

Patient information factsheet

The active cycle of breathing technique (ACBT)

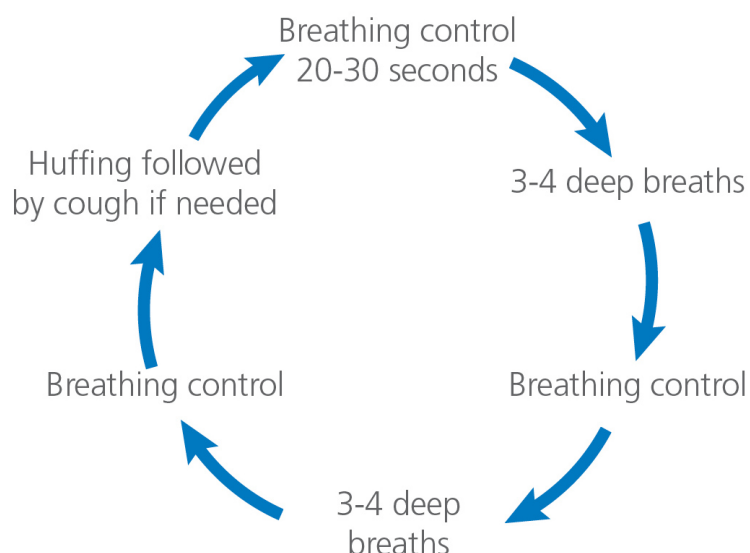
The active cycle of breathing technique (ACBT) is a way to clear phlegm from your chest.

There are three parts to the ACBT, which are:

- breathing control
- deep breaths
- huff or cough

This factsheet explains how to perform the different parts of the ACBT.

How to perform the ACBT



Firstly, find a comfortable, well-supported position. Some people find that leaning forward in a chair or sitting upright in a chair is helpful. Relax your neck, upper chest, shoulders and arms.

1. Breathing control – relaxed breathing

Start by doing breathing control. Lightly rest your hand on your stomach. Breathe in and out quietly and gently through your nose, if you can. You should see your stomach rise as you breathe in. Do this for as long as you need to. If you are quite breathless, you may need to do breathing control for longer until your breathing settles.

2. Deep breaths

Take a long, slow deep breath in through your nose, if you can. Breathe out gently through your mouth. Try to breathe right down to the bottom of your lungs, expanding your rib cage. Aim to do three to five deep breaths before returning to breathing control.

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3. Breathing control

Return to breathing control for as long as you need to, until your breathing is slow and relaxed.

You may need to do a few cycles of deep breathing and breathing control before doing a huff if your phlegm is sticky.

4. Huff

A huff is similar to a cough but you aim to keep your mouth and throat open. Imagine you are trying to steam up a mirror held right in front of you. Take a deep breath in, then exhale the air out forcefully through an open mouth. If you wheeze when you exhale, you are huffing too hard.

5. Cough

After doing a huff you may need to do a good strong cough and bring your phlegm out into a pot or tissue.

Notes

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