

PATIENT INFORMATION

Breathing to Manage Anxiety



Techniques to Manage Anxiety

Hand-held fan

This technique can help to reduce the feelings of anxiety and breathlessness and give the sensation of getting more air in, thus aiding relaxation. The air produced by the fan stimulates small nerve receptors in the face which in turn stimulate the brain to slow down the rate of breathing. The fan should be held approximately 15cm (6 inches) from the face.

Breathing control (tummy breathing)

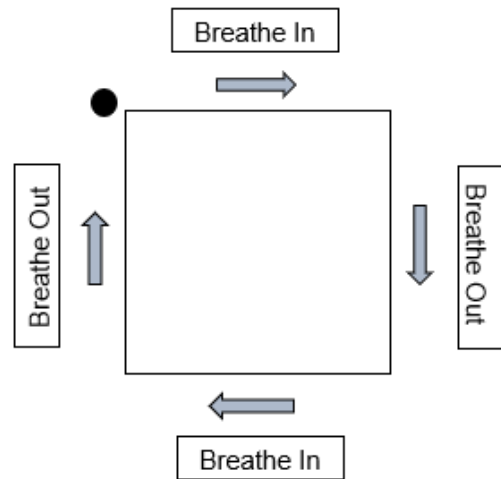
1. Find somewhere comfortable to sit.
2. Either sit in a reclined or upright position - with your back well supported.
3. Place a hand gently on your tummy just beneath your ribs - don't press too hard.
4. Try to concentrate on your tummy rising and falling as you breathe. This will be more difficult if you are anxious, but try to persevere.



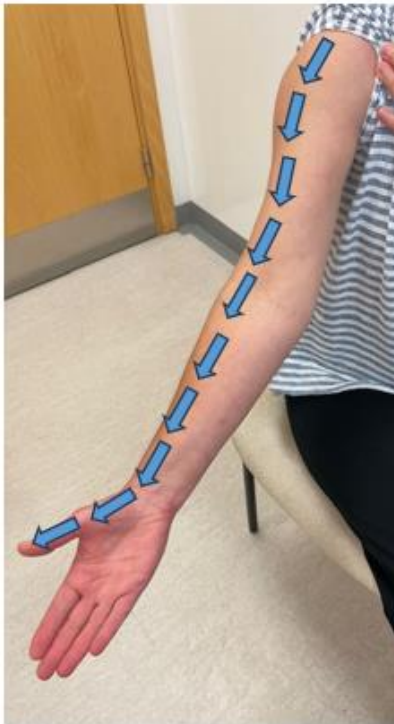
This is a good technique to help get your breathing back in a good pattern and is also a good distraction technique.

Window Breathing

- Place your finger on the 'dot' in the top left of the rectangle.
- Breathe in as you follow the line in the direction of the arrow to the next corner.
- Then breathe out along the next side.
- Continue around the rectangle following the instructions.



This breathing technique is helpful for getting your breathing into a more rhythmical pattern (breath in slightly shorter than your breath out). It is also very helpful as a distraction technique for when you have an episode of breathlessness or anxiety.



Stroking Technique

- Make sure the person is sitting in a comfortable chair with their back supported.
- Place their arm on a pillow on their lap.
- Using the palm of the hand, firmly stroke down the arm and off the thumb to help calm.
- This is often best carried out by a carer in times of anxiety.

The 'calming hand' technique

This is an easy technique and can be used at any time as we always have our hands with us.

1. Hold your thumb firmly and recognise the signs of your anxiety.
2. Hold your index finger, relax your shoulders and sigh out.
3. Hold your middle finger and take a slow deep breath in.
4. Hold your fourth finger and gently breathe out.
5. Stretch your hand and relax.

Repeat as necessary.



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If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.