

Post Covid-19 Self Help Rehabilitation Guide

Exercise and breathing techniques

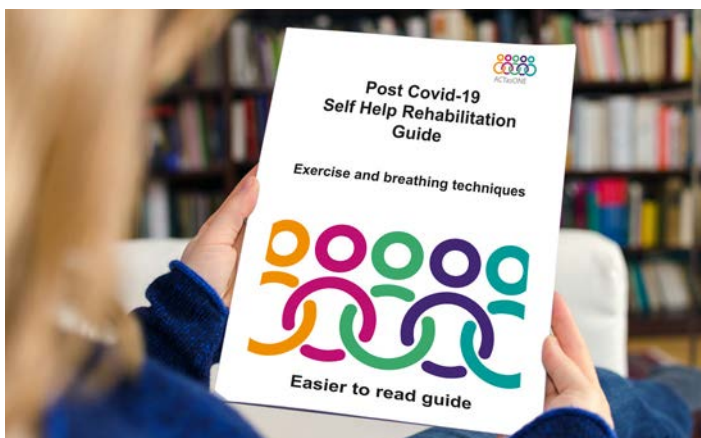


Easier to read guide

Introduction



These booklets are for people who have had Covid-19 and have symptoms that have lasted for more than 4 weeks.



There are 6 booklets in total. This one is about exercise and breathing techniques.



The booklets have been developed by lots of different healthcare professionals.

They work together to help people with long Covid.

Exercise



It is important to start rehabilitation and exercise as soon as possible after you start to recover.

Starting early can help make your physical and mental recovery better. It can also help to stop problems in the future.



The healthcare professionals who are looking after you will work with you to decide when you should start rehabilitation and exercise.



They will support you to make a plan based on your needs and symptoms.

When you are exercising, you should try to feel slightly breathless.

Breathlessness



Feeling breathless is a normal sensation that happens to everybody sometimes.

Due to having Covid-19 you might feel it when you are resting, being active or when you are anxious.



It is important to understand that as you recover from Covid-19, being a little bit breathless is not a bad thing.

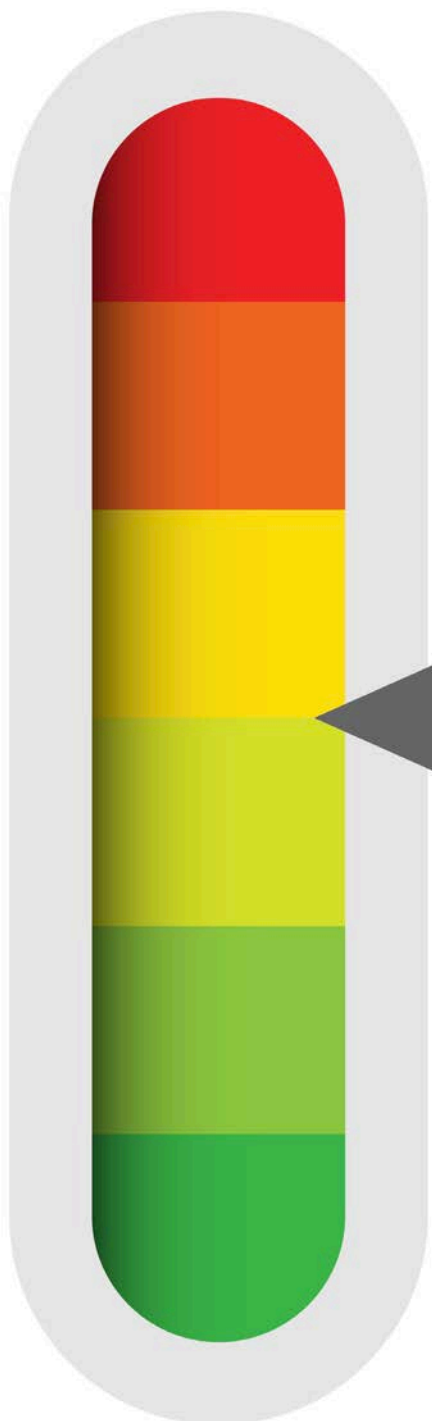


As you do more exercise and exert yourself your muscles will get stronger.

