

Exercises after Mastectomy and Axillary Node Dissection

(In Patient)

Stiffness of the back, shoulder and arm may be felt after breast surgery. To get back full movement it is very important to EXERCISE.

A physical therapist helps you with the exercises shown in this pamphlet.

Start your exercises the day after your surgery and continue until you are using your arm normally in household duties and other activities. Sometimes you will need to continue to see a physical therapist after you are discharged from the hospital.

Goals of Exercise

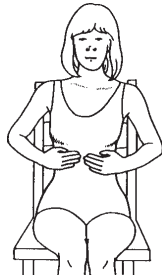
- to get back full use of your arm
- to keep swelling down
- to have good posture
- to relieve stress and anxiety that sometimes come with surgery
- to help you in getting back to normal activities as soon as possible.

Exercises

- are done 3-5 times daily
- do each exercises 10 times, unless otherwise marked
- do in front of a mirror, if possible
- do NOT force any movements
- it is normal to have some discomfort with exercise

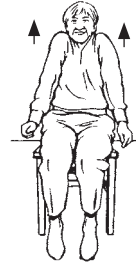
Deep Breathing

Keep shoulders relaxed. Breathe in deeply through nose filling out lower rib cage. Hold for 3 seconds. Breathe out slowly through mouth. Start as soon as you wake up from surgery.



Shoulder Shrugs

Shrug shoulders up to your ears. Relax and let them down. Breathe in when you lift and breathe out when you lower.



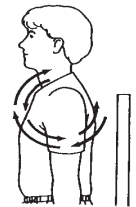
Neck Stretch

Tilt head to one shoulder to stretch opposite side of neck and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat to opposite side.



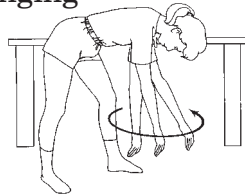
Shoulder Circles

Roll shoulders backwards. Repeat, rolling shoulders forward.



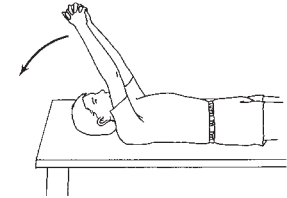
Pendular Exercises

Bend at waist with affected arm hanging parallel to legs. Support yourself with your other arm on a table. Swing arm in a circle in one direction. Repeat in opposite direction.



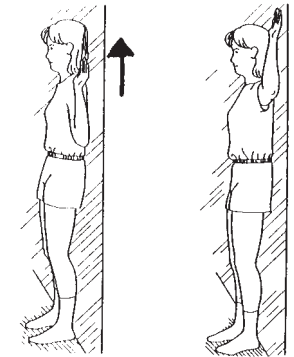
Arm Lifts

Clasp hands and raise arms overhead, keeping elbows straight. Lower slowly. Begin in lying position and progress to sitting.



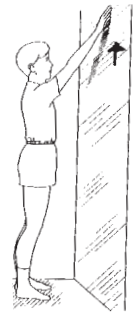
Wall Slides

Stand with your back against a wall with your feet 4-6 inches away and shoulder width apart. Keep your knees relaxed and with the backs of your hands against the wall, slide your arms up, then down the wall, making sure your upper back doesn't arch away from the wall.



Wall Walking

- Facing a wall, "walk" fingers up the wall as far as you can. "Walk" back down. (both arms)
- Stand sideways to a wall, and "walk" fingers up as far as you. "Walk" back down. (affected arm)



Arm Reach

In sitting position, try to touch hands behind your back. Repeat the opposite way.



Posture

It is important to maintain good posture after your surgery. In front of a mirror, check that your chin is tucked in, your shoulders are level and pulled back, and your spine is straight.

Hand and Arm Care

- Keep swelling down by elevating your arm above your heart for 20-30 minutes (on pillows, the back of a couch, etc.) and pump your hand intermittently.
- Alternate arm activity with rest and elevation for the first few days after surgery.
- Carry heavy objects such as shopping bags, briefcases and luggage on the side you did not have surgery.
- Do not use heating pads, hot water bottles or ice packs over your incision as your skin sensation is less in this area and you won't feel if it is too hot or cold. (Ice packs can be used if you did not have a mastectomy.)
- Daily activities are good arm exercises. Use your affected arm for grooming, eating, light housework and hobbies. But don't force it.

Swelling, Injury, Excessive Pain

Report these to your doctor or Emergency Department immediately.

Please contact your doctor if you do not understand these instructions.

Patient: _____

Doctor: _____

Date: _____

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