

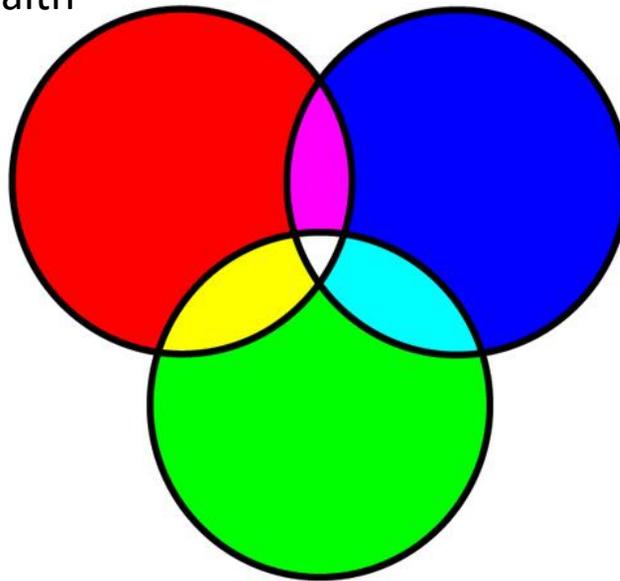


The Benefits of Exercise



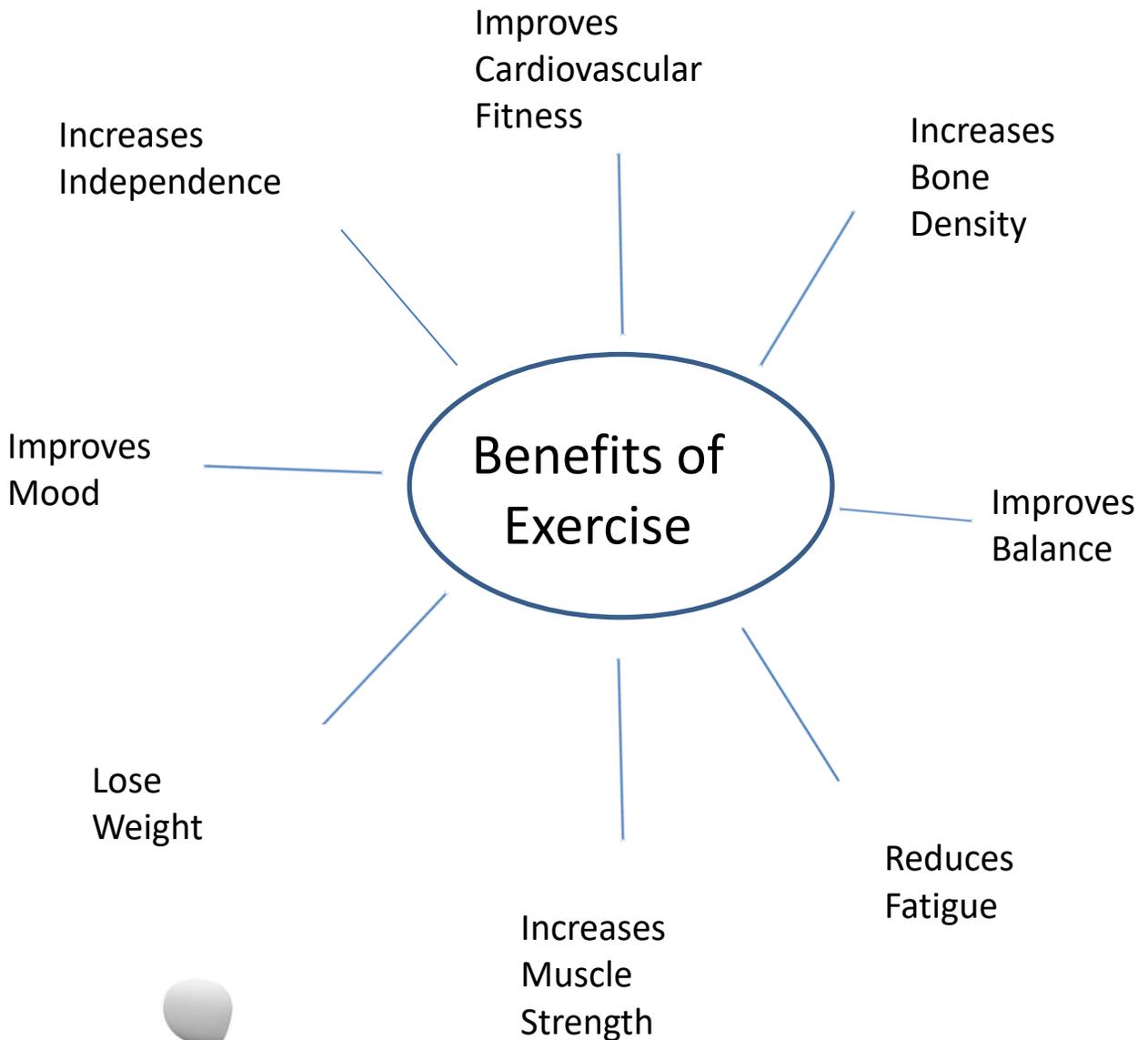
Physical Health

Mental Health



Social Health

There are many benefits to exercise, both physical and mental. The effects of exercise can help improve how you function on a day to day basis.



