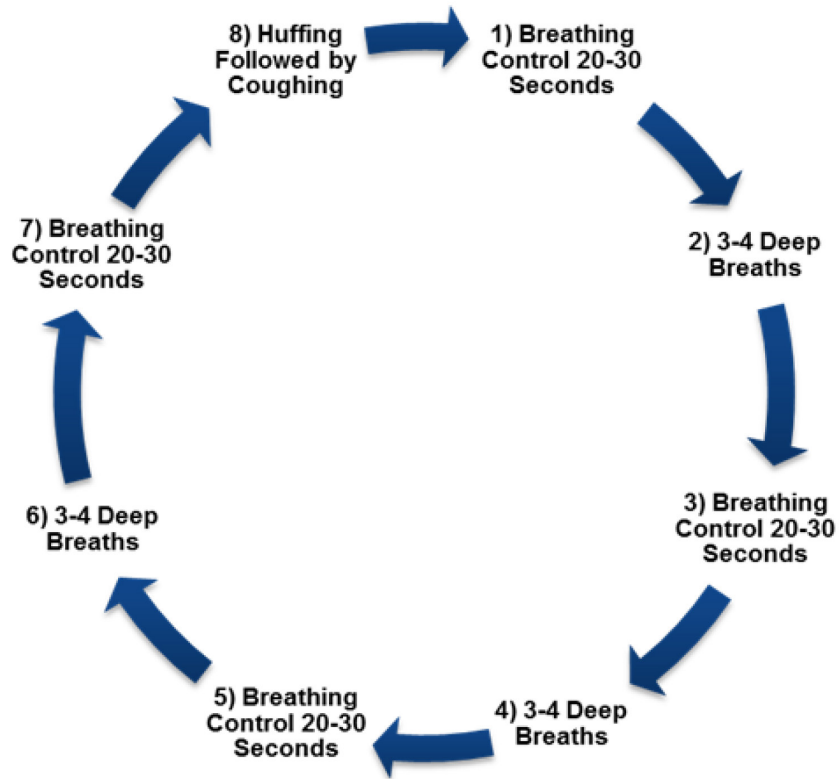
Why is it important to stay active?

It is important for people with your lung condition to remain as active as possible. Staying active helps maintain lung health, clear lung secretions/phlegm, while improving fitness and health.

Being active also helps you feel less breathless when performing your normal daily activities and improves your sense of wellbeing.

If you are thinking of increasing your exercise level you should check with your doctor first, as they can advise you on appropriate activities. Try to build up your exercise level slowly and don't make too dramatic a change in one go.





Breathing control (also called relaxed abdominal/tummy breathing):

- Rest your hand on your tummy, keeping your shoulders and upper chest relaxed. Allow your hand to rise gently as you breathe in.
- Sigh out gently and ensure your shoulders remain relaxed.

Thoracic expansion exercises (deep breaths):

- Take a slow deep breath in through your nose (if able), trying to keep your shoulders and neck relaxed.
- At the end of the breath in, try and hold it in for one second and sniff in a little more air. If this is difficult and you start to cough, do not worry about doing this.
- Let the air out gently through your mouth.

Forced expiratory technique ('huff'):

- First do a small long huff - take a normal breath in, then with an open mouth, huff from the back of your throat fairly strongly, as if misting a pair of glasses, letting the air out until your lungs feel fairly empty. This will move secretions lower down in your airways.
- Then repeat with a big short huff - taking a deep breath in to start and short quick huff out, only a second long. This will move secretions high up in the airways.
- Do not force the huffs if they cause chest tightness or wheezing.
- Do these two huffs then follow with a cough to clear any secretions brought into your throat.

Do not do lots of repeated huffing or coughing. If there are secretions after the cough at the end, repeat the cycle again. Continue doing so until your cough is dry. If your cough remains productive for a long period of time when doing ACBT, then stop when you feel you have done enough and repeat it again later.

You cannot overdose on your breathing exercises. If you are in hospital you should do ACBT every one to two hours. At home when you are well, then do at least twice a day, morning and evening. With a chest infection do at least four times a day. You can do ACBT five minutes post Salbutamol inhaler or 10-15 minutes post nebuliser.

Airway clearance and continence

The coughing associated with your lung condition puts stress on the pelvic floor. Your pelvic floor muscles are the muscles that help you control your bladder and bowel. Over time this repeated stress can cause leakage of urine, wind or faeces. Pelvic floor exercises help you to keep your pelvic floor strong and enable you to perform 'the knack' (see below), therefore reducing incontinence issues.

How to contract your pelvic floor:

- Gently draw up your front and back passages as if you were trying to stop yourself passing wind or stopping your flow of urine mid-stream.
- It should feel like a squeeze and lift.
- Try not to hold your breath or tense your stomach, legs or buttocks at the same time.

Slow exercise:

- Contract your pelvic floor and hold it for as long as you can, up to ten seconds.
- Build up to doing ten repetitions of this.

Fast exercise:

- Quickly contract and relax your pelvic floor, up to ten times.

You should aim to do both slow and fast exercises three times a day; they only take approximately two minutes to do. You can

What can I do to move the phlegm?

- Stay as mobile as possible - when you move, the phlegm in your lungs moves as when you sit up or walk you take bigger deeper breaths which helps to shift the phlegm.
- Stay hydrated - the more water you drink, the looser your phlegm is, making it easier to clear. Cut down on tea and coffee as this is dehydrating and aim to drink two litres of water a day unless you have been advised to restrict your fluid intake.
- Pain control - if you are in pain when you take a deep breath, make sure you stay on top of your pain relief. If it hurts when you cough, get a pillow or rolled up towel and hold it over the painful area. This is called a supported cough.
- Breathing exercises - The active cycle of breathing technique (ACBT) helps move sputum from the small airways at the bottom of your lungs to larger airways near the top where they can be cleared more easily with huffing/coughing. We will look at this in more detail now.

Active cycle of breathing technique (ACBT)

You should follow the ACBT cycle to clear your secretions.

You can watch a 'You tube' video of ACBT by NHS University Hospitals Plymouth's physiotherapy team by accessing this web address:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvorhwGZGm8