



Homerton
University Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust



Post COVID-19 Patient information pack

Helping you to recover and manage
your symptoms following COVID-19



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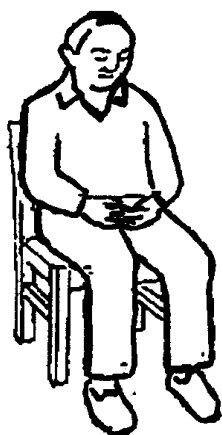
Positions to manage breathlessness

Following COVID-19 you may find you have continued breathlessness.

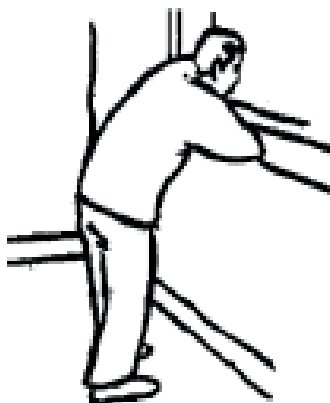
You should monitor this and if it gets worse seek further review from your GP or 111.

These positions can help ease your breathlessness and can be used when resting or when mobilising.

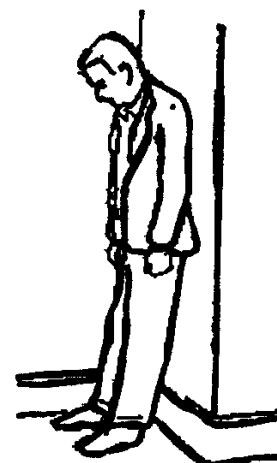
Relaxed sitting



Forward lean standing



Backward Lean Standing



Forward lean sitting



High side lying

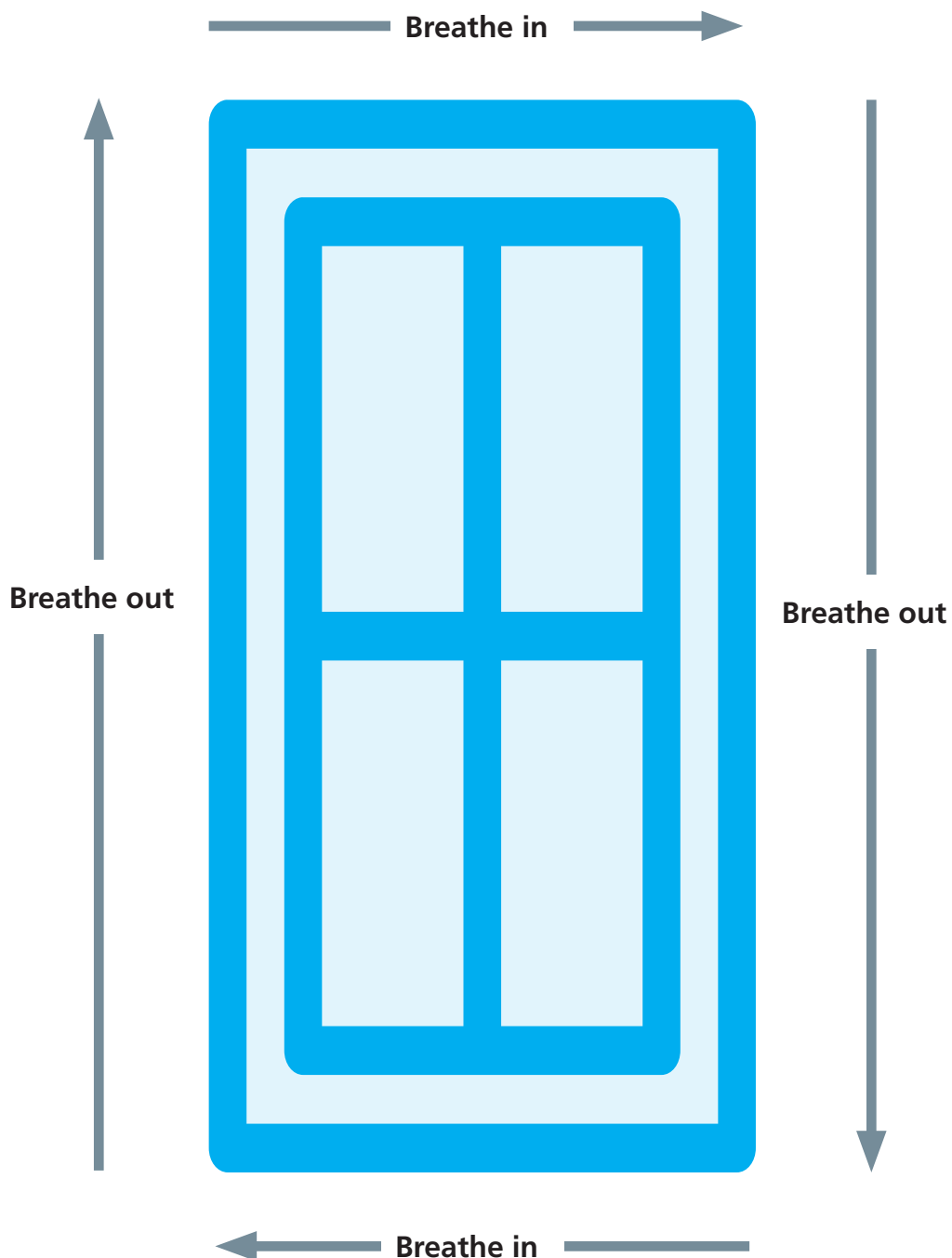


Breathe a rectangle

Find a comfortable position.

