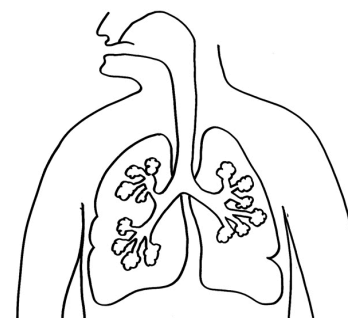


# Active cycle of breathing technique for children

**This leaflet is for the parents/carers of children who have difficulty clearing secretions (phlegm). It explains about the active cycle of breathing technique (ACBT) and how best to introduce it and use it with small children.**

## Clearing the lungs

It is easier to breathe when excess mucus has been cleared. The active cycle of breathing helps to clear mucus more easily. It is often used in children who have been diagnosed with cystic fibrosis as part of their daily routine of chest physiotherapy. However it can be used for many different conditions, including chest infections or after surgery where there is a difficulty clearing secretions from your chest.



## Active cycle of breathing technique

- Sit up nice and tall, but supported and comfy. Keep your head and shoulders relaxed.
- Relax your breathing so that it is controlled and smooth.
- Do 5-6 controlled breaths, breathing into your tummy.
- Take a big deep breath in, filling out your lungs and pushing your ribs out.
- Breathe out normally.
- Repeat your big breath 3 times.
- Now back to your relaxed controlled breathing for 5-6 breaths
- Take medium sized breath in and huff out as though you are steaming up a mirror.
- Cough if you need to.
- Repeat 2 more huffs if clear or the whole cycle until your chest is clear
- Try not to cough lots, as this will cause your chest to tighten up and will be very tiring.

## If you have any questions about the ACBT, please contact:

Physiotherapy Department  
Dingley Specialist Children's Centre  
University of Reading  
Earley Gate, Reading RG6 6BZ  
Tel: 0118 322 5248

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

RBFT Paediatric Physiotherapy, May 2022.

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