

Breathing Exercises (Respiratory Exercises)

Tip

An incentive spirometer is a hand-held breathing exercise device to help you inflate your lungs after surgery. This will help keep your lungs healthy after surgery.

You can read about an incentive spirometer in chapter 3.

Tip

Visit allinahealth.org/relax to listen to guided relaxation techniques.

You can listen to these to help you sleep, or if you are feeling pain or stressed.

Performing respiratory exercises will help you prevent respiratory system problems (complications). Deep breathing, coughing, and incentive spirometer exercises may speed your recovery and lower your risk of lung problems such as pneumonia. Learn the following exercises and practice them every day before your surgery.

Deep breathing

To deep breathe correctly, you must use your abdominal muscles, as well as your chest muscles.

- Breathe in through your nose as deeply as possible.
- Hold your breath for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Let your breath out through your mouth, slowly and completely. As you breathe with pursed lips (like blowing out a candle), your stomach should be going in. Exhale twice as long as you inhale.
- Rest and then repeat these steps with 10 repetitions.

Coughing

To help you cough:

- Take a slow deep breath. Breathe in through your nose and concentrate on fully expanding your chest.
- Breathe out through your mouth and concentrate on feeling your chest sink downward and inward.
- Take a second breath in the same manner.
- Take a third breath. This time hold your breath for a moment, then cough vigorously. As you cough, concentrate on forcing all the air out of your chest.
- Repeat this exercise two more times.