

Active Cycle Breathing Technique (ACBT)

ACBT will help you clear secretions (like sputum) and lower feelings of shortness of breath.

1. Relaxed breathing

Relaxed breathing is the regular breaths you take when resting.

- Place 1 hand on your stomach and let your shoulders relax.
- Breathe quietly and gently. As you breathe in, your stomach should rise slightly. It should fall as you breathe out. **Do not** force the air out.

Repeat until your breathing feels relaxed and under control.

2. Deep breathing

Deep breathing helps air move from behind the sputum that is stuck in your airways.

- Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, keeping your shoulders relaxed.
- Hold your breath for 2 to 3 seconds.
- Breathe out gently through pursed lips (like you are trying to whistle) until your lungs are empty. **Do not** force the air out.
- If you feel lightheaded at any time, go back to step 1 before moving on.

3. Huff

Huffing moves sputum from the small airways to the larger airways, where it can be removed by coughing. Coughing by itself does not remove sputum from the small airways.

- Take a deep breath in.
- Breathe out forcefully by squeezing your stomach muscles while keeping your mouth and throat open (like you are trying to fog up a window).

There are 4 steps in ACBT:

1. Relaxed breathing
2. Deep breathing
3. Huff
4. Cough

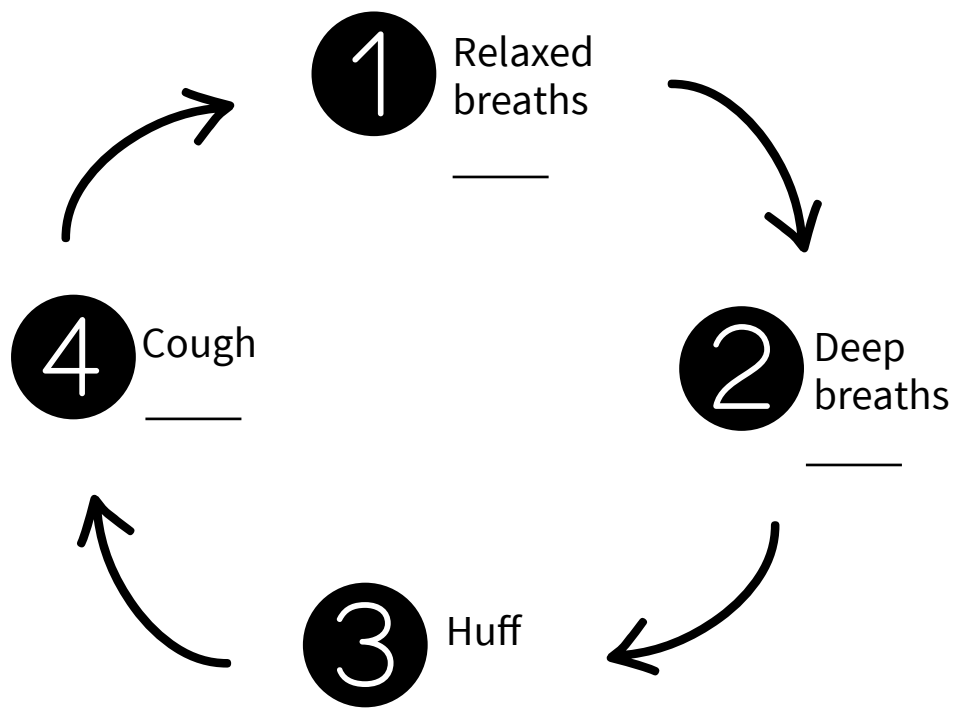
4. Cough

Coughing helps to clear sputum.

- Take a deep breath in, then cough.

Do the ACBT steps up to _____ cycles, _____ times a day.

Repeat steps for up to _____ cycles.



This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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