

## BREATHING EXERCISES

### Building strength for lungs

When we exercise (similarly when demand is placed upon our body when we have recovery from a major operation) our heart and lungs work harder to supply the additional oxygen our muscles and tissues demand. All aerobic and resistance exercises should help our heart and lungs become more efficient at delivering the oxygen our body demands, especially at times of increased stress (exercise, recovery from a major trauma or illness). Some types of exercise can also strengthen the muscles of the neck and chest, including the diaphragm (dome shaped muscle located just below your heart and lungs) and the muscles between the ribs that work together to power breathing. We breathe in and out with our diaphragm doing about 80 percent of the work to fill our lungs with a mixture of oxygen and other gases, and then to breathe out the waste gases (carbon dioxide and other gases).

### Pursed Lip Breathing

This exercise reduces the number of breaths we take and helps keep airways open longer. More air is able to flow in and out of the lungs so you can be more physically active. To practice - breathe in through your nose (e.g. count of 1 or 2) and breathe out at least twice as long (count of 2 or 4) through your mouth, with pursed lips.

### Belly Breathing

Start as you would with pursed lip breathing, by breathing in through your nose. Pay attention to how your belly fills up with air. You can put your hands lightly on your stomach if that helps. Breathe out through your mouth at least two to three times as long as you took to breathe in. Be sure to relax your neck and shoulders as you retrain your diaphragm to take on the work of helping to fill and empty your lungs.

Practice these exercises as instructed by your specialist physiologist with the frequency varying dependant on your personalised journey.