

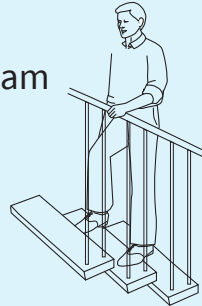
Managing Your Breathing

Feeling short of breath can reduce quality of life.

How can I prevent and manage my shortness of breath?

Taking Care of Yourself

- Pace yourself by breaking your activities down into smaller steps
- Plan your day and avoid rushing
- Take your medications as prescribed
- Have regular follow-up visits with your health care team
- Rest in between activities
- Use breathing exercises on the back of this page
- Avoid talking when walking
- Try pushing objects instead of pulling them
- Breathe in and out with each stair you climb
- Avoid hot water when showering or bathing
- Keep items most frequently used close by
- A standing or sitting position may be more comfortable during sexual activity with your partner
- Ask for help with shopping or use a shopping cart
- Share your feelings with your family, friends, and health care team



Equipment

- Use pillows to raise your head when lying down
- Use reclining chair with footrest
- Use a walker or wheelchair if you need them
- Ask about the use of a bedrail, bath board, or other equipment
- Try using a cool fan across your face

Environment

- Avoid things that can cause shortness of breath such as smoking, perfume, flowers, pets
- Open a window or use a fan if the weather permits
- Stay indoors when weather is too hot or too cold

Posture

- Try to remain sitting while dressing
- Avoid bending over at the waist



When should I contact my health care team?

- ✓ Breathing becomes more difficult over a short period of time
- ✓ You are struggling to breathe and feel nervous
- ✓ Sudden, new or increased chest pain
- ✓ Fever of 38.3°C or higher
- ✓ You wake up with sudden shortness of breath
- ✓ New cough or your cough is getting worse
- ✓ Your breathing is noisy
- ✓ You have breathing problems and:
 - You feel dizzy
 - Your heart rate has increased
 - Your skin is pale

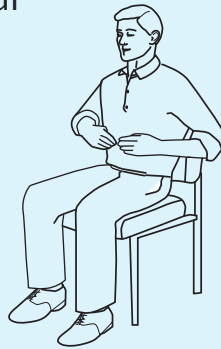
What exercises can I use to reduce my feeling of breathlessness?

Abdominal Breathing

Abdominal breathing can help you recover from feeling breathless after activity.

Follow the steps below:

1. Relax your shoulders.
2. Place one hand on your abdomen just below your chest.
3. To the count of 1. 2. 3. 4. take a breath in, slowly feeling your abdomen rise.
4. Breathe out slowly with pursed lips to the count of 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. To make pursed lips, pretend you are blowing out a candle.
5. Repeat 3-4 times.



Recovery Breathing

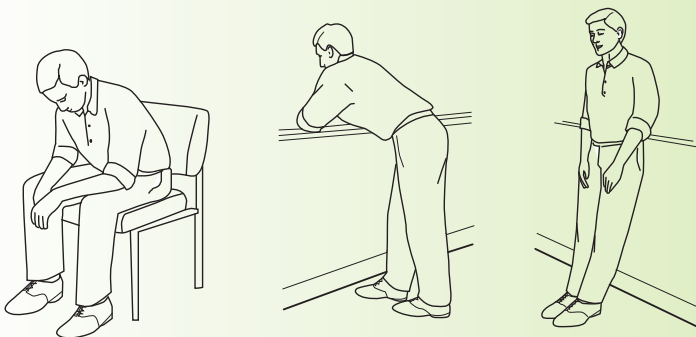
Use this exercise any time you feel extremely breathless or panicky.

Follow the steps below:

1. Use a lean forward position. See the lean forward section below.
2. Drop your chin.
3. Breathe in and out focusing on the out breath.
4. Purse your lips.
5. Gradually blow out for longer periods.
6. Once breathing has eased, sit up straight and do 2 or 3 abdominal breaths.
7. Rest for a few minutes before continuing with your activity.

Lean Forward Positions

Use these lean forward positions to help you recover from feeling breathless.



Relaxation

Relaxing can help you by slowing your breathing and making your breath more effective.

Follow the steps below:

1. Find a comfortable position.
2. Relax or close your eyes.
3. Now breathe gently.
4. Try creating a picture in your mind
5. You may wish to listen to music while relaxing.

You can find relaxation exercises at the website:

www.mhwcancer.ca

Click on information for patients

Click on patient brochures and general information

Look for disease site: relaxation training

**Video on breathing demonstration can be found at:
www.youtube.com/user/ManagingSOB**