Look for a rectangle shape in the room e.g. a window, door or TV screen.

Move around the sides of the rectangle with your eyes, breathing in on the short sides and out on the long sides.



Managing your cough

A dry cough is one of the most commonly reported symptoms for COVID-19 however in some cases it may be productive of phlegm.

Strategies to manage a dry cough

- Stay well hydrated
- Sipping a soft drink – take small sips, one after the other, avoid taking large sips
- Steam inhalation – pour hot water into a bowl and put your head over the bowl. If comfortable, cover your head and bowl with a towel
- Drink warm honey and lemon or another warm drink, this can help to soothe the throat
- If you do not have a drink to hand, but need to cough, try swallowing repeatedly. This can work in a similar way to sipping water

Strategies to manage a productive cough

- Keep well hydrated
- Steam inhalation
- Try lying on either side, as flat as you can. This can help drain the phlegm
- Try moving around; this will help to move the phlegm so that you can cough it out

The next page explains some exercises to help you clear your chest

Positioning

Positioning is extremely effective, but not often considered when addressing energy conservation. Current methods of performing tasks may be using more energy than required.



Consider the following:

- Storing items at a convenient height to avoid excessive and prolonged stooping and stretching.
- Make sure all work surfaces are at the correct height. If a counter is too short, slouching and bending can occur which results in more energy expenditure.
- Use long-handled devices such as reachers or telescope cleaning tools to avoid unnecessary bending and reaching.
- Facilitate bathing - use a shower seat and a hand-held shower head.

Physical activity advice following COVID

Spending time in hospital or being ill at home with COVID-19 can result in a significant reduction in muscle strength, particularly in your legs. This can be for a number of reasons, but mainly due to inactivity.

It's not harmful to get out of breath when doing physical activity, this is a normal response.

However if you are too breathless to speak, slow down until your breathing improves. Try not to get so breathless that you have to stop immediately, remember to pace your activities.

You might have been given some exercises to do in hospital or in the community by a physiotherapist.

Make sure you keep doing these regularly however if you are unsure, contact the prescribing therapist.

Do not overdo it, try to increase your activity levels slowly.



Social life and hobbies

When you've been seriously ill, you may feel differently about things and you may not want to do things you used to enjoy. You may:

- not feel like seeing lots of people at once
- find it difficult to concentrate
- find it hard to follow a TV programme.

Your concentration will get better and your memory will usually improve.

Physical activity advice - how hard should it be?

Breathlessness scale

When you are doing physical activity, it is ok to feel moderately breathless



0	Not at all
0.5	Very, very slight (just noticeable)
1	Very slight
2	Slight
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat
5	Severe
6	
7	Very severe
8	
9	Very, very severe (almost maximal)
10	Maximal

Smoking and COVID-19

- Smoking tobacco products increase your risk of infection due to the harm caused to your immune system and lungs.
- Smoking is linked with poorer outcomes in COVID-19.
- Its never too late to stop.
- By stopping you can see benefits within 24 hours.



Quit Your Way East Renfrewshire continues to support people with stopping smoking by telephone and medication via a pharmacy. If you would like information on how to stop call: **08000 469946** or visit <https://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/health-and-wellbeing-services/52%201erf1116>

Support for patients and families post COVID-19

Asthma UK and The British Lung Foundation - have set up a support hub to provide information and dedicated support for people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and their family members.

This can be accessed at: www.post-covid.org.uk/

What to do if my symptoms do not improve

The length of time that it takes to recover from COVID-19 varies from person to person, for some it will be days, others weeks or months.

The more severe your symptoms, the longer it might take for you to return to what is normal for you.

If however after 6-8 weeks, you are still experiencing symptoms, please contact your GP for further review .

Getting psychological support

Feeling anxious or low in mood is very normal when recovering from COVID-19. You can discuss this with your family and friends or GP if you feel able too.

However, if it feels like it is going on too long or you are finding it hard to cope, you can refer yourself for talking therapy with a trained professional by visiting the website below and completing an online referral form:<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/contact-bridges>



This help is also available for your family or carers, who may experience anxiety, depression or acute stress reactions following your diagnosis and recovery of COVID-19:

For support and advice for your mental health in the aftermath of having COVID-19, please visit <https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-and-your-mental-health>

In a crisis situation, you can contact Breathing Space on **0800 83 85 87** or by visiting <https://breathingspace.scot>