This will help you to get fitter and you will feel less breathless overall.



Use this scale to work out how breathless you feel after doing the breathing exercises that are covered on the next set of pages.



. Maximum exhausted

Exhausted. Out of breath

Very very hard. Very tiring

Very hard. Tiring

Hard. Feel puffed

Fairly hard. Beginning to feel puffed

Moderate. Beginning to feel puffed

Fairly light. Fairly easy

Very light. Very easy

Very light. No problem

Exercise 1: Breathing control



- Sit down on a comfortable chair and in a relaxed position or laying on your side or back

- Place one hand on your stomach

- As you breathe in, feel your stomach move out



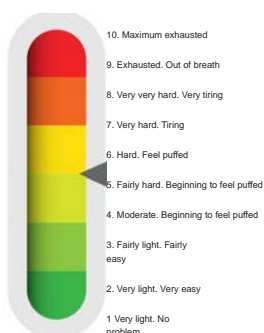
- As you breathe out, feel your stomach return to its original position

- Breathe in through your nose (to filter and warm the air)



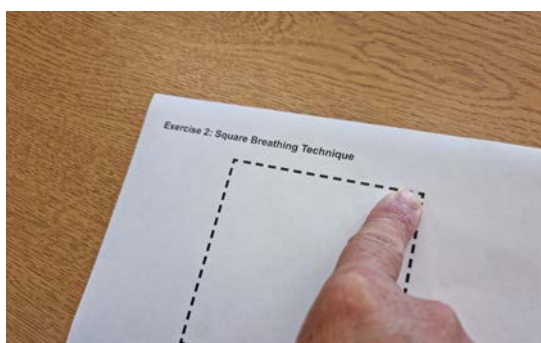
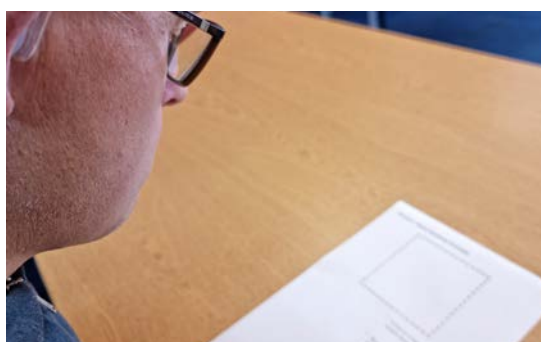
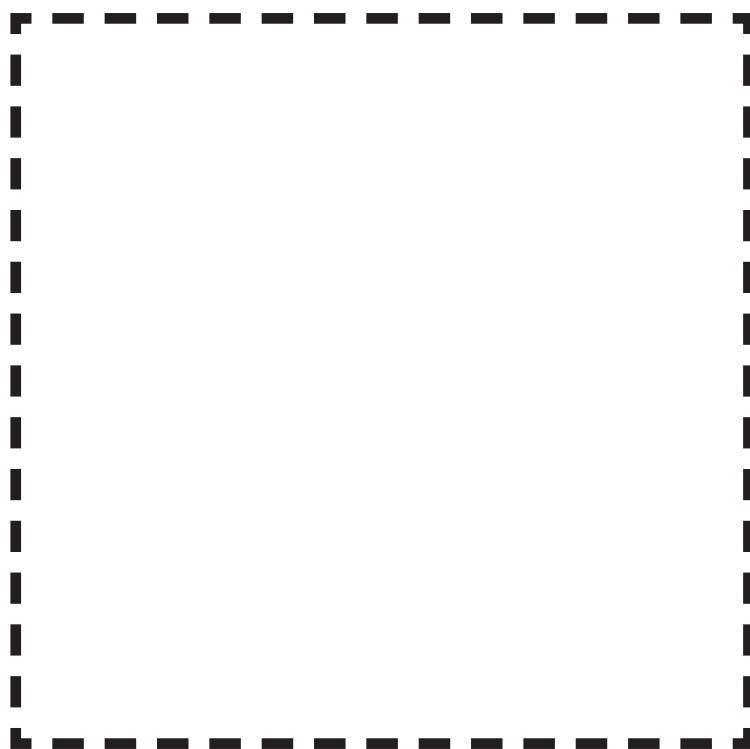
- Breathe out through your nose

- Try to avoid using muscles around the ribs and neck area.



