

Peel Regional Cancer Program

Managing Your Breathing



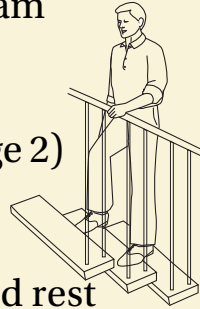
CREDIT VALLEY
THE CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Shortness of breath can interfere with quality of life. Use this tool to help you cope with daily routine and fulfill other roles that are important to you.

Tips to prevent and manage shortness of breath

Self-Care:

- Take your medications as prescribed
- Regular follow-up visits with your healthcare team
- Plan your day and avoid rushing
- Rest in between activities
- Use Breathing and Relaxation Exercises (see page 2)
- Avoid talking while walking
- Try pushing instead of pulling
- Climbing stairs - with each step, breathe out and rest
- Avoid hot water when showering or bathing
- Keep items most frequently used close by
- During intimacy with your partner, a standing or sitting position may be more comfortable
- Ask for help with shopping or use a shopping trolley or small backpack
- Share your feelings with your family, friends, and healthcare team



Equipment:

- Use pillows to raise your head
- Use reclining chair with footrest
- Use a walker or wheelchair if needed
- Ask about the use of bed rail, bath board, and other equipment.



Environment:

- Avoid things that can cause shortness of breath such as smoking, perfume, flowers, pets
- If the weather permits open a window or use a fan
- Stay indoors when weather is too hot or too cold



Posture:

- Try to remain sitting while dressing
- Avoid bending over at the waist

When should I call my healthcare team

- ✓ Breathing becoming more difficult
- ✓ You are struggling to breathe & feeling nervous
- ✓ Sudden, new or increasing chest pain
- ✓ Fever (>38°C)
- ✓ Awaking with sudden shortness of breath
- ✓ New or increasing cough
- ✓ Breathing is noisy

For Medical
Emergency,
call 911



Important names and contacts

Visiting nurse

Family physician

Pharmacy

Other

Breathing and Relaxation Exercises



It is important to know that the process of learning breathing exercises can initially trigger coughing. If this should occur, give yourself permission to stop, take a brief rest period, drink some water if needed, and then begin again.

Gentle Breathing Exercises

- Find a comfortable position
- Relax your shoulders and simply breathe
- Now try breathing in through your nose and out gently through your mouth
- Count to 3 as you breathe in
Hold the breath for 2 counts
Count to 6 as you breathe out
Repeat 3 to 4 times
- Try this exercise 3 times a day and whenever you feel shortness of breath

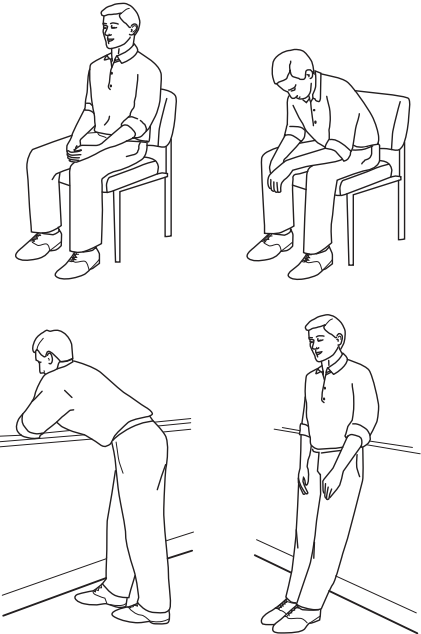


Relaxation Exercises

- Find a comfortable position
- Close your eyes or fix them on a particular object
- As you breathe out, quietly say in your mind “relax”
- Create a picture in your mind of a place that is relaxing
- You may want to listen to music as you are doing this exercise

What to do when breathing becomes more difficult

- When feeling very short of breath, you can breathe in and out through your mouth (like you're blowing out a candle)
- See picture with suggestions to ease your breathing →



PODCAST ON BREATHING DEMONSTRATION IS AVAILABLE AT
<http://www.alcase.org/facing/breathing.html>