

Groundswell

Out of homelessness

Breathe Better, Do More



This is a guide to help you do more if you experience breathlessness. Breathlessness is normal when we push ourselves.

If you have a lung condition, the symptoms may include:

- Breathlessness or shortness of breath, even after light activity.
- A long-term persistent cough that brings up mucus or phlegm. Especially if you have a new or worsening cough that isn't going away, get yourself checked out by a GP.
- Wheezing or tightness in the chest.
- Repeated lung infections.

Everyone has the right to see a GP. You do not need ID or a fixed address to register with a GP and your immigration status does not matter. Always remember your visit to the GP is confidential.

It may be helpful to tell the medical professional if you:

- Are worried or have experienced any sexual violence or other trauma, which may make the appointment difficult for you.
- Have a physical or mental health condition.
- Have had a bad experience with medical appointments before and you can let them know what they can do to make you feel more comfortable.
- Would like to be seen by a medical professional of a certain gender.
- May have issues coming to all, or some of, the sessions.



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Speak to your GP or Support Worker if you think you could benefit from this programme. They can refer you. Don't be put off if you tried doing a programme before and you didn't continue.



- A group of people who understand you and your condition, offering practical support and opening up your social network.



- Ways to manage breathlessness and encourage you to move. Learning practical ways to deal with your symptoms and improve your overall wellbeing.



- Exercise classes made for people with long-term lung conditions who are struggling with breathlessness. Some participants have COPD, but people with other long-term lung conditions can also benefit.

which is made up of:

Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) is a treatment programme for people experiencing breathlessness

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Learning some simple tips to manage your breathlessness can make all the difference

- Find something you enjoy doing to help you make those small changes, for example, watering your indoor plants or doing daily tasks. You're more likely to keep motivated if you enjoy something.



Everyone can move. For example, you don't need to do a set number of steps each day. Do what you can, when you can. If you can do it regularly, this will also help.



Sitting in different positions and taking slow, steady breaths to the bottom of your lungs, aiming to make the breath out longer than the breath in.



Drinking water and hydrating well will help to bring up mucus easily and may help your breathing.



- You will have good days and less good days – try to keep your motivation up! Progress may be slow but it's still progress!
- You are not alone. It might be scary to do more and feel breathless at first, but you can be supported by experienced professionals who understand your condition.
- Everyone is entitled to help for their breathlessness and support to live a healthier life.

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Why do this programme?

This programme can:

- Improve your muscle strength, which means you breathe better and feel less breathless.
- Improve your fitness so you feel more confident doing everyday tasks.
- Help you feel more in control and calmer when you are more breathless.
- Improve your mental wellbeing/mood.
- Help you feel less worried about your breathlessness.
- Help you learn to pace yourself so you can keep going for longer.
- Help you understand and manage your condition better, including how your inhalers work and how to use them.
- Give you simple activities to help with breathlessness that you can do anywhere, without equipment.

Attending a programme like this is a good way to learn how to make yourself more active at the right level for you. The course will build your confidence and help you to meet people in a similar situation to you.

What happens on a PR programme?

A PR programme usually lasts six weeks, with two sessions of up to two hours each week. You'll be in a group with other people with mixed levels of breathlessness. A Physiotherapist will normally lead the group. There may also be volunteer groups in your area, which your GP may be able to tell you about.

Quotes

"I would definitely big up the project 'cos I am genuinely feeling so much better."
– Participant

"It was a brilliant session. Really enjoyed it, even though I was rough this morning. You are definitely making a difference."
- Participant

"I don't reach out to blue inhaler as much as I used to, I can now control my breathlessness."
- Participant

Places to find more help/information:



Pulmonary Rehab info



Moving Medicine COPD guide



Breathlessness and different positions for coping

