

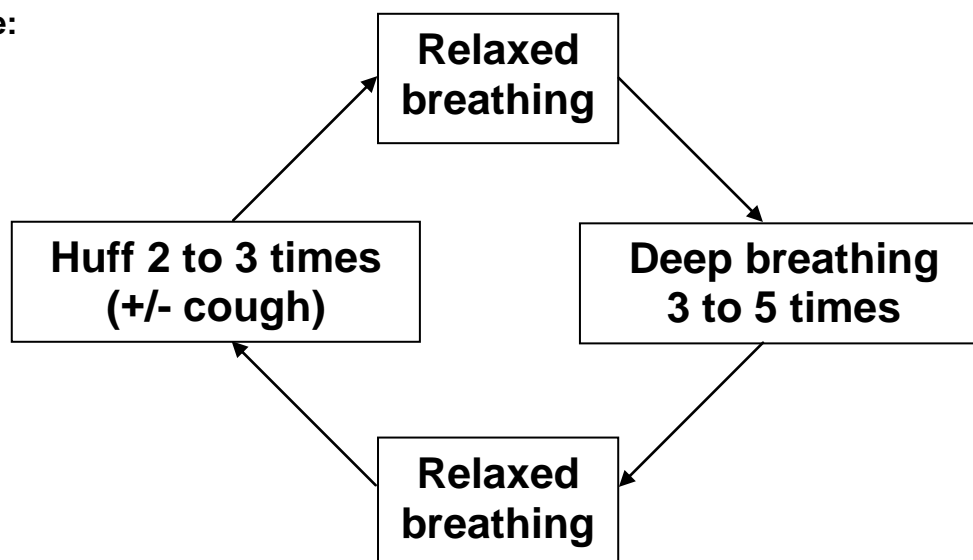
Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT)

What is ACBT?

The ACBT is a technique to help you clear secretions from your chest.

Coughing alone can be tiring and ineffective. The ACBT uses different types of breaths to make it easier to clear secretions by shifting them from the outer part of your lungs towards the main airways.

A typical cycle:



What do I do?

The ACBT can be used in any position that you are comfortable in. Many people find upright sitting the best, but side lying positions can help with clearing secretions.

Relaxed Breathing / Breathing Control

This is normal, gentle breathing using the lower chest.

1. Rest one hand on your abdomen so that you can feel it rise and fall with your breathing.
2. Breathe in gently feeling your hand rise and your lower chest expand.
3. Breathe out gently allowing your shoulders to relax down. The breath out should be slow, like a "sigh".

Deep Breathing

1. Breathe in deeply feeling your lower chest expand as far as possible. Try to keep your neck and shoulders relaxed.
2. Hold the breath for up to three seconds.
3. Let the air out gently.

Huff

This is a short sharp breath out through an open mouth that helps to force the secretions out. There are two types of huff:

1. From a medium sized breath in, with a long “squeezy” breath out.
2. From a big breath in, with a shorter sharper breath out.

Start with the first type and progress to the second, using breathing control to recover between huffs.

Remember the huff needs to be through an open mouth, using your abdominal muscles.

Cough

Only cough if you feel the secretions are ready to be cleared.

When do I stop?

After two cycles without clearing secretions **OR** until you are tired.

How often should I do them?

If you have an infection you will need to do the cycle several times a day to clear the secretions. Three deep breaths every half hour is a good way to check for secretions and improve ventilation, especially during an infection.

Adaptations

The ACBT is a flexible tool. You can do more than one set of deep breaths before huffing. Remember to use breathing to control in between.

Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about patient information. If you have any comments please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – details below.

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department - Tel: 0300 131 4500

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet: Physiotherapy

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Responsible clinician: Kirsten Mitchell, Senior Physiotherapist