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# Exercise diary

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**Physiotherapy**

**Patient Information**





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## Introduction

The aim of this exercise programme is to improve your fitness before, during, and after your treatment for cancer.

You may have been asked to attend before surgery, this is known as prehabilitation. People who have a good level of fitness before their surgery tend to have less risk of complications, a better recovery and a shorter stay in hospital. We will therefore use the few weeks before your surgery to get you as fit as possible.

Or you may have been asked to attend during your treatment (for example, chemotherapy or radiotherapy). Being physically active during treatment can help to manage the side effects of treatment, such as fatigue, and help you stay as fit as possible.

If you have finished your treatment, physical activity can help you to regain your fitness, strength and stamina, making it easier to get back to the things you used to do.

Depending on your treatment, we will ask you to come in to the hospital once or twice a week to exercise in a class, under the supervision of a physiotherapist or an exercise instructor. They will teach you how to exercise safely and give you advice on any modifications you may require to do the exercises.

The exercises you will do in class are detailed in this book (pages 6-16). You will need to carry out these exercises every day at home, or as often as your physiotherapist or exercise instructor advises you.

## Benefits of exercise

As well as preparing you for your surgery, exercise can help you to manage and overcome some of the side effects of cancer and of treatments, such as chemotherapy. Other benefits of exercise include:

- **Improved muscle strength**
- **Improved energy levels.** Fatigue is one of the biggest side effects of cancer and its treatment. Exercise can help manage this.
- **Reduced stress**
- **Improved self esteem**
- **Improved sleep pattern**
- **Improved bone density**
- **Regulated appetite and weight management**
- **Increased sense of well-being** - endorphins or 'happy hormones' are released.
- **Reduced risk of developing heart problems**
- **Improved ability to do everyday activities**
- **Improved immune system.**

## How to exercise safely

It is very important that you follow these simple rules:

### **Make sure that you:**

- Always warm up before exercising (pages 8-10)
- Always cool down after exercising (page 13-16)
- Wear loose comfortable clothing and shoes
- Make sure that you have eaten (lightly) but wait at least an hour after a meal
- Ensure you drink plenty of water.

### **Stop if:**

- You get chest pain or tightness
- You feel dizzy or nauseous (sick)
- You feel clammy or cold
- You feel increasingly wheezy
- Your joints or muscles hurt.

## How often should I exercise?

It is recommended that all adults should exercise for a minimum of 150 minutes (2.5 hours) per week. This is the equivalent of 30 minutes, five times a week and should consist of both aerobic and muscle strengthening exercise (see pages 5 & 6 for a description). If you are usually not very active, this may feel quite daunting. The aim of this class is to help you build up to this level of activity gradually, setting regular small goals to keep you motivated and track your progress.

## How hard should I be working?

It is important that exercise makes you feel breathless. This is essential for you to get fitter and feel the benefits. You may feel slightly sweaty and find that your heart beats faster; this is normal.

In the physiotherapist-led classes, we will monitor your heart rate throughout the session by putting a small probe on your finger. This tells us whether you are working at the right level to improve your fitness.

From your heart rate, we will be able to tell you whether you need to work a bit harder or whether you are working too hard. You will quickly get used to what the 'right level' feels like and this will also be useful when doing your exercises at home.

When carrying out the exercises at home, try to work at level agreed between yourself and the physiotherapist in the classes.

One good way of knowing how hard to work is to try and say this sentence out loud:

**“This exercise programme is doing me good”**

If you can say the whole sentence without stopping, you are not working hard enough.

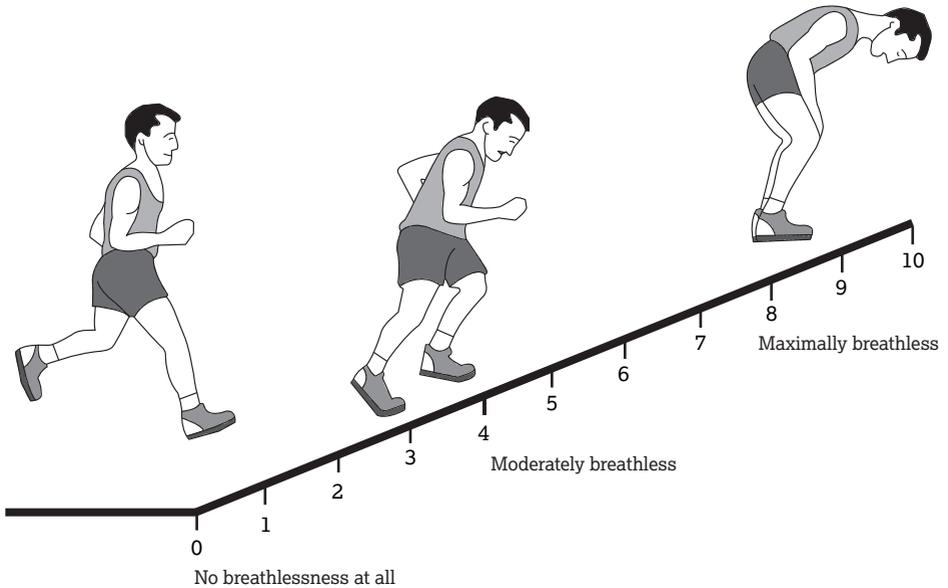
If you need to take a breath after each word, you are working too hard.

