

Appendix 1: The breathing exercise intervention protocol

BE style	<p>Slow breathing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow breathing indicates that the respiration rate is lower than a person's usual respiration rate. • No fixed respiration rate is required as long as it can be tolerated.
BE techniques	<p>Pursed lip breathing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathe in gently through nose while mouth is closed. • Breathe out with lip pursed and let the air slowly release without forcing it. • During breathing, aim at a time ratio of inspiration to expiration of 1:2-3 (count in mind 1, 2 while breathing in, and 1, 2,3, 4 (5, 6) while breathing out). <p>Deep breathing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathe in until cannot breathe in anymore, then start to breathe out.
BE frequency and duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE is recommended for 5 minutes per session, 3-5 sessions a day, for 4 weeks. • One session in the morning, midday and before bedtime; if well tolerated, an additional session can be added in each interval (between morning to midday, and between midday to bedtime).
BE practice condition and requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing BE in a comfortable and relaxed position, either lying, sitting, or standing, eyes can be closed or open. • During practice, focus on breathing and keep mind off from any stressful or unpleasant thoughts.

BE: Breathing exercise

Note:

The development and validation of the breathing exercise intervention protocol has been separately reported in a methodological paper which has been submitted to a journal for peer review. Please refer to the paper titled "Development and validation of an evidence-based breathing exercise intervention protocol for chronic pain management in breast cancer survivors" for more details about the intervention development process and the supporting evidence.