

Ruth is a physiotherapist and over the years she's worked with many people with lung conditions.

"I'm a clinical specialist in respiratory physiotherapy. I treat people with breathing difficulties or coughs from a wide variety of causes, including COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis and ILD (interstitial lung disease).

At the start of the pandemic I was deployed to work in the hospital's intensive care unit. I'm back in my regular clinic now and have recently started seeing many patients with 'long Covid'.

I want to share my expertise in physiotherapy to help those with lung conditions look after themselves this winter. This year more than ever we're likely to be hibernating at home, but there are still things we can do to look after our lungs.

Drink lots of water

Keeping well hydrated is one of the best things you can do for your lungs. Drinking 1.5 - 2 litres of fluids every day keeps the lungs moist and makes mucous easier to clear. Plus, central heating can really dry the air.

You can read more about healthy eating habits, including how much water you should aim to drink, in the [BLF information on eating well](#).

Sing and dance around your house

While we're tucked up at home during winter, my favourite suggestions are singing and dancing. Yes really!

[Singing is wonderful for lung health](#) - there are many groups that were set up purely for this reason. I love to sing in the car. It lifts my mood and helps remind me to take deep breaths in and control the breath as it goes out.

When you're singing, don't hold back: take a really deep breath in, use your diaphragm and stomach, keeping the shoulders relaxed, and sing loudly. If it makes you cough, it's a good sign it is helping clear phlegm off your chest.

My other favourite is dancing. Put on a piece of music that you like and is uplifting, it's sure to get you bouncing around the kitchen. If the tempo increases, people usually speed up too. It's a great work out, even if you're sitting down! Don't forget to use your arms too.

Whatever you do, keep moving!

It's important to keep moving little and often during the day. Every couple of hours, march on the spot, or round the house, or go up and down stairs - just keep moving. I watched a sports game walking in circles and it certainly helped my stress levels too!

Moving doesn't have to be structured or boring. I hope my tips can help you find something fun and invigorating to do each day. Movement should help us to stay active but also keep your spirits up and improve your mental health. Give it a go this winter!"

- You can find some simple exercise ideas in [Ruth's keep active guide](#).
- Or for something a bit more challenging, why not take a look at [Ruth's virtual challenge ideas](#).