

Managing breathlessness 4: Positions to ease breathlessness

The information given below is designed to help you manage your stable long-term breathlessness. If you feel your breathing is getting worse or you are experiencing breathlessness as a new feeling, it is important to seek medical advice.

When to use

These positions may help to ease your breathlessness at rest and after activity. The most commonly used positions are shown, however you may find other helpful positions which are not pictured. Experiment with and modify different positions until you find what works best for you.

How positioning helps to ease breathlessness

The positions in this leaflet place the arms so that the breathing accessory muscles are in a better position to help with breathing. Leaning forward may also improve the movement of your diaphragm, the main muscle of breathing. For more information on the muscles involved in breathing see 'Managing breathlessness 3: Breathing techniques'.

Resting positions

The following positions may help if you are breathless at rest, or if you are feeling very tired or exhausted.



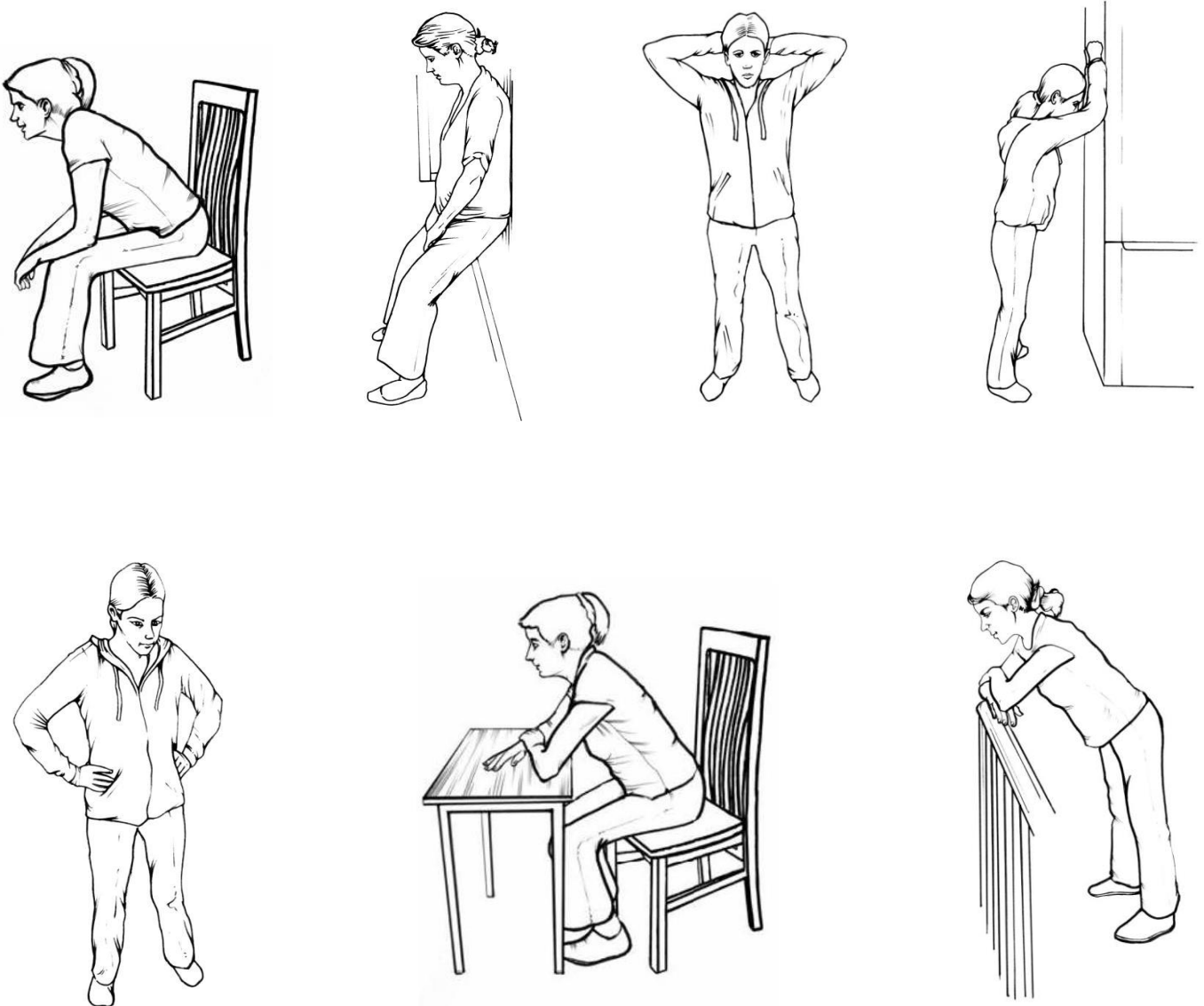
Make sure you are fully over on your side. Resting your upper arm on a pillow may also help.



Relax down onto the pillows as much as possible. Having your legs apart may also help.

Positions to ease breathlessness following activity

The following positions may help to ease breathlessness after you have been active. With all positions, try to relax the hands, wrists, shoulders, neck and jaw as much as possible. Experiment with your arm position. Does your breathing feel easier with your hands behind your head or back?

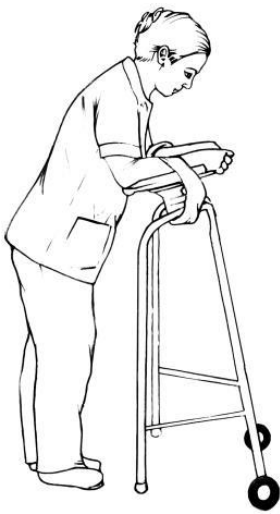


There is no one position which suits everyone, nor one position which people with a particular condition prefer. Experiment with different positions and find what works best for you.

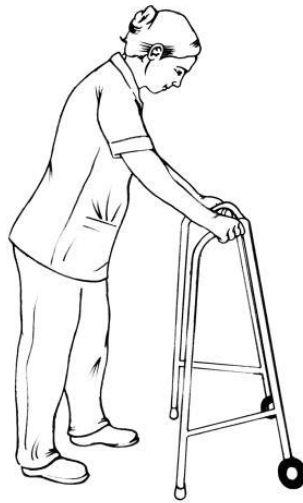
Use of walking aids

Some people may notice that they are able to walk further and feel less breathless when pushing a supermarket trolley around the shop. Pushing the trolley enables you to maintain a 'forward lean position of ease' while walking.

In a similar way, using a walking frame may enable you to walk further and feel less breathless, as well as provide a portable leaning post for when you wish to stop and rest. A walking stick can also provide a portable leaning post.



Gutter frame



Rotator frame



Walking stick

When walking outdoors, people often prefer to use a three or four wheeled walker. Some walkers have a seat so that you can sit and rest, others may have a handy storage compartment.

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Useful sources of information

Contact us

Interstitial Lung Disease Service

t: 020 7188 8635 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

e: gst-tr.khpildservice@nhs.net

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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A list of sources is available on request