

# Pulmonary Rehabilitation



## What is Pulmonary Rehabilitation?

Pulmonary Rehabilitation is a free programme designed to help people with chronic respiratory disease, such as COPD.

## What to expect

Pulmonary Rehabilitation programmes are run in different locations around Canterbury.

During the eight week exercise and education programme, you will meet other people living with similar breathing conditions.

You will be supported by health professionals and learn ways to manage your condition in a safe and supportive environment. People who have completed the programme are also there to help and answer questions of how they cope with their breathing.

“ **A brilliant programme. Lots of relevant information, great exercise and a lot of fun.** ”

Past participant, Mr F



[www.ccn.health.nz](http://www.ccn.health.nz) | [info@ccn.health.nz](mailto:info@ccn.health.nz)

## What is involved?

### Before starting

Before starting the programme you will be assessed by a nurse and physiotherapist at the venue.

They will explain the programme and give you the opportunity to ask any questions. They will also review your medications and general health to make sure you get the most out of the programme.

### Once you start

The programme involves two sessions a week for eight weeks.

Each session runs for approximately two hours and includes a group exercise class designed specifically to help you breathe easier and an education session where you'll hear from a range of health workers.

### After the programme

At the end of the programme you will be re-assessed and encouraged to continue what you have learned at home or to join a local exercise class.

“ **I can't breathe now, why would I go and do exercise?** ”

Turn over to read Pauline's story...

For more information search 'Pulmonary Rehabilitation' at [www.healthinfo.org.nz](http://www.healthinfo.org.nz)

## Breathing easier

Pauline Mohi remembers the days when you were encouraged to sit down over a cigarette with your GP.

“They’d have a lolly jar for kids and a cigarette packet for adults. The doctor’s ashtray would be full,” Pauline recalled.

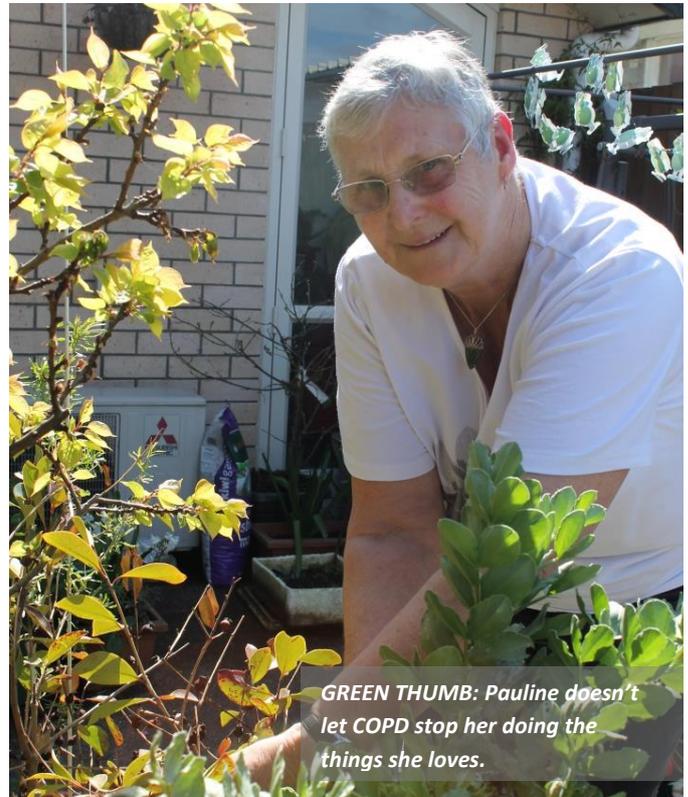
“It’s the first thing I did in the morning and the last thing at night. If the telephone rung I’d light a cigarette before I picked it up. I’d light one to walk down to the mailbox.”

The Christchurch grandmother was diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) 25 years after she’d given up smoking. Despite getting breathless doing everyday household chores like changing the bed sheets, Pauline refused to believe that she had a ‘smoker’s disease’.

“I just thought that was part of getting old and this is the way it is. I gave up my old villa because I couldn’t keep up the grounds anymore. It was a big quarter acre section and I’d planted a mini orchard. That’s one of the things that happens to most people; when you find yourself breathless you stop doing it.”

But Pauline has learnt that it’s not necessarily the case. Pulmonary Rehabilitation helps people with COPD to live a full life despite their condition. The programmes run for eight weeks and provide a safe and supportive environment for people with respiratory conditions to learn breathing, diet, exercise and day-to-day living techniques.

“It didn’t make sense when the doctor first said about this exercise programme. I said ‘Get real. You’re crazy. I can’t breathe now, why would I go and do



*GREEN THUMB: Pauline doesn't let COPD stop her doing the things she loves.*

exercise?”

But she’s seen the results. “Around the time I did Pulmonary Rehab I started a walking group. I dragged at the back and they even assigned someone to walk with me. Now I walk at the front. And that says it all.”

“It can be embarrassing forever excusing yourself for huffing and puffing or coughing. That’s where it’s fantastic to be able to go to Pulmonary Rehab and be with other people like you. I’ve met people on the programme who have become close friends.”

“Lots of normal everyday things are an effort, but it doesn’t mean that you can’t do them and that you shouldn’t do them. I don’t have a big garden now but it hasn’t stopped me. I’ve got every fruit tree, bush, grape vines and everything that you can think of.”

“I just feel I’m so lucky that my doctor knew about Pulmonary Rehab.” Pauline is sure she can breathe easier because of Pulmonary Rehabilitation.