

The physiotherapist may also vibrate, shake or clap your chest while you breathe out.

How long should I spend doing it?

One answer is - do it as long as you cough up any sputum. But 20-30 minutes is probably long enough for any one treatment.

If you have a chronic respiratory condition but you are very well, 10 minutes will be long enough to ventilate your lungs and clear any secretions.

If you have an infection and your cough is more productive than usual you will need to spend longer clearing it.

How often should I do it?

Again - this depends how much you cough.

As a preventative or for 'maintenance' once or twice a day for 10 minutes may be enough. If you are ill or have a bad cough you may do 3 sessions of 30 minutes, or even more.



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Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT)



Active cycle of breathing techniques (ACBT)

This is a simple pattern of breathing to loosen and clear sputum, to improve ventilation and to maintain your lungs in good condition.

This leaflet is designed to remind you of the breathing exercises you have been taught by the Physiotherapist.

The components of the ACBT are:

Breathing control

This is gentle breathing with a relaxed upper chest, which allows your breathing to recover back to a normal comfortable rate. This is used between deep breathing and huffing.

Deep Breathing

These are long, slow deep breaths in and out. Four deep breaths are usually enough. Remember to try and keep your shoulders down and feel the air fill your lungs and expand the lower ribs.

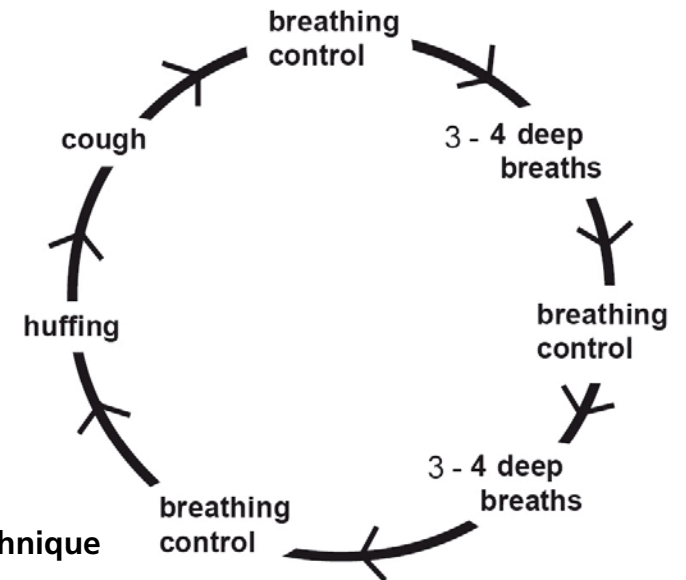
Huffing

Take a slow medium sized breath in and then force the air out through an open mouth as though you were steaming up a mirror (being careful not to completely empty your lungs).

Coughing

This should follow 2 huffs. Cough only if you feel there is phlegm ready to come. If not, continue with the cycle.

Active cycle of breathing



This is a flexible technique

The routine can be varied to suit you. You can do 3 to 5 deep breaths followed by a variable period of breathing control.

In what position should I practise this breathing technique?

You can use this method of breathing in whatever position you find is most comfortable, or seems to bring up most sputum, for example: sitting in a chair, leaning forward, lying on your side, or 'tipped' if this helps.

What other techniques can I do with the Active Cycle of Breathing (ACBT)?

It is often beneficial to 'hold' for a second or two at the end of one or all of the deep breaths.

You or a helper can 'clap' your chest, (as taught by your physiotherapist), while you do the deep breaths.