If you are able to say the whole sentence slowly with one or two

stops, then you are working at the right level.

Another way of knowing how hard to work is by asking yourself to score how tired and breathless you feel out of 10. You should aim to be working at 5-6 out of 10.

## Exertion scale



## Types of exercise

The prehabilitation exercise programme is made up of both **aerobic exercises** and **strengthening exercises**.

The combination of these is important in helping prepare you for your surgery. A description of both is outlined below.

## **Aerobic exercise**

Aerobic means ‘with oxygen’, so aerobic exercise is any activity that requires oxygen to meet energy demands during exercise. It is low to moderate intensity, sustained activity involving the large muscle groups, such as walking, cycling, jogging and swimming.

Because your muscles need oxygen for energy, your lungs work harder to get oxygen from the air into your body and your heart works harder to pump the oxygen-carrying blood cells around your body. You will notice your heart beating faster, your breathing getting faster and you will sweat.

The more you do this kind of exercise, the more your body adapts and becomes better at doing it. You will start to feel fitter.

A good level of aerobic fitness is associated with a lower risk of complications during and after your surgery. It is also linked to a shorter hospital stay.

## **Strength training**

Strengthening exercises use resistance to make your muscles contract with more force. To meet the demands placed on the muscles, they become stronger and more efficient.

Strength training provides lots of benefits such as improving bone, muscle, ligament and tendon strength, improving joint function, reducing the risk of injury and improving heart function.

Being stronger makes you more efficient at everyday activities such as walking, and functional tasks such as getting in and out of the bath.

Unfortunately, our muscles get weaker more quickly than they get stronger. So building them up before your surgery prepares them for this and allows you to get back to your normal activities as soon as possible.

## Other ways to exercise

You can exercise anywhere. There are many ways that can be enjoyable and can easily fit in to your daily routine.

Walking is probably the most convenient exercise you can do. This may be achieved by walking the dog, getting off the bus or tube a stop early or by joining a walking group. Your physiotherapist can provide you with a step counter (pedometer) so that you can monitor how many steps you do in a day and see how you improve.

Here are some other ways to exercise:

- Gardening
- Playing golf
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Housework
- Walking up the stairs rather than using a lift

## The warm up

It is very important to warm up properly so that you do not injure yourself. Aim to do each exercise five times.

### Shoulder shrugs

Slowly lift your shoulders up towards your ears, then lower down again.



## Shoulder circles

With your arms by your side, circle your shoulders forwards and then backwards.

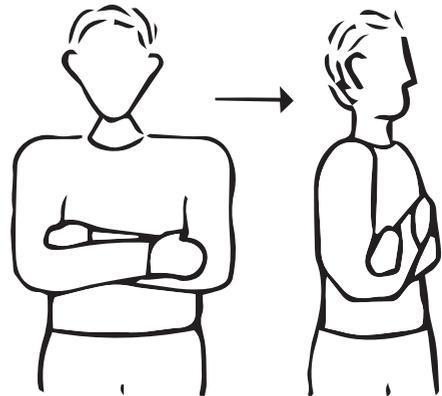


## Head turns

Slowly turn your head as far to the right as you can then bring back to the centre and turn to the left.

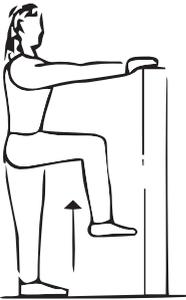
## Trunk twists

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, arms folded in front of you. Keeping your hips facing forwards and your legs still, turn your shoulders around to the right, back to the middle and then round to the left.



