

Active Cycle of Breathing (ACBT)

Respiratory
Service



What is ACBT?

The active cycle of breathing is a technique used to:

- **Help to clear sputum from your chest**
- **Improve ventilation** (help the air move around your lungs)
- **Reduce risk of chest infections** (Reducing the build up of sputum in your chest)

This information is to help remind you what you have been shown by your clinician.

There are 4 parts to the cycle:

- **Deep Breathing**
- **Breathing control**
- **Huffing**
- **Coughing**

Deep breathing

These are slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to visualise getting the air to the bottom of your lungs, filling out all the space in your chest.

The clinician will tell you how many breaths to take:

Breathing control

This is normal, gentle breathing that allows the air from the deep breaths that you have taken to circulate around your lungs.

Huffing

This is a medium sized breath in, followed by a fast breath out through an open mouth, like steaming up the corner of a mirror or a pair of glasses. Huffing helps to keep the airways open and allow the sputum to move up towards the back of your throat where they are then able to be cleared more easily.

Coughing

If huffing clears your sputum you should not need to cough. You should only cough if the sputum can be cleared easily. Try to avoid long bouts of coughing as these can be very tiring, may make you feel breathless, or cause your throat and chest to become sore or tight.

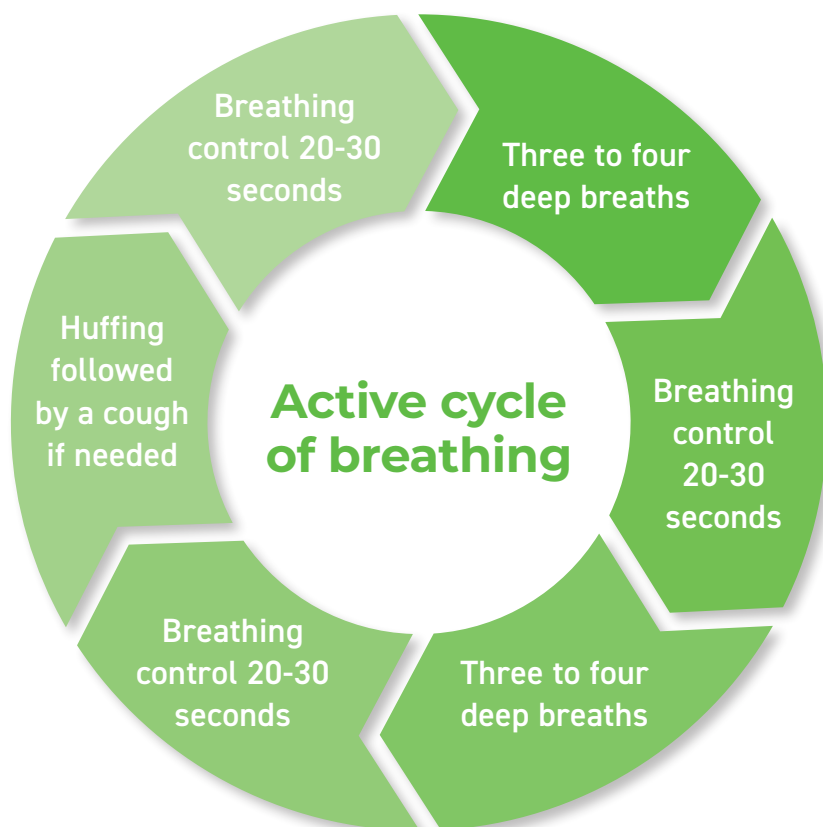


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What position should I practice the technique in?

Most commonly, the best position is sitting up straight in a supported chair with your arms supported. However you can be in any position that you find most comfortable, or seems to clear the most sputum. If there is any reason to use a specific position, the clinician will advise you.



This is a template of the basic technique used but it can be adapted if necessary. Your clinician will advise you of any changes.

Your clinician will advise you on how many times a day you need to complete the exercise and how many cycles you should complete each time.

cycles

time a day

You should finish your ACBT cycle when: either your huff is sounding dry or you are fatiguing.

Only complete this cycle once you have discussed with your clinician to ensure it is the most appropriate and effective airway clearance for you and your condition.

Any other advice:



TOP TIP:

Being well hydrated will help loosen your phlegm so it is easier to clear.

Try and aim for 6-8 glasses of fluid a day, unless told otherwise.

