

## Home Exercise Program for Breathing

Many pre-existing conditions, such as heart or lung diseases, cause breathlessness. Breathlessness can be very frightening and distressing, even in milder cases, and may be worsened by fears relating to the corona virus. During the current corona virus outbreak, you may have reduced access to your usual support networks. It is important that you continue the usual treatments for your underlying conditions (e.g. inhaler).

**The following steps may help you feel less breathless. You might find some of these steps more helpful than others. Try them out and use the ones that you find most helpful:**

**Finding a comfortable position can ease your breathlessness, try these:**

Sit upright in a comfortable armchair with both arms supported on the chair arms or cushions. Let your shoulders drop and relax. Rest the soles of your feet on the floor.



Sit on a chair and let your body flop forwards. Rest both arms on a table or your knees to support you.



Lie on your side propped up with pillows under your upper body. Tuck the top pillow into your neck to support your head. Rest your top arm on a pillow placed in front of your chest and your top leg on another.



In your comfortable position, loosen your wrists, fingers and your jaw.

### Abdominal and tummy breathing

Rest a hand on your tummy and breathe in gently to feel your tummy rise. Then breathe out slowly through your nose or your mouth. Rest and wait for the next breath to come. You may find it helpful to purse your lips while you breathe out slowly as though you were making a candle flame flicker.

### Slowing down

When you are comfortable with the tummy breathing, try to slow down the speed of your breathing. When you slow down, your breathing becomes deeper, which is more efficient. Imagine air filling your tummy like a balloon. Practicing regularly will make it easier to do when you are breathless.

### Breathe a rectangle

- Once you have found a comfortable position, look around for a rectangle. This might be a window, a door, picture, or even a book or television screen.
- Now follow the sides of the rectangle with your eyes as you breathe, breathing in on the short sides and out on the long sides.
- Gradually slow the speed that your eyes move round the rectangle, pausing at the corners to help slow your breathing.

