

PHYSIOTHERAPY AND THORACIC SURGERY

PRE-ADMISSION CLINIC INFORMATION



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Role of the Physiotherapist after Thoracic Surgery

Physiotherapy is necessary to prevent any post-operative lung complications such as lung collapse and infection, to maximise your lung function as soon as possible after your surgery and to give you advice regarding exercise to help you obtain your pre surgery functional levels.

Your physiotherapist will explain the normal routine after thoracic surgery as you progress from the high dependency unit to the ward.

On the first day after your surgery your physiotherapist will instruct you in breathing exercises and supported coughing techniques. They will also assist you in taking short walks. This is very important to prevent any lung complications, especially if you are a smoker. Non-smokers may also develop chest problems post-operatively.

It is important to remember that your incision area cannot be damaged by any post-operative exertions such as coughing. Examples of the breathing exercises are shown below. Try to practice these prior to your admission for surgery.

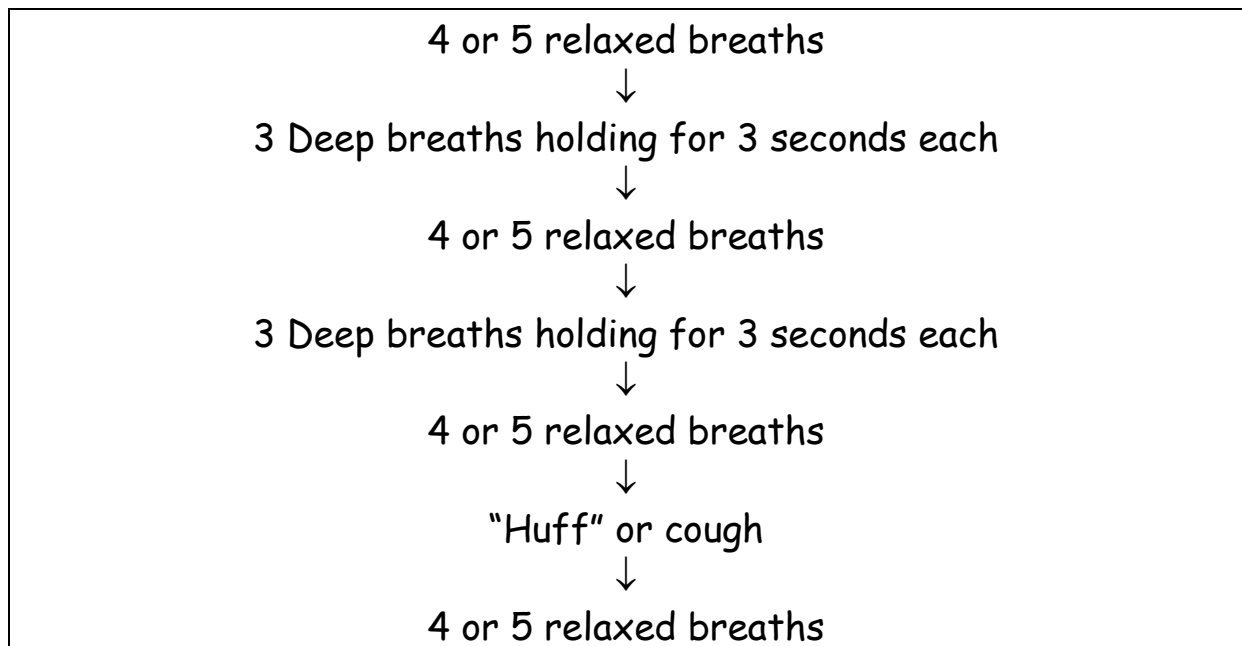
Breathing Exercises

Get yourself comfortable before you start.

For relaxed breaths, put one hand on your tummy and feel it rise up when you breathe in, and sink down when you breathe out.

A "huff" is a sharp breath out like fogging up a mirror but much stronger with your mouth in an O shape.

If you feel phlegm in the back of your throat after a huff, you may cough to clear it.



Do this until your chest clears, i.e. no phlegm for 2 huffs in a row, once per hour. If you have any questions, ask your physiotherapist.

Pain Control

After your surgery pain relieving medications will be given to you frequently. It is extremely important that after your surgery your pain is well controlled in order for you to carry out your breathing exercises and be able to walk.

If you are in pain after your surgery please let the staff know and they will address this problem. Do not wait until it gets very bad or out of control as it will inhibit your recovery.

Mobilising

- The morning after your surgery the nursing staff or the physiotherapist will help you to sit out of bed. You will begin to walk

short distances as soon as possible, with the aim of walking at least twice daily

- The distance you walk will be increased every day at a pace appropriate to your recovery.
- You may be surprised that mobilisation begins so soon after surgery but this is necessary to help your lungs return to normal function and to improve your lung function.
- If you use any mobility aid such as a walking stick prior to surgery you should bring this with you into hospital as you will require it to assist your walking after surgery.
- Before you go home you will be walking regularly on the ward by yourself. Your physiotherapist will practice the stairs with you to make sure you are comfortable using them at home.
- An exercise programme individually tailored to your needs and abilities will be discussed with you by your physiotherapist prior to your discharge home. This will help you fully recover from your surgery and return to normal activities.



On Keith Shaw ward we will be encouraging you to get out of bed, get dressed in your own clothes and get active. This is because being active will help you recover quicker and you will feel better dressed in your day clothes. Please bring loose fitting comfortable clothing e.g. a shirt, pair of shorts or tracksuit bottoms and comfortable supportive footwear e.g. trainers.

***"Pyjamas say you're unwell...
Clothes say you're getting better"***