



Your exercise handbook

For people living with a lung condition

Sample

Contents

Why is being active important for me?	4
How active should I aim to be?	5
How will being active affect my breathing?	8
What is the right level of effort for me?	9
Breathing techniques to help me exercise	10
How do I keep active during a flare-up?	12
What if I don't feel like exercising?	13
Do I need any equipment?	14
How can I stay safe when I exercise?	15
My exercise programme	16
My goals	34
Exercise record	36
Walking record	40
Other ways to keep active	44
Help and support	46

The information in this booklet was written in consultation with leading health care professionals, people with lung conditions and the BLF. Thank you to everyone for their input.

Code: BLF-EH1 Version: 4 Last reviewed: February 2018 Due for review: February 2021

We value feedback on our information. To let us know your views, and for the most up-to-date version of this information and references, call the helpline or visit blf.org.uk

© British Lung Foundation 2018

We feature real-life stories in this booklet. Some names have been changed and some pictures are posed by models. The information in this booklet has been reviewed by independent experts. We have made every effort to ensure that the information provided is correct. The British Lung Foundation cannot accept liability for any errors or omissions, and policy, practice or medical research may change. If you are concerned about your health, you should consult a doctor, or for more information, consult the sources listed.

This resource has been developed in partnership with:



“

Eight months ago, I used to hate exercise and only joined a gym when I was diagnosed with COPD. But wow – I’m amazed at the difference in what I could do then and what I can do now, and how good I feel after exercising. Any newly diagnosed people – if you can exercise, this is a must. ”

Paul

We’ve put together this handbook to support you to get active, like Paul. It shows you different exercises, has space to record your progress and gives tips on exercising with a lung condition.

We’ve included a full range of exercises for you to choose from. At first, choose what works best for you and what you find easiest. Then try other exercises too and aim to do a bit more each week. Choose what you enjoy doing and always remember to warm up before you exercise and to cool down and stretch afterwards. If you’ve already been to pulmonary rehabilitation, you may know which exercises are best for you and using this handbook can be a good way to continue to exercise at home. We hope you’ll see an improvement from week to week.

safety
first

Before you start any exercise, including using this handbook, check with your health care professional or physiotherapist that it’s safe for you. You can also discuss with them the level of exercise that’s right for you.

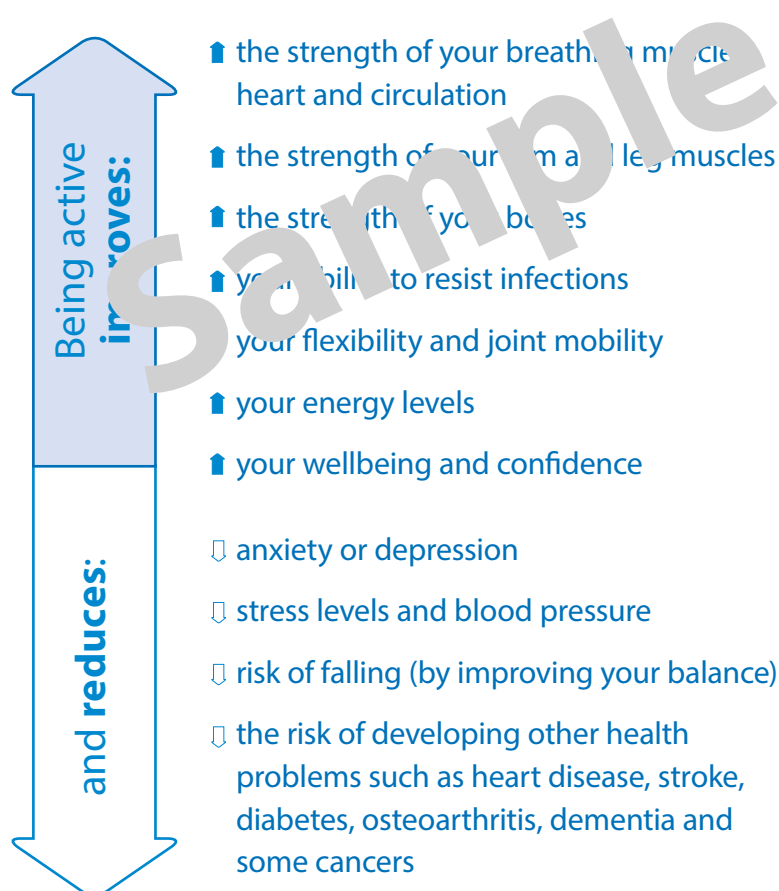
You can watch the exercise programme online at [blf.org.uk/exercise](https://www.blf.org.uk/exercise), or order a free DVD from [blf.org.uk/shop](https://www.blf.org.uk/shop) or by calling our helpline on **0300 030 555**.

Why is being active important for me?

Being active has many benefits for people with breathing problems.

You might be nervous about becoming more active and doing exercise, especially if you haven't been active for a while or if exercise is new to you. But keeping active can help improve your breathing and your quality of life. You might even be able to rediscover activities that you thought you could no longer do.

Being active improves your fitness, makes you stronger and helps you manage health conditions and stay out of hospital. Physical activity helps you take back control, be more independent and can help you live well for longer.



“ I feel better in my body and mind... Exercise has saved my life! ”

Roy

How active should I aim to be?

What you should aim for is shown on pages 6 and 7 overleaf. If you're not very active at the moment, this might seem overwhelming. But think about how you could do a little every day. Even 10 minutes can make a difference. Over time, you'll get fitter and be able to do more. You can work towards what's recommended by doing physical activity and specific exercises. It all depends what works best for you, and what you enjoy.

Sit less

This is one of the biggest changes you can make. Try to break up long periods of sitting and increase the number of steps you take every day. Research suggests that just 1,000 more steps a day can make a difference. Track your daily steps using a smartphone or pedometer and try to gradually increase this number.

