



Sultanate of Oman - Ministry of Health  
General Directorate of Primary Health Care  
Department of health education and awareness programs  
Royal Hospital

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# SELF REHABILITATION FOR COVID-19 RELATED ILLNESS

The Covid-19 virus is one of the corona viruses that infect the respiratory system and cause diseases ranging from common cold to acute respiratory syndrome, and respiratory symptoms of Covid-19 disease.

### **What are The Symptoms of COVID-19?**

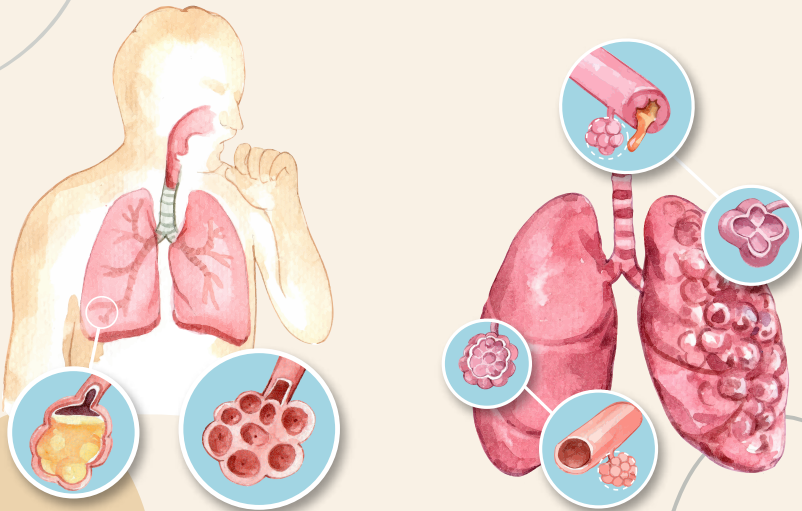
- Fever  $\geq 37.5^{\circ}$
- Fatigue (Tiredness)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Running nose
- Diarrhea (Loose Motion)
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Body ache
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of smell and loss of taste



**The patient does not necessarily have all of the above symptoms**

## How COVID-19 Affect the lungs :

Corona virus causes inflammation within the lungs resulting in fibrosis (During the positive stage of covid-19 and it might extend even post de-isolation). This fibrosis makes it difficult for oxygen to move easily from the lungs into the blood.



## **Managing difficulty in breathing:**

- It is common to feel difficulty in breathing while suffering from COVID-19 .
- Feeling difficulty in breathing can make you feel anxious which can make it worse,try to stay calm and manage your difficulty in breathing with the positions and techniques shown in the pictures.
- Your difficulty in breathing should improve as you slowly increase your activities.

**The following are some of the positions to relieve difficulty in breathing:**



**if difficulty in breathing is not easing please go to health center as it might be an indicator that you need oxygen support.**

While lying down, most of the lung segments are on the posterior aspect hence studies have shown that by lying on your stomach it improves oxygenation, try:

- To sleep on your stomach for **10** mins and slowly progress on it such that you can at least sleep **2-3** hours on your stomach.
- If you cannot lie on your stomach you can sleep on your side and turn over a pillow .
- It is better to change your position frequently to prevent any complications.

**The following images show the positions that help better oxygen exchange in the lungs:**

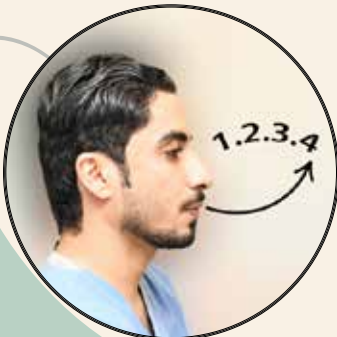


## **Breathing exercises :**

These exercises are good for patients who can control their breath.

### **Apical breathing :**

- Sit in a comfortable chair with back supported
- Breathe in through your nose or your mouth in such a way that your chest moves out while breathing in and place your hands on the upper chest to feel the movement of the chest.
- Purse your lips while breathing out. Try to use as little effort as possible and make your breath slow and relaxed



## Diaphragmatic breathing exercise :

The diaphragm is the main muscle of respiration so the diaphragmatic breathing should be encouraged for covid-19 patients to avoid exhaustion of accessory muscles of respiration.

- To do this exercise lie down on a supported surface bend both your knees.
- Breathe in through your nose/mouth such that the upper part of the abdomen swells out.



- Then purse your lips while breathing out and notice your upper part of the abdomen returns back to normal.



**Being affected by covid -19 might cause general body ache so keep good fitness is required through unspific exercises just to move your limbs as much as you can to motivate your blood circulation and muscle power**

**1. General Upper Limb Exercises:**





## 2. General Lower Limb Exercises:



## 3. Walking:

If walking is difficult, try to walk with a walker or with help. Start with 2-3 steps initially and slowly increase gradually the number of steps and the distance as well.



## How to know whether you are exercising at the right level :

- Try speaking a whole sentence of 5 words without stopping if you are not feeling difficulty in breathing then you can exercise harder .
- If you can not speak at all or can only say a word at a time and are severely breathless then you are exercising too hard .
- If you can speak a sentence pausing once or twice and the exercise should be only moderately hard for you.
- If you do feel too breathless then you should stop to rest until your breathing feels more controlled.
- Hard core strengthening exercise training should not be started before six weeks after discharge.

## When to Stop Exercising?



If you have fever  $\geq 37.5^{\circ}$



If you are feeling dizziness or light headedness.



If you feel severe short of breath without any activity.



If you feel palpitations.



If you experience sudden pain in the chest or chest tightness.

## Points to Remember:

- While exercising it is better to have your saturation probe on your finger so that your O<sub>2</sub> saturation is always above 90%. The saturation should not drop more than 3 units from what it was at rest.
- If your oxygen level does not improve, you should go to the nearest health institution.
- It is normal to feel difficulty in breathing when you exercise, gradually building your fitness can help you become less breathless.

**All the exercises shown can be practiced 1 to 2 times per day  
Then gradually increase the frequency (at least 3 times per day).**

**Focus on light exercises, and short exercise sessions**

**But more frequently While making sure not to reach  
the stage of fatigue.**