Normal Response to exercise

Irrespective of whether you have a health condition, there are some normal responses to exercise that all people experience. These include:

- Increased Body temperature
- Sweating
- Faster Breathing
- A faster Heart Beat
- Aching Muscles during and after



What is breathlessness?

Breathlessness is a sensation felt by an individual. It is natural to become breathless on exercise; however, it is possible to learn how to control this breathlessness and to increase your exercise tolerance.

Breathlessness has been described in many ways, “chest tightness”, “difficulty in filling the lungs”.

Learning how to control your breathing will help to reduce these feelings of breathlessness.

Breathlessness is not harmful if it is in a controlled form.

It shows the amount of fitness you have, which can improve.

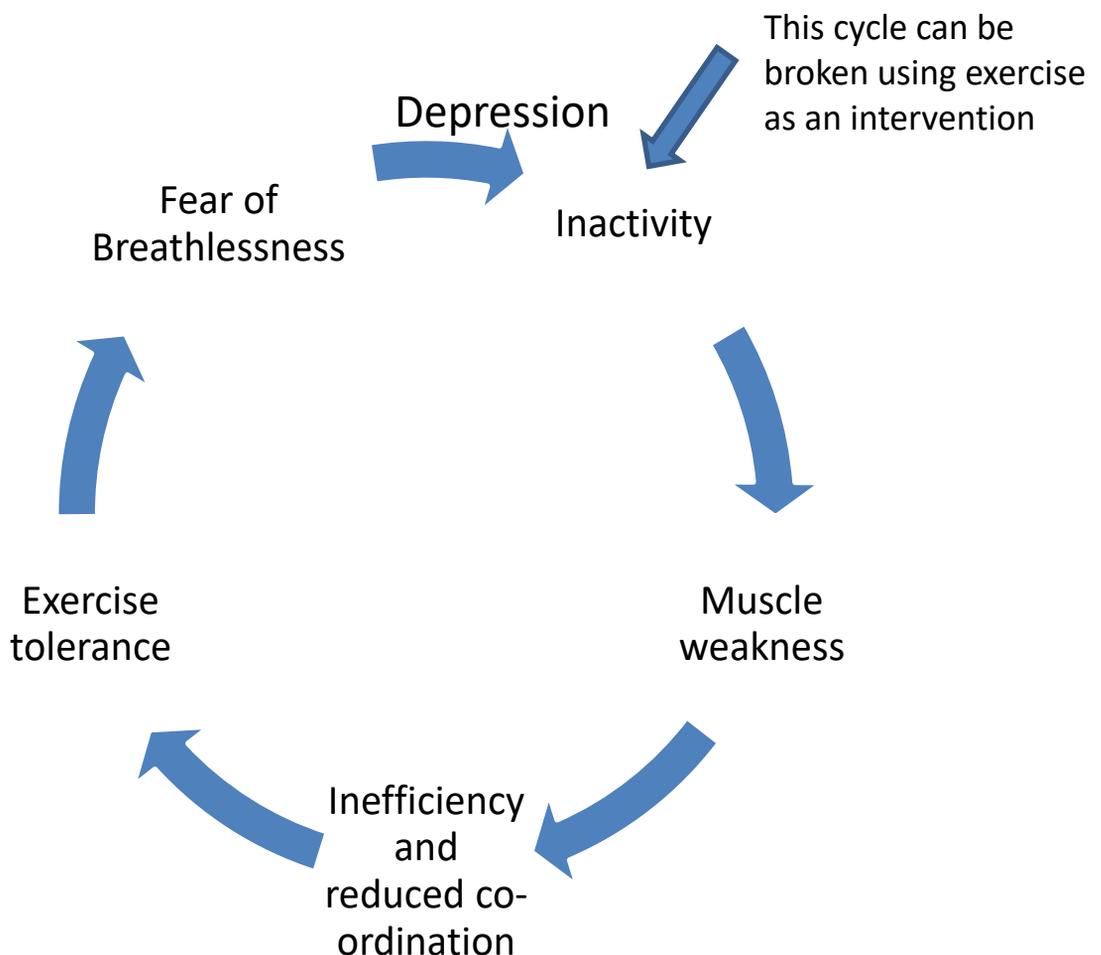


Benefits of exercise for people with breathlessness

- It can be worrying for people who experience breathlessness to consider exercising.
- Breathlessness is unique to individuals and what may feel like breathless to one person may be different to another.
- Breathlessness is the main limiting factor to exercise.
- However, people who have a lung condition, which results in breathlessness, **can** benefit from exercise:
 - It provides the wide range of benefits highlighted earlier including physical, mental and social.
 - It improves your exercise capacity (ability).
 - It can make everyday activities easier.

