

Techniques and exercises to Optimise Respiratory Health in Multiple Sclerosis.

People with progressive neurological conditions like Multiple Sclerosis may develop weakness of their breathing (respiratory) muscles which affects how well the respiratory system works. In Multiple Sclerosis you may often be unaware that your respiratory system is getting weaker, it is recognised that if you are using a wheelchair permanently or you are sitting for a lot of the day your respiratory system may be silently getting weaker due to disuse. This may be because you may not have as much opportunity to exercise your lungs. Our lungs need to stretch to stay healthy on the inside and the muscles for breathing require regular exercise to stay strong. So to stay healthy like any other part of your body exercise is the key. It is much better to prevent a problem developing like a cold turning into a chest infection. However if this has already happened to you don't worry, these exercises will help you recover. You may have noticed that sometimes your voice has become weaker /quieter and these exercises may help prevent these or improve the projection / loudness of your voice. However if you have lots of concerns with your voice your physiotherapist may have or be able to refer you to a speech and language therapist for assessment and advice.

This leaflet has been designed to explain the benefits of the treatment activity you have been taught, and act as a reminder of the technique and who to contact if you have any questions

Introduction

You have recently been seen by the Physiotherapist and taught techniques to help you maintain your respiratory health. This leaflet is designed to remind you of the correct techniques and any personalised advice given during the session.

Breath Stacking:

What is breath stacking?

Breath stacking is a breathing exercise to help improve and maintain the size of the breath you are able to take and can be used regularly to help you clear mucus from your chest (secretion clearance) . It can also be used to help improve the strength of your cough and voice.

Benefits:

- Improves depth of breathing
- Aids secretion clearance
- Helps keep the rib cage flexible
- Stretches respiratory / breathing muscles
- Improves cough strength and effectiveness
- Improves voice
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Technique:

- Sit upright in a comfortable position
- Take a deep breath in and hold it
- Try to take another deep breath on top of the previous breath
- Aim to take another 1 -3 breaths in the same way (3-5 in total)
- Breathe out or cough
- Repeat this process 3 to 5 x

How often should I do it?

2 to 3 x a day but can be completed more often if needed

When should I not use it?

Within an hour of eating, drinking or PEG, RIG feeding

If you have chest pain or blood in your Phlegm

Singing and using a Kazoo:

Benefits:

- Improves depth of breathing
- Stretches muscles for respiration / breathing
- Stimulates and strengthens the muscles associated with breathing and talking
- Improves co ordination of breathing and talking
- If you join a choir it can be social
- It can improve articulation and pitch control, stop your voice going squeaky high for example
- Improves your mood

Technique: Singing

Sing along to your favourite song especially if it has an anthem

There are lots of sing along Karaoke clips on youtube, have a google and sing along if you cannot remember any words

If you have an Alexa at home, sing along with it and you can also, do quizzes on Alexa and shout out the answer.

Sing along to your favourite Football or Rugby Anthem Alexa's can help you with this too.

Technique Kazoo:

Your therapist will have shown you how to hum down a kazoo. Remember you are humming into the wider end of the kazoo. It is recommended to try humming a song like Over The Rainbow or the Dam Busters, or Happy Birthday, but start with a tune you know.

How often Should I sing or use the Kazoo?

2 to 3 x a day but can be completed more often if needed

When Should I not do it?

Within an hour of eating, drinking or PEG, RIG feeding

If you have chest pain or blood in your Phlegm

Reference section:

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