## Side bends

Keep your body straight, arms by your side. Slide your right arm down your body towards the floor without leaning forwards. Slide your arm back up and repeat on the left.

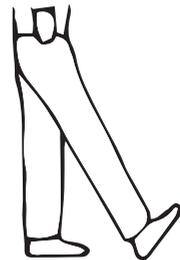


## Knee lifts

Slowly lift one knee up to hip level, not too high. Then lower again. Repeat with the other leg. (hold on to a secure surface for balance needed).

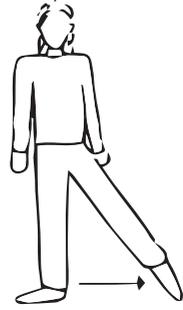
## Heel dig

Stand with your hands on your hips. Place one foot in front of you, tapping the floor with your heel. Bring it back to a standing position and repeat with the other side.



## Toe taps

Stand with your hands on your hips. Put one leg out to the side, tapping the floor with your toe. Bring it back to a standing position and repeat with the other side.



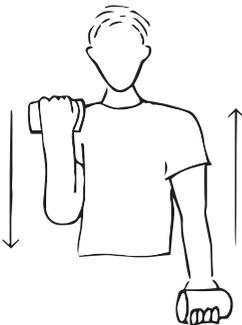
## Exercises

These are a combination of exercises, some aimed at strengthening your muscles and others aimed at your cardiovascular fitness. It is important to do them all—if you have any problems with any of them, please speak to your physiotherapist.

**Do each exercise for two minutes.**

## Marching

Standing tall, with feet hip width apart, march on the spot lifting your knees as much as you can. Try to swing your arms, keeping them close to your body.

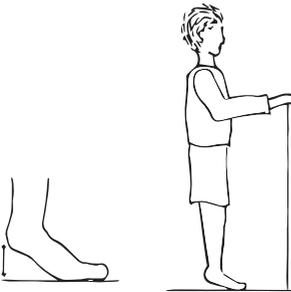
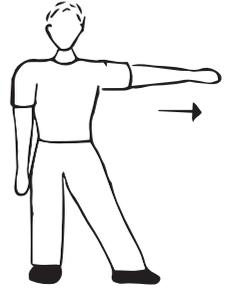


## Bicep curl

Stand with your arms by your side. Hold hand weights or the resistance band with your palms facing up. Bend one elbow to bring your hand up towards your shoulder. Slowly straighten your arm again and repeat with the other side.

## Star jack

Stand with your arms by your side  
Move your right arm and leg out to the side  
at the same time. Return them back to the  
centre and then repeat with the left side.



## Heel raise

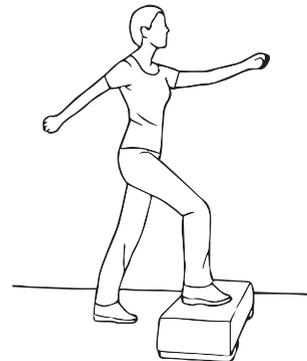
Stand with feet hip width apart.  
Rest your hands on a stable surface  
(the back of a chair or edge of a  
table). Keeping your weight over  
the centre of your feet, lift up on to  
the balls of your feet. Slowly lower  
down again.

## Step up

Standing at the bottom of your  
staircase, rest your hand on the hand  
rail (if required) for balance. Step up on  
to the step, with your foot fully on the  
step.

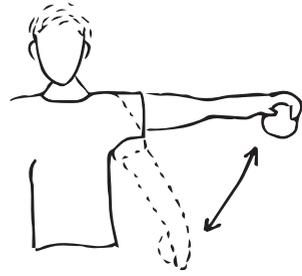
Bring the other foot up to the step and  
then step back down.

Try to lead with one leg for one minute  
and then change.

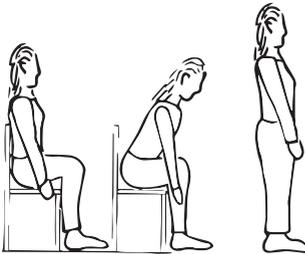


## Lateral raise

Stand with feet hip width apart. Hold arm weights or a resistance band with palms facing down, resting your arms by your side. Keeping your arms straight, lift to the side, shoulder height. Slowly lower your arms back to the side of your body.



## Sit to stand



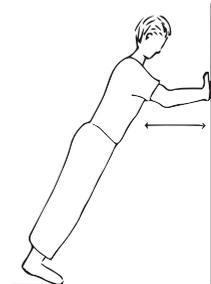
Sit towards the end of an upright chair.

