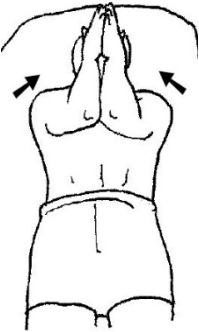
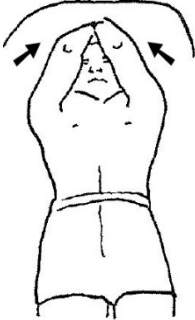

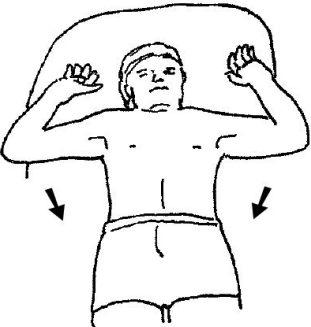
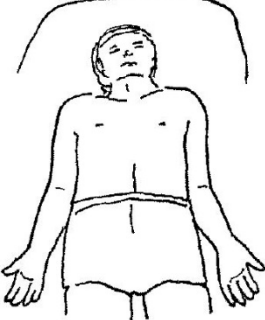

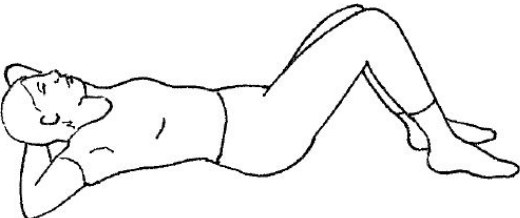



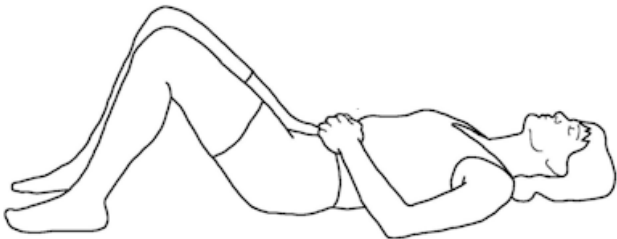


Stretches for patients with hyperventilating / dysfunctional breathing

This leaflet offers some tips to help relax a stiff thoracic spine due to hyperventilation / dysfunctional breathing. These positions / exercises aim help you to open up your thorax (chest) and keep your shoulders relaxed and dropped, in order to aid your breathing. If there is anything you do not understand speak to your physiotherapist, who can explain things for you.

Middle trapezius stretch exercise

<p>Lying down, place your forearms together in a 'prayer' position above your face.</p>	<p>With your arms in the same position, move your elbows above your head.</p>	<p>Extend your arms up so they are stretched out fully.</p>
		
<p>Slide arms to the sides.</p>	<p>Finally straighten your elbows and relax your arms. Your chest should feel wide and 'open'. Repeat up to 10 times.</p>	
		
<p>Arms behind your head Lying or sitting, place your hands behind your head to open up your chest area. Hold for 30 secs, repeat up to 3 times.</p>	 	

<p>Arms behind your back</p> <p>When standing, clasp your hands gently behind your back. This ensures your shoulders drop and opens up your chest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure both feet are in contact with the floor, from big toe to heels, including the outer edge of the foot. • Knees should be in line with feet and kept 'soft'. • Hold for 30 secs, repeat up to 3 times. 	
<p>Relaxing your spine</p> <p>Place a rolled up towel in the groove of your back (under the spine). Remove the towel and then repeat the middle trapezius stretch exercise (see page 1) 10 times.</p>	
<p>Body awareness techniques</p>	<p>Be aware of each of your limbs in turn – feel the weight of your leg from your foot up to your hip. Continue to allow the feeling to spread towards your head and let your head rest back onto the pillow.</p>
<p>Contract and relax (Laura Mitchell technique – method of physiological relaxation)</p>	<p>The idea of this technique is to contract and lengthen the muscles.</p> <p>Starting with your arms, pull your shoulder down towards your feet. Relax. Then contract and move your elbows out to the side. Relax. Stretch your fingers, thumbs and hands. Relax. Continue this idea into your legs all the way up to your head, pushing it into a supportive surface. Relax. Clench your jaw, then release.</p>

Contact numbers

Respiratory Physiotherapists: Frankie Knight, Beth Anderson, Isobel Whitfield

Tel: 0118 322 8545 / 3575 / 7560, **Email:** pulmonary.rehabilitation@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Department of Respiratory Medicine

Reviewed: March 2026. Next review due: March 2028