

Strategy 2

Controlled breathing

- Start with Strategy 1.
- Begin to focus on your **out** breath.
- Try to make your **out** breath last twice as long as your **in** breath. (Sometimes it helps to count - e.g. **in** for one, **out** for two, or **in** for two and **out** for four.)

Practice until you feel comfortable with his breathing pattern.

You are now more able to slow and regulate your breathing. You are in control.

Space for notes you and your nurse might like to make:

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Hospiscare serves the area from Okehampton in the west through Tiverton and Exeter to Axminster and Seaton in the east.

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Breathing control

Strategies to help you control your breathing



Information for patients, families and carers

These strategies help to put you back in control of your breathing. They will help you to become aware of, and to change your breathing pattern to breathe more effectively.

Introduction

The strategies do not involve you taking deeper breaths but aim to reduce the effort of breathing.

You will find that the more relaxed you are, the more effective your breathing control will be. Relaxation can take time, but you will achieve it with practice.

By mastering the first strategy you will become more aware of your breathing. Then you can move on to strategy 2 which will help you further.

Strategy 1 Breathing awareness

Ensure that you are in a comfortable, well-supported position such as sitting or lying. Try to ensure a quiet environment without interruptions.

- Once sitting comfortably, SIGH OUT as you relax your shoulders and arms. Continue to breathe normally, and when you are ready:
- Place one hand lightly on your upper chest.
- Place your other hand on your upper abdomen just below where your ribs divide.
- Keeping shoulders and upper chest relaxed, take a normal breath in and feel the hand on your abdomen rise up and out.

- Breathe out and feel the hand on your abdomen sink down and in. Your upper hand should barely move. When you feel this happening you are in more control and breathing more effectively.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth at a rate that is comfortable to you.

Practice this strategy for approximately 5 minutes two or three times a day, at a time when you feel able to relax.

Once you feel you have mastered this first strategy you can proceed to *Controlled breathing*, Strategy 2 overleaf. This will help you to:

- Sustain breathing control at rest
- Maintain control during activity, eg. walking upstairs
- Regain control during episodes of breathlessness.