



COPD

PATIENT SUPPORT

Exercise Your Lungs

Daily Breathing Exercises to Help You Clear Your Chest
Breaking the Cycle of Breathlessness

This piece has been reviewed by
COPD Support Ireland.



If you have been diagnosed with COPD, this leaflet will help you with your lung condition.



The simple exercises in this leaflet have been shown to help people feel:

- **Less breathless**
- **Fitter**
- **Better able to do daily activities**
- **Better about yourself**



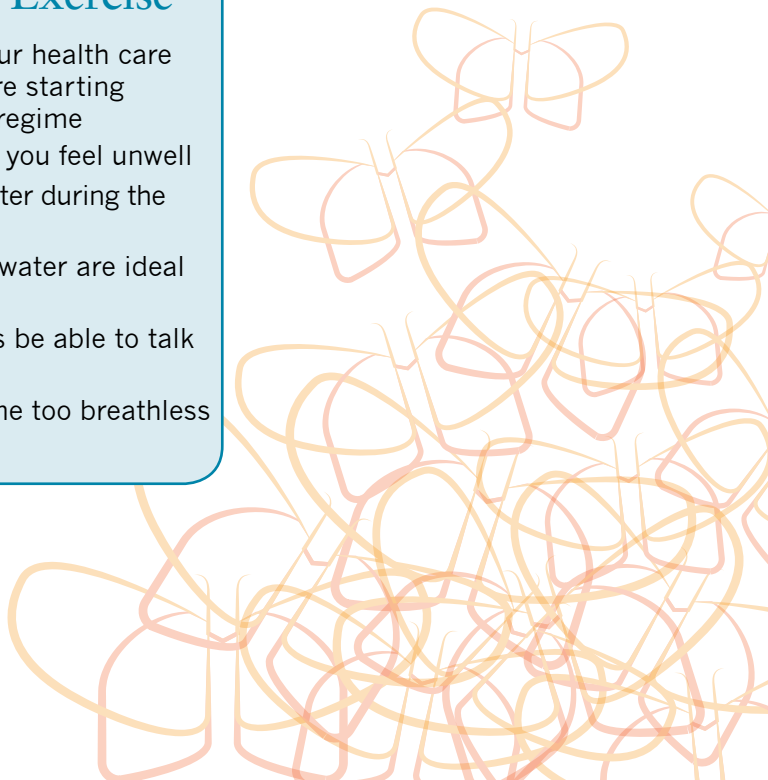
This leaflet gives you step by step advice:

- **What to do if you are feeling Breathless**
- **Daily Exercises to Clear your Chest**
- **Daily Fitness Exercises**



Tips for Safe Exercise

1. Please consult your health care professional before starting any new exercise regime
2. Do not exercise if you feel unwell
3. Drink plenty of water during the day
4. 500ml bottles of water are ideal hand weights
5. You should always be able to talk whilst exercising
6. Stop if you become too breathless or feel unwell



What to Do if You Become Breathless

Position of Ease

- Relax and sit in a comfortable position or lean against a wall
- If you are sitting, drop your shoulders and rest your palms face up
- Lean forward sitting in a chair
- Focus on your breathing and breathe out with pursed lips



Pursed Lip Breathing

This technique will help you if you feel breathless

- Breathe in through your nose
- Breathe out through pursed lips like you are blowing out a candle. Ensure that your breath out is twice as long as your breath in
- Relax and repeat until you feel less breathless



Relaxed Breathing

A breathing technique that will help you relax. This is called tummy breathing or diaphragmatic breathing.

- Sit and relax your shoulders and chest
- Put one hand on your tummy, just above your belly button
- Breathe gently in and out through your nose at rest
- Your tummy should rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out



The Active Cycle of Breathing Technique is a breathing exercise used daily in COPD to loosen and clear any phlegm you may have and it is gentler than just coughing. Phlegm in the lungs can lead to chest infections.

