

# Your home exercise plan

Information and advice for patients

## *Community Respiratory Services*

A home exercise plan is designed for people who are unable to attend pulmonary rehabilitation classes in a community setting. This may be for a number of reasons such as travelling difficulties, personal circumstances, or individuals who are unsuitable for group work. The aim of the programme is to help you increase your fitness levels in order to improve your quality of life.

### **What are the benefits of these exercises?**

These exercises can:

- Help to strengthen your heart so it does not have to work as hard
- Use more of your lungs and reduce how often you have to breathe thus reducing stress on your heart
- As you get fitter you produce more red blood cells to take oxygen around your body
- Increase your ability to do activities that are important to you
- Boost your self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy
- Improve your circulation
- Strengthen your muscles and bones and keep your joints healthy
- Improve your balance, thus preventing falls

The benefits of the exercises will depend on how much effort you put in. The exercises need to be performed correctly and on a regular basis.

### **Are there any risks to doing the exercises?**

There are no risks to the exercises as long as they are performed correctly. If the exercises cause you pain or if you feel faint/dizzy, stop immediately and call the Community Respiratory Service on 0121 507 2664.

### **Are there any alternatives to doing the exercises?**

There are no alternatives to doing the exercises that will give you the same benefits; however the exercises can be modified to suit your needs and abilities. Your Community Respiratory Team will be able to advise you about this.

### **How often should the exercises be performed?**

We recommend you perform these exercises 3-4 times per week. You will be advised how long you need to do the exercises for and how many repetitions of each one you should do, by your community respiratory team, as this will be based on what you achieve on your initial assessment session.

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We will work with you to build towards the NHS recommendation for aerobic exercise (heart and lungs) OF 30 minutes 5 times a week, combined with strengthening exercises, to achieve the best health benefits.

Your progress will be checked by your community respiratory team every week until you feel confident enough to continue by yourself.

### **Before you exercise**

Here are a few Do's and Don'ts to bear in mind before exercising:

- **Do** wear loose clothing and flat, non slip shoes
- **Do** eat something small 1-2 hours before exercising. Leave at least an hour before you start
- **Do** keep hydrated before, during and after exercise
- **Don't** exercise if you feel unwell
- **Don't** continue if you do not understand the exercise session
- **Don't** rush – pace yourself – use breathing control
- **Don't** continue if you are in pain

### **Warm up before exercise**

It is important to warm up before doing any exercise to prevent injuries to your muscles and joints. Before exercising make sure you follow this warm up plan:

**Cardiovascular warm up:** \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| • Tilt your head up to the ceiling, then back to your natural position | x5 |
| • Tilt your head down to the floor, then back to your natural position | x5 |
| • Look over your right shoulder, then back to your natural position    | x5 |
| • Look over your left shoulder, then back to your natural position     | x5 |
| • Bring your right ear to your shoulder                                | x5 |
| • Bring your left ear to your shoulder                                 | x5 |
| • Roll your shoulders forwards   | x5 |
| • Roll your shoulder backwards   | x5 |
| • Side bends* – left   | x5 |
| • Side bends* – right  | x5 |
| • Heel to toe** – left   | x5 |
| • Heel to toe** – right  | x5 |

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### **\*Side bends**

To perform a side bend:

- Start in a standing position, facing forwards, with your arms by your sides
- Bend your upper body to one side whilst sliding your hand down towards your outer knee.
- Do this until you feel a gentle stretch on the opposite side of your waist or as far as is comfortable.

### **\*\*Heel to toe**

To perform a heel to toe bend:

- Stand facing forwards, holding onto something sturdy for support if necessary
- Stretch one leg out in front of you, keeping it straight and with your heel on the floor and the toes pointing upwards
- Extend (stretch) your leg out until your toes are touching the floor
- Alternate heels and toes touching the floor for 5 times
- You will feel a gentle stretch in your calf muscles

## **What to do when you feel short of breath**

Shortness of breath is normal during exercise. However if you become too breathless to continue, adopt a position of rest until normal breathing is resumed. Use your inhaled medication if needed.

## **Positions of rest to use when you're breathless**

- Sit upright with your arms supported on your lap or on the arms of a chair
- Lean forwards from the waist with your arms on a pillow, a table or your thighs
- Stand and lean on a window sill or other stable surface
- Stand with your back against a wall
- Stand and lean sideways against a wall with your hands in your pockets



## **Breathing techniques for exercise**

It will be helpful to use the following breathing techniques whilst exercising to prevent you getting short of breath, reduce stress on your heart and thus enabling you to do more.

These techniques can be used on their own or together:

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### **Slow, controlled deep breathing**

Slow down your breathing, breathe more deeply, breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth.

### **Paced breathing**

This is useful when climbing the stairs or walking. Breathe in and out in time with the steps you take. Do this in a rhythm that suits you and how breathless you are.

When climbing the stairs:

- Breathe in when on the step, and breathe out as you go up a step (blow as you go!), or
- Breathe in for 1 step and out for 1 step
- Breathe in for 1 step and out for 2
- Breathe in for 2 steps and out for 3
- When you are walking:
- Breathe in for 1 step and out for 2
- Breathe in for 1 step and out for 3
- Breathe out when you're making a big effort (blow as you go!) e.g.
  - Stretching your arms above your head
  - Reaching for something on a shelf
  - Bending down
  - Going up a step
  - Standing up
  - During the hardest part of any action like lifting, moving a weight, during the hard part of a resistance exercise

### **Pursed lip breathing**

Breathe out with your lips pursed, as if you're whistling or going to kiss someone. This slows your breathing down and helps to make your easier. Take longer to breathe out than you do to breathe in. Do not force your lungs to empty.

**Practice breathing control during the exercise. Breathe OUT through your mouth on the exertion part and breathe IN through the nose on the resting part of the exercise**

- "Blow as you go"

### **Walking**

Aim to walk for set periods of time as often as you can, say 5 -10 minutes at a steady pace without stopping. Aim to feel between 3 and 5 on the breathless (borg) scale as you walk. You should try to walk as often as you can, preferably every day.

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### Here is your walking plan

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### Exercises

Please refer to your separate exercise sheet for your exercises. Please record each exercise session on your exercise recording sheet.

### Cool Down

After exercising it is important for you to cool down. Here is your cool down plan:

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### How hard are you working?

You will be aiming for scores of 3 – 5 on the BORG scale. BORG is the scale used to measure your Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) i.e how breathless you are feeling.

### The BORG scale

Score	How breathless you are feeling
0	Not at all, no problem
0.5	Very, very light, very, very easy
1	Very light, very easy
2	Easy
3	Starting to feel a bit puffed
4	Fairly hard, feeling a bit puffed
5	Hard, feeling puffed
6	Very hard, very tiring
7	Very, very hard, very tiring
8	Exhausted, out of breath
9	Maximum exhausted

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You should record your BORG scores on the recording sheet below each time you perform your exercises. If you record scores of 2 or below you are not working hard enough and your exercises will need to be increased. If you record scores of 6 or above you are working too hard and your exercises will need to be decreased.

As you get fitter and your BORG scores decrease, your exercises will be increased in order for you to achieve 3 – 5 on the BORG scale.

### Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

#### Community Respiratory Service

Monday - Friday

8am - 6pm: 0121 507 2664 Option 4

Monday - Friday 6pm-8pm, and Saturday, Sunday, bank holidays

8.30 - 4.30pm: 07866 360145

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5303 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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