Physiotherapy: Breath Stacking Technique

Respiratory Physiotherapy
Community & Therapy Services

This leaflet has been designed to explain the benefits of the treatment activity you have been taught, act as a reminder of technique and who to contact with any questions.
Introduction
You have recently been seen by the Physiotherapist and taught techniques to help manage your condition. This leaflet is designed to remind you of the correct technique and any personalised advice given during the session.

Breathing Stacking

What is breathing stacking?
Breathing stacking is a breathing exercise to help improve and maintain the size of breath you are able to take and can be used regularly to help you clear mucus from your chest (secretion clearance). It can also be used to help improve the strength of your cough and voice.

It is mainly used for people with weak breathing muscles which makes breathing and coughing difficult. Patients with neuromuscular diseases often have weakness of their breathing (respiratory) muscles which affects how well the respiratory system works. It is also used for people with bone or structural problems which cause a small / altered chest shape making coughing difficult.

Benefits
- Improve depth of breathing
- Aids secretion clearance
- Helps keep rib cage mobile / flexible
- Stretches respiratory muscles
- Improves cough strength and effectiveness
- Improves voice

Risks
There are no risks.

Alternatives
There are no alternatives.

Technique
- Sit upright in a comfortable position
- Take a deep breath in and hold it
- Try to take another deep breath in on top of the previous breath
- Aim to take another 1-3 breaths in the same way (3-5 breaths in total)
- Breathe out or cough
- Repeat this process 3-5 times

How often should I do it?
2-3 times a day but can be completed more often if needed.

When should I not use it?
- Within an hour of eating or drinking / or PEG feed
- If you have chest pain or blood in your phlegm

Reference Section

Information for patients and visitors

Motor Neurone Disease. 2016 NICE Guideline NG42.

Contact Details for Further Information
Respiratory Team, Physiotherapy Department, Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby
01472 875276
Respiratory Team, Physiotherapy Department, Scunthorpe General Hospital
01724 290010

Concerns and Queries
If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.
Alternatively you can email: nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

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