

## **STRATEGIES TO CONTROL BREATHLESSNESS**

Breathlessness is the feeling of being out of breath. During illness it can occur at a much lower level of physical exertion than normally expected

### **BREATH CONTROL**

- A method of taking normal breaths.
- A slower, controlled breathing that does not involve taking deeper breaths.
- Using the lower chest whilst keeping the upper chest and shoulders relaxed.

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### **INDICATIONS**

- To reduce the effort of breathing.
- To obtain a sense of control over breathing. It works well when feel 'out of breath' or when breathing is difficult.
- To improve the efficiency of all respiratory muscles.
- To improve exercise tolerance during activities such as walking and climbing stairs.

### **POSITIONS TO REDUCE BREATHLESSNESS**

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In conjunction with **pursed lip breathing** and **diaphragmatic breathing**, use of these breathing positions to help reduce shortness of breath.



*Forward lean sitting*

These positions are helpful when have shortness of breath during activity, emotional excitement, exposure to adverse weather conditions or when feel tense and need to relax.

### Sitting

- Rest feet flat on the floor.
- Lean chest forward slightly.
- Rest elbows on knees or rest chin on hands.
- Relax neck and shoulder muscles.

-OR-



### *Forward lean sitting*

- Rest feet flat on the floor.
- Lean chest forward slightly.
- Rest arms on a table.
- Rest head on forearms or on some pillows.



Figure 2. High-sided lying

### Standing



### *standing 2*



### *Relaxed standing*

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart.

References: Cash text book of chest, heart and vascular disorders

- Lean hips against a wall.
- Rest hands on thighs.
- Relax shoulders, leaning forward slightly and dangling arms in front of .

-OR-

- Rest elbows or hands on a piece of furniture, just below shoulder height.
- Relax neck, resting head on forearms.
- Relax shoulders.



Figure 6. Forward-lean standing

## **PURSED LIP BREATHING**

Pursed lip breathing also helps in reducing the respiratory rate.

## **BREATHE CONTROL WHILE WALKING AND FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

During exercise, it's normal to increase breathing rate, but try not to alter the pattern. If necessary,

Breathe in and out of mouth. Avoid the temptation to hold breath whilst walking. It may be helpful to breathe rhythmically in time with steps.

For example, breathe out for two steps and in for One step, or, breathe out for three steps and in for two steps. Do whichever is most comfortable.