



World Health
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

SELF-REHABILITATION AFTER SEVERE COVID-19

Techniques to manage breathlessness

It is common to experience breathlessness after being in hospital. These techniques can help to manage it.

Controlled breathing helps you to relax:

- Sit comfortably.
- Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Slowly breathe in through your nose (or mouth if you are unable to do this) and then out through your mouth.
- As you breathe, you will feel the hand on your stomach rise more than the hand on your chest.
- Try to use as little effort as possible and make your breaths slow, relaxed and smooth.

Paced breathing is useful when carrying out activities that might take more effort.

- Break the activity down into smaller parts to make it easier to carry out.
- Breathe in before you make the “effort” of the activity, such as before you climb up a step.
- Breathe out while making the effort, such as climbing up a step.
- You may find it helpful to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.



Contact your health-care professional if you start to feel severely short of breath and it does not get better with these positions or techniques.