

Reducing breathlessness with neck fans

Why use a neck fan?

A fan can help manage breathlessness, as research shows that a cool breeze from a fan is effective in providing relief. Neck fans are a popular choice due to their affordability and portability (they leave your hands free to aid in positioning or push your walker). Other options, such as a handheld fan, free-standing fan, desktop fan, or the natural breeze from an open window or door, can also be helpful. Additionally, some people find that a cool, damp cloth or a light mist of water on the face provides similar relief.

How to use a fan?

Follow these three steps for immediate relief:

- 1 Position the fan:** Place the fan around your neck, adjusting each fan so that it faces towards your mouth.
- 2 Set the speed:** Press the button on the top right side of the fan to turn it on and select your desired speed.
- 3 Adjust for relief:** Position the fans so the breeze is directed towards your upper lip.

Remember to practice controlled breathing and relax your shoulders. For more information on controlled breathing techniques, consult your health professional.

Content adapted with permission from Mary Roberts, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Breathlessness Clinic, Westmead Hospital.

When to use a neck fan?

You can use your fan as often and for as long as you need. Keep it nearby at home and take it with you when you go out. It can be especially helpful when moving around your home or during activities that make you feel breathless, such as walking, climbing stairs, or going to the bathroom. You do not have to wait until you are breathless. Turning it on **BEFORE** activities can also reduce the breathlessness you feel.

Why do fans help?

It is unclear exactly why a fan can decrease breathlessness. It is likely that the fan's breeze stimulates the nerves in the face, **sending a message to your brain**, which decreases the feeling of breathlessness. The fan is also a good distraction. It can help decrease anxiety and give you a feeling of control.

Does it use standard AA batteries like the hand-held fan?

No, the neck fan is rechargeable and comes with a USB cable for charging.



Buy a fan



Lung Foundation Australia offers a range of services and resources to support people living with a lung disease.

lungfoundation.com.au/shop

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