Aerobic activity

Every week, try to do a total of at least 150 minutes of activities like brisk walking, dancing, gardening, housework or the aerobic exercises in this handbook. These aerobic activities work your heart and lungs. Your body warms up, your heart beats faster and your breathing is quicker and deeper than normal. Aim to get moderately out of breath – use the talk test on page 9 to check you're working at the right level.

Strengthening activity

Aim to do activities that improve your muscle strength at least twice a week. You can fit this into your daily life, for example by carrying shopping bags. You could also do yoga or the strengthening exercises in this handbook. You can do this more often if you work on different muscles. But give each muscle group a rest day after working them.

Activity to improve balance and coordination

If you're older or at risk of falling, aim to include activity that improves your coordination and balance at least twice a week. This will help reduce your risk of falling. If you have poor balance, we've marked exercises that will help you with a star in this handbook. Activities like dance, tai chi and bowls can also help prevent falls. But if you have poor balance, talk to your health care professional about what's suitable for you.

“Tai chi is so good for people with lung conditions because it helps them with their breathing. They expand their chest and learn to use their breath efficiently. Tai chi also strengthens their joints and muscles, and improves their balance, so it helps prevent falls and improve mobility too.”

Stan from our Breathe Easy Liverpool North group

11. Hip extensions *

These are tiny movements. You should feel them in the muscles of your bottom and the back of your thigh.

Stand with one leg slightly behind you, resting the ball of your foot on the ground. Keep your knee straight.

Gently lift your right foot one inch off the ground behind you. Keep your body upright and leg straight.

Pause for a moment, then slowly lower your leg back down.

Repeat with the other leg.

Level 2 – hold the position for longer.

Level 3 – add an ankle weight.



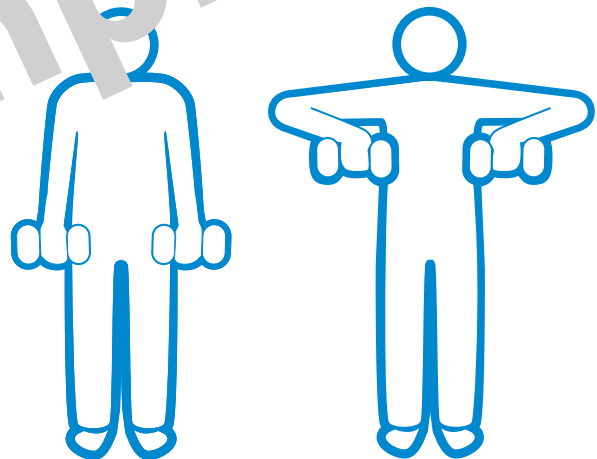
12. Upright rows

Sit or stand with your arms by your side. Hold weights in your hands, your arms down and your feet flat on the ground.

With your elbows out to the side, raise your arms up to your shoulders and lower them down again. Breathe in as you bring your arms up and breathe out as you lower them.

Level 2 – increase weight and stand.

Level 3 – increase weight again.



13. Knee extensions

Sit on a chair, feet side by side. Keeping your thighs on the chair, straighten one leg out in front of you, bending at your knee.

Lower your foot back to its starting position. Repeat up to 10 times with one leg.

Repeat with the other leg.

Level 2 – pause for three seconds when your leg is straight.

Level 3 – add an ankle weight - unless your skin is fragile or damaged.



Exercises for balance and coordination

Remember to do each exercise in sets of 10. Aim for a maximum of 3 sets.



Exercises marked with a star are also good for improving your coordination and balance.

These exercises will help your balance and coordination. They are simple, but you'll need to concentrate to do them properly. They should not feel easy.

They focus on muscles surrounding your pelvis and spine – your core. These muscles are very important. They support your back and help reduce the chances of back problems.

14. Leg slides to the side *

Face a stable surface, like a table or kitchen counter top, and stand with your feet together.

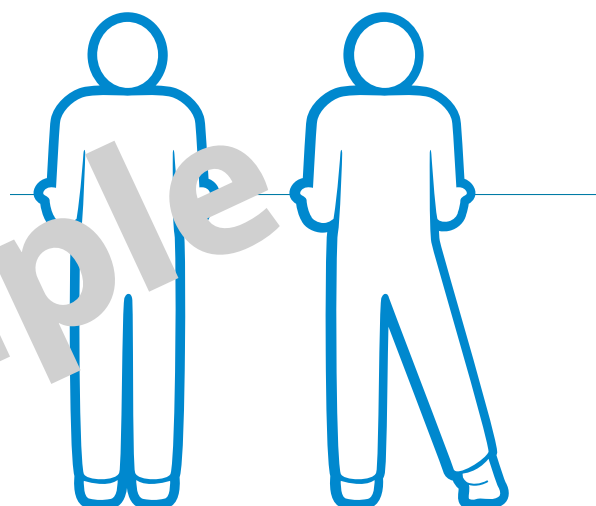
Press your hands firmly down on the surface, as if you were pushing yourself taller. Don't raise your shoulders. At the same time, slide one leg a few inches to the side. Keep your toes facing forwards.

Bring the leg back to the middle, then relax your arms.

Level 1 – do this five times on each leg.

Level 2 – do this 10 times on each leg.

Level 3 – add an ankle weight.



15. Mini knee lifts *

This exercise works your inner tummy and back muscles without you knowing it.

Sit up straight with your bottom near the front of your chair and your feet flat on the floor. You should feel your weight on the two prominent bones in your bottom – your sitting bones. Place your hands on your knees.

Now lift one foot about half an inch off the floor, then slowly place on the floor again.

Repeat using the other foot.

Level 2 – hold your arms out to the side.

Level 3 – add a small weight to your ankle.