Daily Breathing Exercises to Clear Your Chest

Repeat until your chest is clear and you no longer hear the “rattle” of phlegm. Stop if you feel tired or your chest begins to feel tight or wheezy and return to them later when you feel better

Sit comfortably and relax your shoulders and neck...

It is a good routine to clear your chest with these exercises every morning and evening increasing this every 1 or 2 hours when you are feeling unwell, and have lots of phlegm.



6. Huffing

Huffing followed by cough if needed to remove phlegm.

Huffing – Take a medium breath in, then breathe out through a very open mouth (as if fogging up a mirror to clean it) You can do this 2 or 3 times until the “rattle” of phlegm is gone.



1. Tummy Breathing

Relaxed breathing (or tummy breathing)



5. Tummy Breathing

Relaxed breathing (or tummy breathing)



2. 3 Deep Breaths

3 deep breaths (to the bottom of lungs) and hold each breath for a count of 3



4. 3 Deep Breaths

3 deep breaths (to the bottom of lungs) and hold each breath for a count of 3



3. Tummy Breathing

Relaxed breathing (or tummy breathing)

Easy Exercises to Do at Home

Simple exercises at home can improve your strength and help you feel fitter. Listening to music or the radio whilst doing them will help you keep going!

Make some kind of exercise part of your daily routine, like a short walk to the shops or the park and try and increase your distance and speed each week. In cold weather, try taking a walk in the local covered shopping centre.

In cold weather, you can try these simple exercises at home.

EXERCISE No. 1:

Sit to Stand (*stand up from sitting position holding onto armrests*)

- Stand up from a sitting position using the arm rests for support only
- Keep your feet shoulder width apart
- Repeat as many times as is comfortable

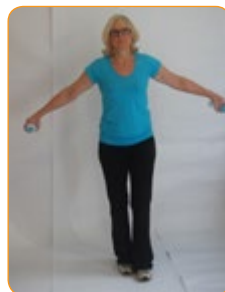
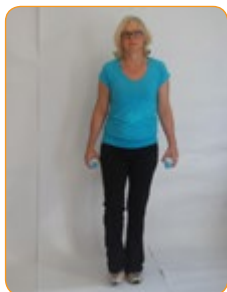


EXERCISE No. 2:

Shoulder Raises

You can use two small 500ml water bottles for handweights in this exercise.

- Stand with hand weights or water bottles
- Raise your arms up and down to shoulder height
- March on the spot at the same time
- Repeat as many times as is comfortable



EXERCISE No. 3:

Step Ups

- Hold onto the rail and keep legs shoulder width apart
- Step up onto the bottom step of the stairs
- Step down and step up again
- Repeat as many times as is comfortable



EXERCISE No. 4:

Chest and Shoulder Exercises

- Stand with your arms up at shoulder height and elbows bent
- Hold a hand weight or bottle of water in each hand
- Pull your elbows back and squeeze shoulder blades *as if you are squeezing something between them*
- Release your arms and repeat
- March on the spot at the same time
- Repeat as many times as is comfortable



Information supplied by:

©Joan Johnston and Michelle O'Brien
Physiotherapy Team
St Michaels Hospital, Dun Laoghaire,
Co Dublin.

*For help to quit smoking call
the National Smokers' Quitline
on 1850 201 203 or visit
www.quit.ie*

References:

Guidelines for the physiotherapy management of the adult, medical, spontaneously breathing patient. Bott J et al. Thorax 2009;64(Suppl 1):i1 - i51.



A number of Patient Support Groups open to anyone living with COPD are in place nationwide including Dublin, Bray, Louth, Clare, Sligo, Mayo, Cork & Waterford.

Please contact COPD Support Ireland for further information on group meetings & services available in your area.

COPD Support Ireland

Office 35
Brookfield House
Brookfield Terrace
Blackrock
Co. Dublin
Tel: +353 1 2833500
Fax: +353 1 2833592
Mobile: +353 87 1379447
Email: info@copd.ie
www.copd.ie