



## THE BENEFITS OF RELAXATION AND BREATH AWARENESS EXERCISES FOR THOSE WITH BREATHING DIFFICULTIES

Shortness of breath often brings feelings of fear, anxiety, panic and general unease. Breathing exercises and relaxation are the key to the release of muscular, emotional and mental tensions which aggravate breathlessness.

People with airflow limitation tend to become short of breath on exertion, and consequently they will become anxious when anticipating such activities.

Studies have shown that lower chest breathing and relaxation are associated with a slower respiratory rate, and so lowering blood pressure, heart rate and calming the nervous system by reducing stress hormones within the body.

There's a wide variety of relaxation techniques and breath awareness practices to help, but remember 'one size doesn't fit all', and it may take a little while for you to find a technique that works for you. These exercises can't cure breathlessness but can help to relieve tension, particularly helping to relax your shoulders and upper chest muscles, enabling you to breathe more efficiently, gain a sense of control and so more able to manage episodes of breathlessness.

The key to using the relaxation and breathing techniques regularly is to build them into your lifestyle, if possible giving yourself the time most days. Practising when you are not especially breathless may help you to use them when you are having difficulties. The motivation for sticking with it comes from the result you will get.

If you would like any help or advice with these practices, please don't hesitate to contact The Debenham Project and they will put you in touch with someone you can speak to.