Cycle that can increase breathlessness in COPD

- A diagnosis of COPD/lung conditions can result in someone reducing their activity.
- You will see from the cycle below that this can lead to muscle weakness due to lack of use.
- This then results in the body being less efficient and coordinated with movements and in turn can reduce exercise tolerance = more breathlessness.
- This can then result in a fear of exercise due to breathlessness and potentially depression.



How to control and monitor your breathlessness during exercise?

- The BORG Breathless scale is a scale that asks you to rate the difficulty of your breathing.
- It starts at number 0 where your breathing is causing you no difficulty at all and progresses through to number 10 where your breathing difficulty is maximal.
- During exercise you should try to work at number **3-4**. This is where you are feeling moderately breathless on exercise.
- **Stop** exercising if you experience chest pain or symptoms of angina, if you **are too** breathless to continue, experience increased wheeze or any other symptoms; such as calf pain, dizziness or nausea.
- There are a range of exercises to follow each week. It is advisable to work to a moderate level to see improvement.
- Between exercises you should rest until you rate yourself at BORG Level 3, before moving onto next exercise
- If breathing settles within 3-4 minutes the level was just right.
- **This scale is available within the useful resource section**

How Do I Deal with Excessive Breathlessness?

Breathing control can help with breathlessness.

What is Breathing Control?

Breathing control is gentle breathing using the lower part of your chest with the upper chest and shoulders relaxed. This has the effect of:-

- Making breathing easier, allowing energy to be used more effectively.
- Relieving breathlessness.
- Encouraging your breathing pattern to be more normal.
- Improving ventilation of the lower part of the lungs.

How to do Breathing Control?

- Settle yourself in a relaxed position, sitting is good.
- Make sure your back is supported.
- Rest your hand on your lower rib cage/upper abdomen.
- Keep your upper chest and shoulder relaxed.
- Feel the gentle rising and falling under your hand as you breathe in and out.
- Concentrate on the lower part of your chest moving rather than the upper part.

With practice, breathing control will become easier, you will then be able to practice it whilst standing, progressing on to using it to regain your breath following exertion, or when you feel especially breathless.

When you are breathing and unable to control it using just 'breathing control' e.g. during an infection, there are several positions that can be used to ease the breathlessness. Each position will help you to relax your shoulders and upper chest then you can use your breathing control.

Relaxation and Positioning to Control Attacks of Breathlessness

During an attack of breathlessness, control of your breathing can be of great benefit.

Aim for smooth rhythmical and slow breathing practise breathing in this way every day in a comfortable position.

Firstly, get into a relaxed position.

You may find the exercises difficult. Persevere.

It is very important to relax your shoulders and upper chest. If you feel you cannot gain control over your breathing, in an emergency cup your hands over your mouth and nose.

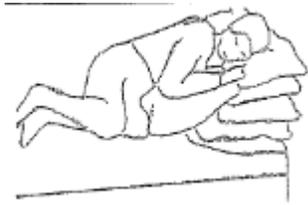
Taking time to relax can be a very effective way to gain control of your breathing.

Maintaining a good posture is essential to a good breathing pattern.

Some complementary techniques can be useful – such as aromatherapy, acupuncture, reflexology and massage.

Yoga, Pilates and tai chi are all good at encouraging a good posture.

The following positions are very helpful with breathlessness



High side lying

Lie on your side, rolled slightly forwards. Use another pillow to fill the gap between your waist and armpit. Top pillow should support your head and neck, your shoulders should not rest on the top pillow. Have your knees slightly bent with the top one forward.



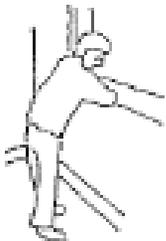
Sitting at a table

Place 1 or 2 pillows on a table, sit at the table and lean forwards at the hips to support your head and upper chest on the pillows.



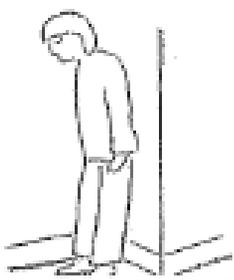
Sitting leaning forwards

Sit on a chair and lean forwards with your arms resting on your thighs and your wrists relaxed. Alternatively you may find that sitting back with your arms resting on your thighs with palms facing upwards is relaxing.



Standing leaning forwards

Stand leaning forwards with your arms resting on a ledge eg window sill, bench or banister rail.



Standing leaning backwards

Lean back against a wall with your shoulders relaxed and arms resting down by your side. Your feet should be slightly apart and about 30cm (12") from the wall.