Keep your feet hip width apart and your arms by your side. Stand up, making sure you straighten all the way up.

Sit back down again - try not to use your arms.

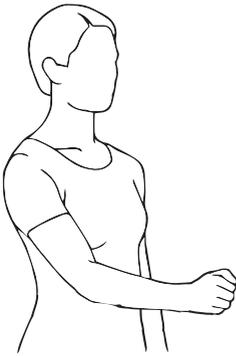
## Wall press

Stand facing a wall with your feet hip width apart. Rest your palms on the wall at shoulder height. Bend your elbows so that you are doing a press up against the wall. Make sure that your body stays in a straight line.



## Marching

Standing tall, with feet hip width apart  
March on the spot lifting your knees  
as much as you can. Try to swing your  
arms, keeping them close to your body.



## Punching forward

Stand with feet hip width apart.  
Bend your elbows and clench your  
fists.

Punch one arm out straight in front of  
you, keeping the other close to your  
chest.

As you bring one arm back towards  
your body, punch the other one out.

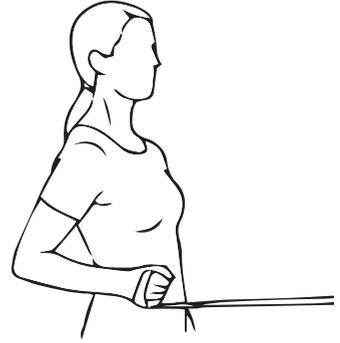
## Tap back

Stand with feet hip width apart.  
Rest your hands on a stable surface (the  
back of a chair or edge of a table).  
Keeping your weight over the supporting  
leg, tap one foot behind you and then  
return to centre. Repeat with the other  
side.



## Rowing

Stand with feet hip width apart. Hold arm weights or a resistance band with palms facing down. Raise both arms up, straight in front of you. Pull your arms back, so your elbows are bent and your shoulder blades come together. Move your arms forwards again and repeat.



## The cool down

Just like the warm up, the cool down is very important. Cooling down allows your body to gradually wind down.

### Gentle marching on the spot

Stand tall. Standing with feet hip width apart, gently march on the spot for up to one minute.

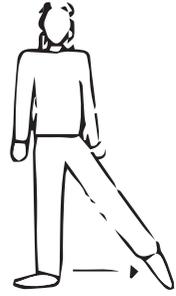


### Heel dig forward

Stand with your hands on your hips. Place one foot in front of the other and put your heel gently on the ground. Then bring the foot back to a standing position. Repeat with the other leg.

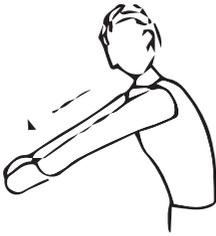
### Toe taps to the side

Stand with your arms by your sides. Put your right leg out to the side and tap your toe on the ground. Bring this leg back to the centre and repeat with your left leg.



## Stretches

These can be done in sitting or standing. They should not be painful but you should feel a slight stretch. Try to hold each stretch for 30 seconds.

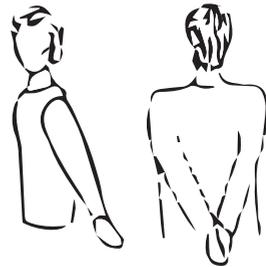


### Back stretch

Clasp your hands together; reach your arms forwards arching your back. You should feel a slight stretch in the muscles between your shoulder blades.

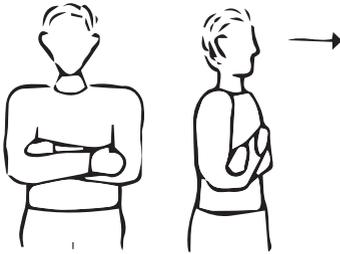
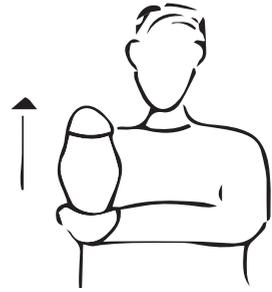
### Chest stretch

Clasp your hands behind your back. Pull your shoulders back and your elbows together. You should feel a slight stretch in the muscles at the front of your chest.



### Arm stretch

Put your right hand on your right shoulder and lift your elbow upwards. You can help to lift it and stretch it further with help from your left hand. Repeat with your left arm. You should feel a slight stretch on the back of your upper arm.

