

Assisted Cough

Online Education

from

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Assisted Cough



Assisted Cough

Why?

- Coughing is the primary mechanism of clearing secretions
- It requires a maximal insufflation (volume greater than 2.3 L) with strong contraction of the abdominal & intercostal muscles
- Clients with weak cough are at risk of pulmonary infection

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What?

- Client or caregiver replaces weak abdominal and intercostal muscles with forceful arm movements



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When?

- Follows a deep spontaneous or volume augmented breath
- Once a day for clients with impaired cough
- More often if phlegm or infection present
- Best done before meals or at bedtime

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How?

- **Position:**
 - Seated or supine with head slightly elevated
 - Back & head must be fully supported
 - Straight posture
- **If seated:**
 - Buttocks as far back in the chair as possible
 - Lock wheelchair and position against a wall to prevent tipping



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Helpful Hint

To ensure straight posture, you may need to have a small rolled towel placed horizontally just below the shoulder blades



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Techniques

1. Caregiver-assisted abdominal thrust
2. Caregiver-assisted lateral costal compression
3. Client self-assisted cough



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Abdominal Thrust - Why?

Most closely simulates abdominal muscles during cough



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Abdominal Thrust - Hand Placement

- Landmark naval and place heel of one hand on abdomen just above navel



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Abdominal Thrust - Hand Placement

- Place the other hand on top of the first hand with fingers interlocked and pulled away from the body
- Avoid the ribs and xiphoid
- Keep elbows straight



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Abdominal Thrust - How?

- The client takes a deep spontaneous **or** augmented breath
- Breath is held
- The caregiver pushes **once**, upwards and inwards under the rib cage **just prior** to saying "cough"



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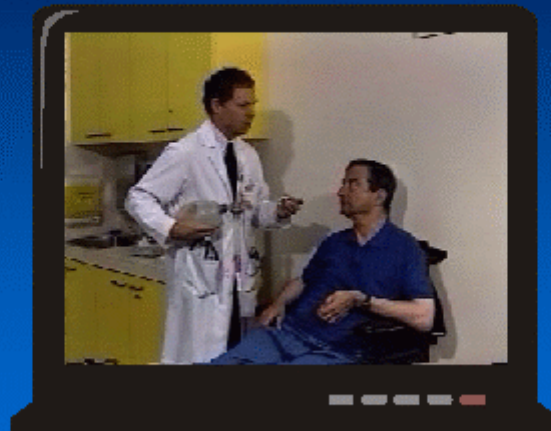
Abdominal Thrust - Helpful Hints

- The caregiver must shift their body weight through straight arms
 - If thrust is not forceful enough, secretions may not be mobilised
- At the command of "cough" the client attempts to cough simultaneously with the thrust



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Abdominal Thrust



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Abdominal Thrust - Contraindications

- Pregnancy
- Abdominal aneurysm
- Recent abdominal surgery
- Acute upper GI bleed

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Abdominal Thrust
Caution



- Filters in the vena cava may be dislodged
- Insertion of new abdominal feeding tube (< 48 hrs)

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Lateral Costal Compression - Hand Placement

- Locate the lower third of the ribs
- Place a hand on each side with fingers pointing to the back



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Lateral Costal Compression - How?

- Client takes a deep spontaneous **or** augmented breath
- Breath is held
- Caregiver squeezes the ribs up and in just prior to saying "cough"
- At the command of "cough" client attempts a cough simultaneously with the compression