

Breathing control & useful tips



What is it?

- A technique used to help return to normal breathing
- An exercise to practice in everyday life when you feel breathless



What are the aims?

- To gain control of breathing
- To allow the correct respiratory muscles to work efficiently
- To decrease the overall effort of breathing

How is it done?

1. Relax your entire body
2. Place one hand lightly on your upper chest and the other on your abdomen
3. Breathe in and out through your nose
4. Focus on the movement of your hands as you breathe
5. Note which hand is moving first
6. As you take a breath in, you should feel the hand on your abdomen rise as you inhale and fall as you exhale
7. The hand on your upper chest should be moving minimally

Useful tips to help avoid becoming breathless

- Avoid bending from the waist, as this can cause breathlessness
- Use breathing control if you become breathless when walking or climbing the stairs. Try matching your steps with your breathing, such as breathing in on the first step and out on the next two. Practice and find a comfortable pace for your breathing
- Eating can be hard if you are breathless. Try taking smaller meals or snacks more often. Take smaller mouthfuls and avoid foods that are difficult to chew. Keep a drink nearby so you can sip it during the day
- If talking makes you breathless, try to use short sentences and pause for breath in between
- A cool draught, such as from an open window or fan, can be beneficial when you are feeling breathless
- A wheelchair may help with energy conservation, and can be assessed for you by your occupational therapist or physiotherapist
- Please also see our fatigue management leaflet for more useful tips which can also help with managing breathlessness.

For further information, please contact a member of the hospice therapy team via the hospice OneCall helpline on **0800 5670 111**.

We can help

St Elizabeth Hospice have a range of therapy services available. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Contact us

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