

Chest Injury Exercises

Minor Injury Unit

Advice for patients following a Chest Injury



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You can help to relieve shortness of breath by relaxed breathing control.

- Breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth, let the air 'go' as you breathe out. Do not force it.
- Normally, a breath out lasts longer than a breath in. The elastic recoil of the lungs can expel the air without using the chest muscles.
- Blowing the air out through pursed lips can help settle your breathing pattern.
- Allow your shoulders to drop down, next, try to relax your breathing pattern.
- Rest one hand on your stomach. As you breathe in imagine your stomach is a balloon filling with air and as you breathe out, feel the air sweep away.

Recovery positions which may help you feel more comfortable.

Sitting on a chair:

- Rest your arms on your legs or
- Lean forward onto a table and pillows

Standing:

- Lean forward onto a wall or
- Lean backwards onto a wall dropping shoulders forwards.

Lying

- Lie on your side in bed propped up with pillows. Place one pillow under your top leg and one under your upper arm.

Supported cough to minimise pain

It is important to clear any phlegm you have to reduce the chance of a chest infection.

- Sit upright
- Loosen any phlegm by doing breathing exercises.
- Hug a pillow or pull a towel tightly around your chest and then try to cough.
- If you find it difficult to cough, try again after having a hot drink.

Forced explanation technique

You must do this exercise regularly, every hour to keep your lungs and airways clean or you may develop a chest infection.

1. Deep breaths - Take 3 long, slow, deep breaths in through your nose, hold at the top of your breath and then gently release the breath.

2. Breathe in a controlled way - Breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth. When you feel settled repeat the deep breaths followed by the controlled breathing.

Repeat **a** and **b** twice



3. Huff - In a sitting or lying position take a small breath in then force the air out through your mouth. Your mouth remains open so there is hardly any noise and then push the air out. (The huff is similar to misting glasses to clean them).

Then use your relaxed breathing to settle. Repeat this phase once more.

Arm exercises to prevent your shoulder stiffening up

Lift your arm up right above your head so that the fingers point to the ceiling.

Repeat this 5 times every hour with each arm. If you develop increasingly breathlessness or become generally unwell, see your GP, Minor Injuries Unit or ring 111.

Contact us [if not included elsewhere]

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