

COVID-19 Managing Breathlessness

In addition to medication, there are things you can also do to help you feel less breathless.

Step 1: Positions to ease breathlessness

- The following positions support the muscles in the body that help us with breathing.
- Try to relax your hands, wrists, shoulders, neck and jaw as much as possible.



Make sure you are fully over on your side. Resting your upper arm on a pillow may also help.



Relax down onto the pillows as much as possible. Having your legs apart may also help.

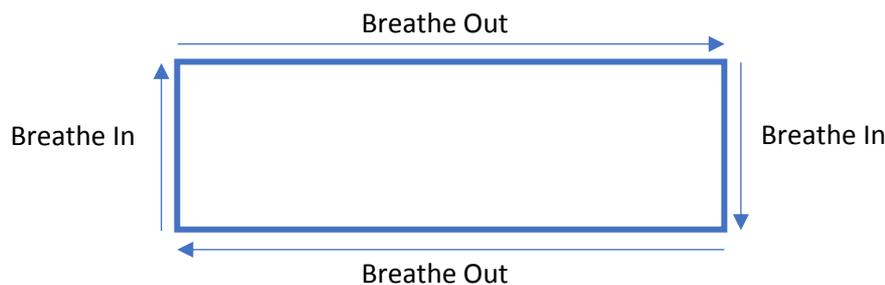


Experiment with your arm position, find what is comfortable with you. When sitting, sit upright, have your legs uncrossed and keep your head up. Leaning forward will also help.



Step 2: Breathing techniques

- The aim is to move from fast, upper chest breathing to relaxed, slow tummy breathing.
- Take slower breaths, in through your nose down into your tummy, then gently breathe out through pursed lips (as if you were going to blow out a candle) to create more room for the next breath in. Do not force your lungs to empty.
- You may find it helpful to rest your hand on your tummy as you do this, feel it rise and fall gently with each breath
- Remember 3 Rs: **Rise** the tummy as you breathe in, **Relax** the breath out, **Rest** and wait for the next breath to come.
- Follow the sides of the rectangle with your eyes as you breathe in (nose) and out (pursed lips).
- Gradually slow the speed your eyes move around the edge of the shape to slow your breathing.



Practice these techniques regularly so they will feel more natural to use when you are breathless.

Step 3: Relaxation techniques

Breathlessness can make us feel anxious, which in turn can add to our breathlessness. The following relaxation exercises can help:

- **Visualise** a relaxing scene, such as a favourite place, a walk, a garden, the beach or somewhere from your imagination that makes you feel happy and secure (not places that evoke bad or sad memories). Imagine what you can see, hear, feel and smell.
- **Body scan:** Scan your body from head to toe, trying to release any tension in your muscles.
- **Let go of thoughts.** Imagine you are sitting on a riverbank watching leaves drifting downstream. When a thought or feeling comes into your mind, try to see this as a leaf and let it drift away from you, and disappear.
- **Velindre App:** This is a free App to download, use the relaxation exercises section.
- **Relaxed Melodies App:** This is a free App where you can choose your favourite relaxing sounds.