How does it feel? Use the scale on page 5 to work out how breathless you feel.

Exercise 2: Square breathing technique



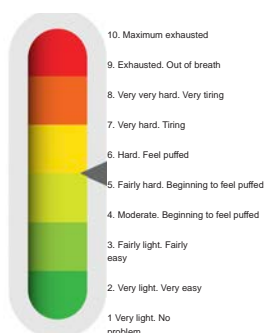
- Focus on a square object or the square above
- As you breathe in through your nose, follow the line with your finger or eyes
- When you reach the corner, breathe out through your nose
- Repeat focusing on the square
- Try to avoid using muscles around the ribs and neck area.

How does it feel? Use the scale on page 5 to work out how breathless you feel.

Exercise 3: Pursed lip breathing



- Breathe in, through your nose
- Breathe out with your lips pursed as if you are whistling
- Try to blow out for as long as you feel comfortable.



How does it feel? Use the scale on page 5 to work out how breathless you feel.

Exercise 4: Taking 3 deep breaths



- Sit in a relaxed position and take a slow deep breath in, filling your lungs with air to the bottom of your chest
- Hold your breath for a couple of seconds
- Sniff in through your nose to fill your lungs with more air
- Breathe out slowly and normally.

How does it feel? Use the scale on page 5 to work out how breathless you feel.

Exercise 5: Huffing



- Sit in a relaxed position and take in a medium sized breath



- Open your mouth and force the air out as if you're steaming up a mirror

How does it feel? Use the scale on page 5 to work out how breathless you feel.

Here are some positions to help reduce your breathlessness



Sitting leaning forward with your arms on your knees or a table.



Sitting upright.



Standing leaning forward with your hands on a chair or kitchen worktop.



Standing leaning back on a wall.

Coughing up mucus. Mucus is a slimy substance that is made in the nose and throat.



Coughing up mucus is a normal symptom of Covid-19.

It is important to cough it up to clear your airway so you can breathe better. It will help reduce the risk of more infections.

Postural Drainage. These are different positions to help you move the mucus and which will make it easier for you to cough it up.

There are 4 positions you can change between.

Look at the images below and use a pillow to support your head and neck.

LYING ON YOUR BACK



Lie on your back, support your neck with a pillow.

SITTING UPRIGHT



This can be done in a chair or in bed. Use pillow to support your posture and neck.

SIDE LYING



Lie on your side. Use a pillow to support your neck. Bend your knees slightly.

LYING ON YOUR STOMACH



Lie on your abdomen. Turn your head to one side. Use pillow for your head. You can cross your arms or placed by your head.

Walking record sheet.

Please keep a record so you can see how you are doing.

Date	Minutes of continuous walking	Use scale on page five to record your score
Week 1		
Week 2		
Week 3		
Week 4		

Date	Minutes of continuous walking	Use scale on page five to record your score
Week 5		
Week 6		
Week 7		
Week 8		

Exercise record example

Below is an example of how to fill out your exercise record.

Write down activity and any symptoms you are feeling.

Please give as much information about your symptoms.

This will let us to know which service can best help you.

Session/Day	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
Exercises	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms
Steps	15 reps	Breathless RPE-7 Tired for 3 days												
Walking up the stairs					5 mins	Breathless RPE-5								
Dog walk									30 mins	RPE-5 Tired for 2 days				
Making dinner											45 mins	Aching muscles. Physical and cognitive fatigue next day		

On the next page you will find your blank 'my exercise record' for you to fill out.

Session/Day						
Exercises	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms

EXERCISE RECORD

Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms	Sets	Symptoms

This resource was developed collectively by members of the multidisciplinary team featuring healthcare professionals working in health organisations across Bradford district and Craven. We are grateful to Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for giving us permission to use and adapt their resource for Bradford district and Craven patients.

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