

Breathlessness and coronavirus



Contents

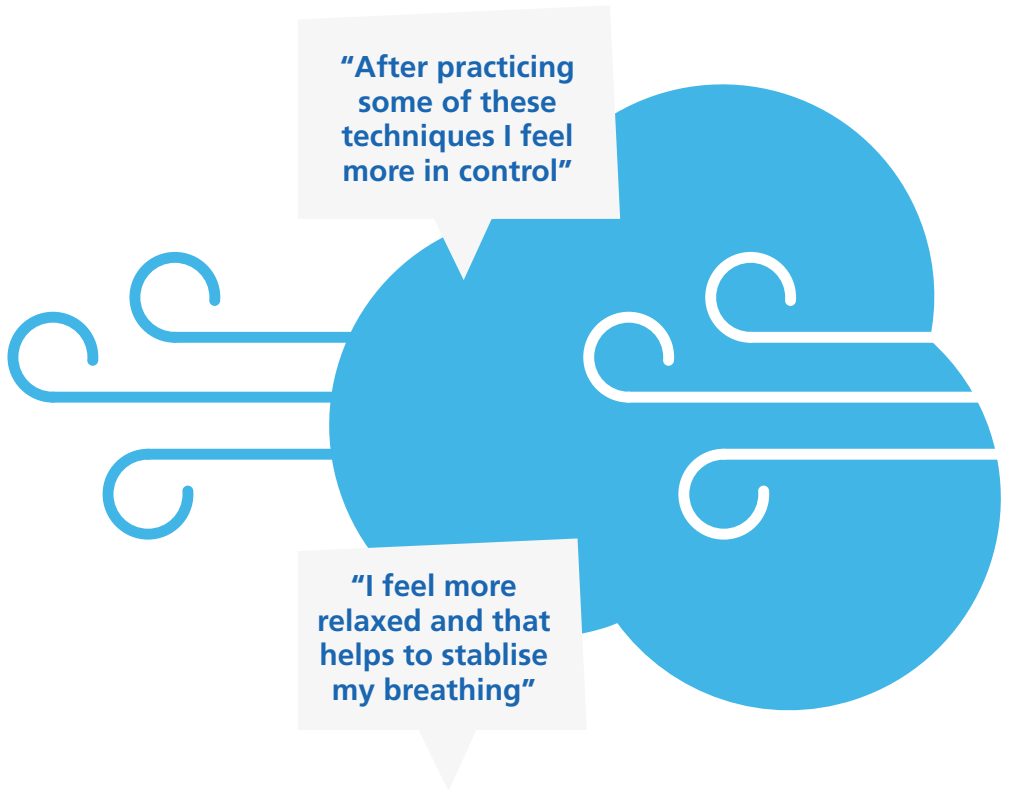
Introduction	3
Breathing control	4
Positioning	5
Pursed lip breathing	6
Distraction	7



Introduction

Breathlessness itself is not harmful but can be a frightening and unpleasant experience.

The aim of this booklet is to give you some advice and practical suggestions to help you cope with your breathlessness.



Breathing control

Having control means breathing slowly using the lower part of your chest, whilst relaxing your shoulders.

- Make sure you are sitting comfortably
- Place a hand over your tummy
- As you take a breath in you should feel your hand move outwards
- Now try to relax your neck, shoulders, and upper chest, as these muscles tend to be overused when you are short of breath
- Concentrate on trying to make your breath in shorter than your breath out

Positioning

Forward leaning in standing, sitting with your forearms on your thighs or on a table puts your diaphragm in the best position to move easily.



Figure 1



Figure 2



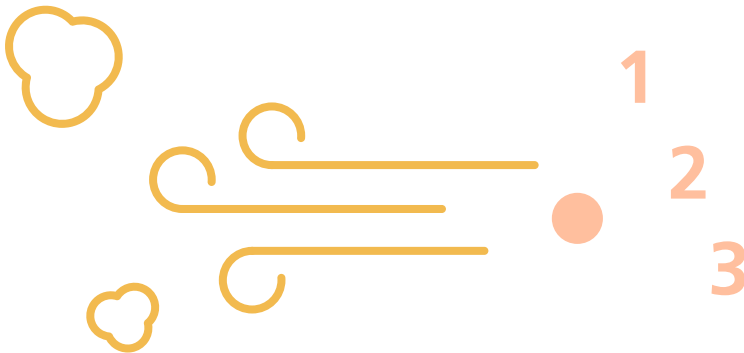
Figure 3

Pictures courtesy of The British Lung Foundation www.blf.org.uk

Pursed lip breathing

This is a technique that will help slow your breathing and is a technique you can use whenever you are doing something that makes you breathless.

- Relax your neck and shoulder muscles
- Take in a normal-sized breath slowly through your nose keeping your mouth closed (imagine you are sniffing a flower)
- Breathe out slowly and gently keeping your lips in this 'pursed' position and try to exhale over three seconds (imagine you are gently blowing out a candle)



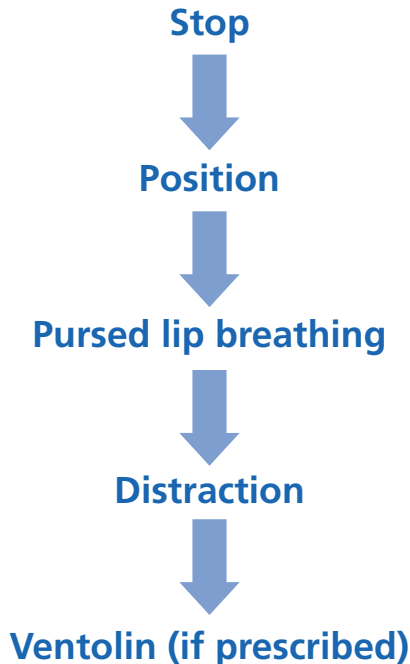
Distraction

To feel in control of your breathlessness it is important to practice the techniques so that they become second nature to you.

The flow diagram below is a very simple and effective 5 step approach to managing your breathlessness.

Practice these 5 simple steps and remind yourself of them by sticking them up around the house.

If it is practiced enough that it becomes an automatic behaviour, you will find you cope better when you become breathless as you have a plan and therefore have more control.



Patient Advice and Liaison Service

For information about CPFT services or to raise an issue, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 376 0775, or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours service for CPFT mental health service users

Please call NHS 111 for health advice and support.

If you require this information in another format such as braille, large print or another language, please let us know.