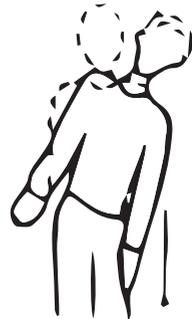


### Trunk stretch

Fold your arms across your body. Keeping your body below the waist facing forwards, turn your upper body to the right. Hold for a few moments. Slowly return to the middle and repeat to the left.

### Side stretch

Stand with your feet hip width apart. Slowly slide your right hand down your right leg if standing (down the right hand side of a chair if sitting). You should feel a slight stretch down the left hand side of your body. Return to the starting position and repeat to the left.



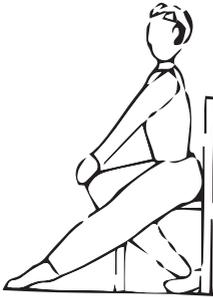
## Calf stretch

Stand with your feet hip width apart, holding onto something sturdy. Put one foot about 12” in front of the other with both feet facing forwards. Bend the front knee and keep the back knee straight. Push the heel of the back foot into the floor. Swap your legs round and repeat. You should feel a slight stretch in the calf muscle of the back leg.



## Hamstring stretch

Sit on the edge of a chair. Have one leg bent and the other completely straight in front of you. Point your toes to the floor. With your hands on the bent knee sit up tall with a good posture, bend at the waist and move your upper body slightly forwards. You should feel a slight stretch in the back of the thigh of the straight leg. Swap your legs round and repeat.



## Exercise diary

Please keep a note of the activity and exercises you do. Your physiotherapist or exercise instructor will advise you how many times to complete the programme at home.

We will also help you to set a goal each week. It is important that your goal is specific. For example, if you say “I will walk more this week” it will be difficult for you to know if you have achieved that. A more specific and measurable goal would be “I will walk for 15 minutes around my local park with my partner on five days this week”. This example is more specific and measurable so you will know if you have achieved it.

Some people find it helpful to get somebody to support them in fulfilling their goal. Each week we will look at your goals from last week to see if you have achieved them.

# Exercise diary

# Week one

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Marching							
Bicep curl							
Star jacks							
Heel raise							
Step up							
Lateral raise							
Sit to stand							
Wall press							
Marching							
Punching							
Tap back							
Rowing							
Step count							

## Goal setting

My goal this week is :

Confidence scale: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being no confidence and 10 being extremely confident, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”

Other activities (such as gardening)

Activity:

Duration (minutes)

How did you feel exercising this week?

What has gone well?

Concerns or questions:

# Exercise diary

# Week two

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Marching							
Bicep curl							
Star jacks							
Heel raise							
Step up							
Lateral raise							
Sit to stand							
Wall press							
Marching							
Punching							
Tap back							
Rowing							
Step count							

## Goal setting

My goal this week is :

Confidence scale: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being no confidence and 10 being extremely confident, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”

Other activities (such as gardening)

Activity:

Duration (minutes)

How did you feel exercising this week?

What has gone well?

Concerns or questions:

# Exercise diary

# Week three

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Marching							
Bicep curl							
Star jacks							
Heel raise							
Step up							
Lateral raise							
Sit to stand							
Wall press							
Marching							
Punching							
Tap back							
Rowing							
Step count							

## Goal setting

My goal this week is :

Confidence scale: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being no confidence and 10 being extremely confident, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”

Other activities (such as gardening)

Activity:

Duration (minutes)

How did you feel exercising this week?

What has gone well?

Concerns or questions:

# Exercise diary

# Week four

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Marching							
Bicep curl							
Star jacks							
Heel raise							
Step up							
Lateral raise							
Sit to stand							
Wall press							
Marching							
Punching							
Tap back							
Rowing							
Step count							

## Goal setting

My goal this week is :

Confidence scale: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being no confidence and 10 being extremely confident, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”

Other activities (such as gardening)

Activity:

Duration (minutes)

How did you feel exercising this week?

What has gone well?

Concerns or questions:

# Exercise diary

# Week five

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Marching							
Bicep curl							
Star jacks							
Heel raise							
Step up							
Lateral raise							
Sit to stand							
Wall press							
Marching							
Punching							
Tap back							
Rowing							
Step count							

## Goal setting

My goal this week is :

Confidence scale: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being no confidence and 10 being extremely confident, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”

Other activities (such as gardening)

Activity:

Duration (minutes)

How did you feel exercising this week?

What has gone well?

Concerns or questions:

# