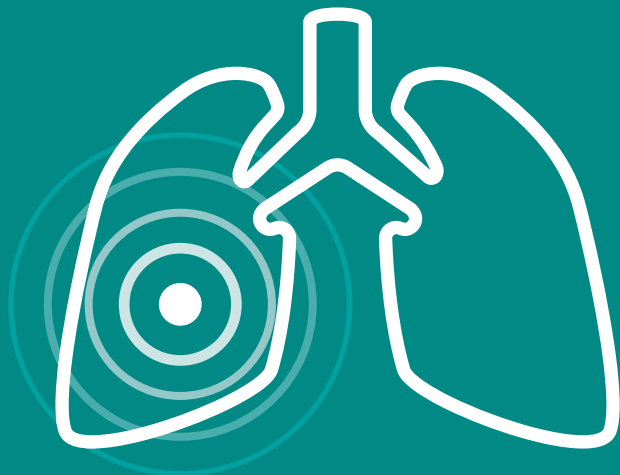


Chest  
Heart &  
Stroke  
Scotland



# PULMONARY REHABILITATION



ESSENTIAL GUIDE

# This Essential Guide is about pulmonary rehabilitation.

## It explains:

- what pulmonary rehabilitation is and if it might be right for you
- answers to some of the most common questions about pulmonary rehabilitation
- what to expect at pulmonary rehabilitation classes.

# What is pulmonary rehabilitation (PR)?

Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) is an exercise and education programme for people living with a long-term chest condition.

**PULMONARY** = your lungs

**REHABILITATION** = improve your health

PR programmes:

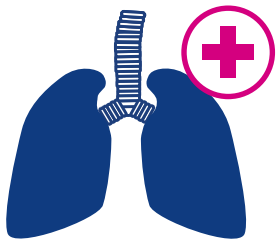
- are run by healthcare professionals
- are delivered in a group setting of around 8-16 people
- include exercises, information and support
- teach you how to better control and cope with your symptoms.

# Is PR right for me?

You may be offered PR if you have a long-term chest condition that **affects your everyday life**. For example: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis, or pulmonary fibrosis.

PR is offered to people of all ages and levels of ability.

If you have been offered a place on a PR programme, it is up to you if you accept it. You can also choose to go at a later date.



## PR is not right for everyone.

PR may not be right for you if:



you have heart problems such as unstable angina (chest pain).



you are unable to walk or do any exercise - for example, if you have bad arthritis.



you have recently had a heart attack.

# How can PR help me?

PR has lots of benefits for both your physical and mental health.

Going to PR can help you to:



Cope better with your breathlessness



Feel less breathless



Get stronger



Improve your fitness



Feel less anxious or frustrated about your condition



Exercise better



Meet other people living with breathlessness



Feel less isolated



Increase your confidence



Learn how to manage chest infections



Reduce your risk of going to hospital



Improve symptoms of depression and anxiety



Improve your overall quality of life

# What happens at PR classes?

## Exercises

At PR classes you will:

- do exercises to help improve your breathing and fitness level
- be helped to do 'endurance work' like walking or using an exercise bike, and 'strength work' like using weights to help strengthen your arms and legs
- work at your own pace and slowly increase what you do as you become fitter
- be supervised to make sure you feel safe and comfortable.



## Education

As well as exercises, PR classes will include information to help you better understand and manage your condition. Different topics will be covered. These will depend on what you would like to know more about.

Things you might talk about include:

- breathing techniques
- ways to cope with your breathlessness at home and outside
- how to manage chest infections
- advice about antibiotics.

Not all PR programmes are the same. They may be different lengths or include different exercises. However, everything you do will be adapted to make sure it is safe and right for you.

# How will I know how much I can do?

Before starting the programme, your fitness and level of ability will be assessed.

During the assessment you will be asked questions about how your breathlessness affects you. You may also be asked to do a short walking test.

The results of the assessment will then be used to decide the right level of exercise for you and what exercises are best.



# How do I join a PR programme?

To join a PR programme, you need to get referred by a health professional, such as your doctor, nurse or physiotherapist. They may refer you if there is a programme in your local area.

You can also discuss the programme with them if you have not been referred but think it might help.



# Who runs PR classes?

PR classes are run by a trained healthcare professional – usually a nurse or a physiotherapist. They will be at every class to support you.

Other healthcare professionals who may help with the classes include physiotherapists, dietitians, occupational therapists, fitness instructors and doctors.



# How long do PR classes run for?

PR classes usually run twice a week for 6-12 weeks.

Each class lasts around 1-2 hours.

You will be asked to keep doing exercises at home, in between your classes. Walking more will also be encouraged.



# Where are PR classes held?

PR classes are usually based in the community so that they are easy to get to.

Examples of places that hold PR classes include hospitals, community halls, health centres and leisure centres.

# What should I wear?



Wear loose, comfortable clothing that you can easily move around in, and flat, comfortable shoes, like trainers.

# How will I get to the classes?

If you need help to get to your PR classes, there may be different transport schemes available to you in your local area. For example: Dial a Ride, Volunteer Car Schemes or Taxi Cards.

For more information about transport help in your local area, ask about transport options at your PR assessment appointment or contact the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line nurses.

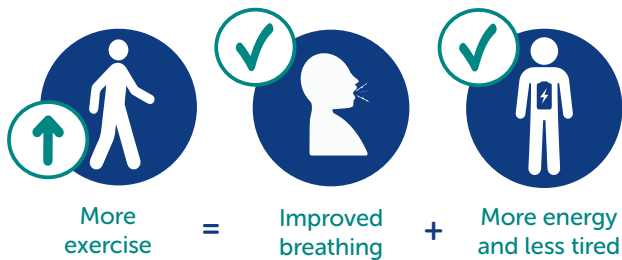




# Can I still go to PR classes if I am very breathless?

Yes! One of the main goals of PR is to help you better manage your breathlessness and not be afraid to be active because of it.

By slowly building up the amount of exercise you do, you can improve your breathing. PR can also make your heart and body stronger so you have **more energy** and feel **less tired**.



If you have a chest infection or you are on antibiotics or steroids, you may be told that it is better not to attend classes until you have recovered.

If you become unwell and you are unsure if you should attend PR classes, discuss this with your PR class coordinator.



# What happens when I finish my PR programme?

When the PR programme ends, your personal goals will be reviewed and your fitness and level of ability will be assessed again. The results of the assessment will be compared with the results from your first assessment. This will show how you have progressed over the course of the programme.

Even once your PR programme finishes, it is important to stay active and keep up with what you have learnt.

You might even choose to continue to meet up and exercise with people who attended the classes with you.

Your PR coordinator or the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line nurses can also tell you about different ways to keep active.

## These might include:

- joining a local support group
- using a smartphone app or a video class to try different activities, such as yoga or tai chi
- going swimming
- joining a walking or singing group
- joining follow-up classes at your local gym or leisure centre with other people living with a long-term health condition.



Our publications are available for free to anyone in Scotland who needs them. Go to [www.chss.org.uk/resources-hub](http://www.chss.org.uk/resources-hub) for all our resources, including other Essential Guides in this series.

For free, confidential advice and support from our **Advice Line nurses**, call: 0808 801 0899 (Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm), text: NURSE to 66777 or email: [advice@chss.org.uk](mailto:advice@chss.org.uk).

Across Scotland, over one million people – that's one in five of us – are living with the effects of a chest, heart or stroke condition. We are here to help everyone who needs us. But we need your support to do this. Go to [www.chss.org.uk/supportus](http://www.chss.org.uk/supportus) to find out how you can help more people in Scotland.

**If you would like this resource in an alternative format, please contact our Advice Line nurses.**

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Heart &  
Stroke  
Scotland**



**NO LIFE HALF LIVED**

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