



Information for
patients and
carers

Breath Stacking

What is breath stacking?

Breath stacking is an exercise used to improve the volume of air that you can breathe in. This is useful when the muscles are weak, and you may struggle to take a full breath. It can be used to help improve your cough strength and may even improve your voice quality.

If it is done as part of a daily programme, breath stacking will not only make you feel better but can help prevent chest infections. When breath stacking is used it can help your breathing muscles feel they have had a full stretch. It allows air to get to every corner of your lungs which can help you feel like you are breathing better.

Breath stacking can be done by delivering several (usually 3 or 4) in breaths which are “stacked” on top of one another or one single big breath in followed by a full breath out. It is done either voluntarily (i.e., with no equipment) or with the help of a modified ambu bag (the breath stacking bag).

When to do it?

It is recommended that you do some breath stacking every single day. You can do it between 1 – 4 times a day, but you may choose to do it more often if you find it beneficial. You need at least 10 minutes between each session to avoid hyperventilation (breathing rapidly).

When not to do it?

You should not do the exercises within one hour of food / drink. If you are fed through a tube directly into your stomach or nose, you should stop the feed one hour before doing the exercises. You should not do your exercises if you feel any acute chest pain or see any blood in your phlegm. If this occurs, please seek medical attention. Do not use the lung volume recruitment bag if you are allergic to latex, have had a pneumothorax (hole in lung) or severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Are there any risks?

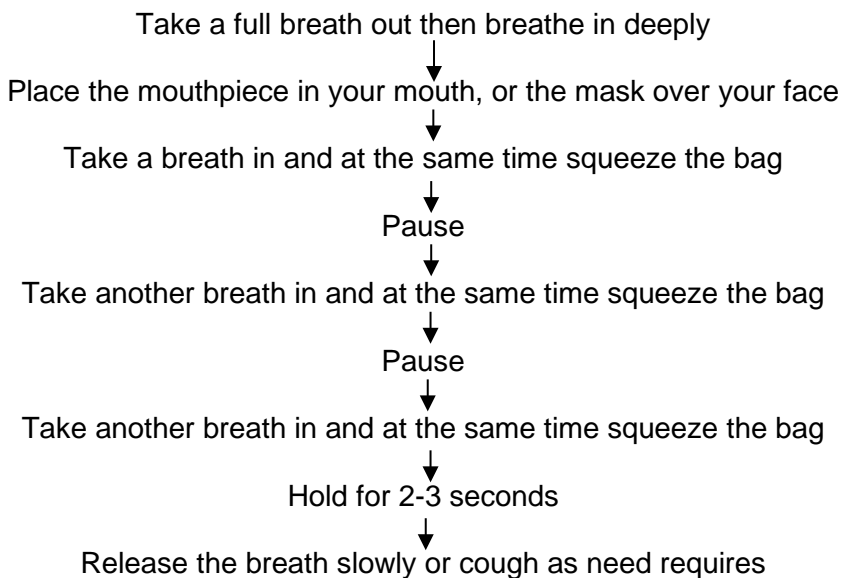
There are very few risks with the breath stacking technique. Lung volume recruitment bags can cause a pneumothorax if used incorrectly or against medical advice, so it is very important that you closely follow the advice of the physiotherapist.

How to use a breath stack

It is best to do these exercises in a relaxed upright position where possible.

If someone is helping you with the exercises (using the bag for you) then you need to establish a way of communicating the event of wanting to stop the procedure.

The following steps are an example of how to do the exercise, but be aware that your physio may alter this to suit your individual needs:



You may feel that by the last full breath, there are some secretions to cough up so instead of letting go of the full breath slowly, try and force the air out and generate a strong cough. If you have a suction unit at home, it is useful to have it to hand to remove any secretions that come into your mouth.

If you are unable to breath stack (i.e., have difficulty holding your breath) then just aim to do one big breath in, whilst squeezing the bag to reach the deepest breath you can manage.

The mask and mouthpiece can be washed in hot water after each session and the filter should be changed monthly or sooner if visibly soiled. Always use as recommended by your physio and only the people who have been shown should use the circuit.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

MND Team: 01772 522545 / MNDteam@lthtr.nhs.uk

Long-term Ventilation Team: 01772 522340 / ccventilation@lthtr.nhs.uk

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.mndassociation.org

Lancashire Teaching hospitals Trust video instructions on how to breath stack can be found here (Link & QR code):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_HJsAiPjtK



All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો ફૂલકરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਯਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لئے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ے مہر یبان پو ےی چھدی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأ ح ر ف ك ب س ر ة و بلغات إذا كنت تر يد مسا عدة في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُر جى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما ت

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