

# Tips to help your recovery from illness

## Breathlessness and Coughing page 1 of 3

Breathlessness is a natural response to exercise or strenuous activities like walking up a hill. Research has shown that **following an illness, such as COVID-19, it is very common to be short of breath whilst doing 'normal activities'**, (things like getting dressed or walking down stairs.)

There are a few factors that could explain persistent breathlessness such as increased stress, infection, or reduced activity levels. This alongside allergies or other infections can produce a cough.

Feeling short of breath can be worrying and stressful. Remember, there are simple tips that could help you on the following page.

**Some people find that by slowly returning to their usual activities their breathlessness starts to decrease and this is because the more they do the easier the activities become.** With time recovery is possible and symptoms should start to disappear.

09.04.2021



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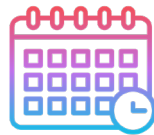


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### Coughing

**In some cases a cough can continue after illness.** Many of us had a persistent cough during COVID-19. In some cases this cough remains.



The main thing to remember; **it may take time for your symptoms to disappear.**

If you have a productive cough, **keeping your chest clear is important** as it reduces the chance of getting a chest infection. This can be achieved by taking prescribed medication regularly and keeping active.

Additionally, the **‘active cycle of breathing’** technique can help keep your chest clear. [Click here for more information](#)



**Keeping hydrated** can help reduce your cough symptoms and soothe your throat. Try a sip of water when you feel a cough coming on.

### Breathlessness

**Breathlessness** can have a big impact on your life and can be very worrying. It is important to try not to panic. Anxiety or fear can increase how breathless you feel.

As we get more anxious, we may become aware of our breathing, breathe faster and tense our breathing muscles. Learning to stay calm when we are breathless can help us feel in control. To help control your breathing you can try a few simple steps which help you become more aware of your breathing. [Click here for breathing control steps from the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Respiratory Care](#)



**Changing positions** can also help reduce your cough and help with breathlessness. Rather than laying on your back, try laying on your side or sitting up.

[For more information click here](#)



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### Becoming more active

**Your breathlessness should improve as you slowly increase your activities and exercise.** It is important to become active again when you are recovering, but this can be hard if you feel very tired, breathless, and weak, which is normal after being unwell.

It is important to pace ourselves in order to maintain an even level of activity throughout the day instead of doing as much as possible in the morning and then resting all afternoon.

[For more information on energy conservation click here](#)

If you are struggling to plan your activities, you can use the following activity planner to help you:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/media/1265833>



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