

Helpful Exercises After Breast Surgery

The following exercises are to help you regain your normal shoulder and arm movement (range of motion) after your breast surgery. Check with your doctor, nurse or physical therapist **before you** begin these exercises.

These exercises are not designed for patients who have had breast reconstruction. If you have had reconstruction you will be given a different set of exercises.

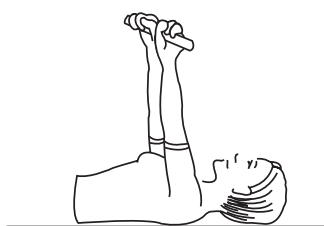
Helpful Guidelines

- If you are experiencing pain, discontinue exercises and notify your doctor or nurse.
- If your arm becomes swollen or very tender after these exercises, contact your doctor, nurse or physical therapist.
- After your surgery it may take about 2-3 months to recover full motion and strength in your arm.
- The best way to regain motion is to work gradually, increasing your movement in small steps.
- It may be helpful to do exercises when your muscles are warm, such as after bath or shower. Do not use a heating pad on your affected arm.
- After surgery or radiation you may have tightness in your chest tissue or armpit. This is normal. Continue the exercises until the feeling of tightness is gone.
- You may notice a burning, tingling or soreness to the back of your arm and along your chest wall. Do not be alarmed. This is caused by irritated nerve endings. These sensations may become stronger 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery and usually subside. Movement may temporarily increase these sensations. It is important that you continue your exercises to maintain your normal arm movement.
- If possible, do exercises in front of a mirror to keep your correct posture and motion
- Be sure to breathe during your exercises you may not realize you are holding your breath.

Remember:

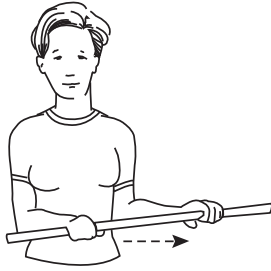
- Do not lift heavy objects after your surgery. Your doctor will let you know when you may resume activities such as housework, etc.
- You are encouraged to use your elbow and hand in performing your daily activities, as long as these activities involve light to normal use of your arm.

The instructions below are a guide. Start gradually if needed, and work up to the recommended repetitions.



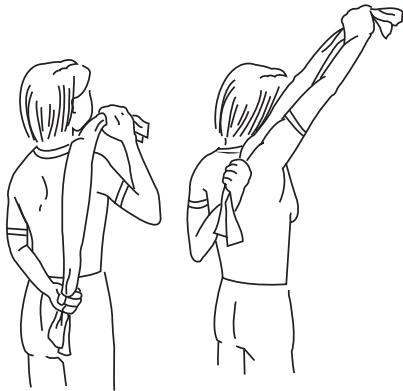
Exercise 1 of 5 Shoulder External Rotation/Abduction

1. Lie on back as shown, holding stick with both hands
2. Raise both hands overhead, so that you feel a stretch
3. Hold 10 seconds
4. Do 10 repetitions, 2 times a day



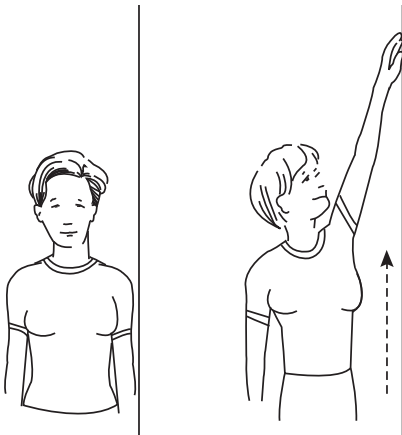
Exercise 2 of 5
Shoulder External Rotation

1. Stand with elbows bent to 90 degrees, holding stick in front of you
2. Using stick for assistance, rotate your affected hand and forearm out away from your body
3. Keep your elbow at your side. You should feel a stretch in your shoulder
4. Hold 10 seconds
5. 10 repetitions, 2 times a day



Exercise 3 of 5
Shoulder Internal Rotation

1. Stand with towel as shown, affected arm behind your back
2. Stretch the arm up behind your back by pulling upward on the towel with the other hand for assistance until you feel a stretch
3. Hold 5-10 seconds
4. 5 repetitions, 2 times a day



Exercise 4 of 5
Diagonal Wall Climbing

1. Stand at a diagonal with affected side toward wall about 6 inches away from wall
2. Slowly "walk" fingers up the wall
3. Stop when you feel it pulling on your incision
4. Slowly walk back down wall, then repeat. Goal is to reach the same height as your unaffected arm
5. 10 repetitions, 1-2 times day



Exercise 5 of 5
Pectoral Stretch

1. Stand in a corner about 1-2 feet from wall with hands on wall as shown
2. Gently lean into corner until you feel a stretch in your chest
3. Hold 10-15 seconds
4. 5 repetitions, 2 times a day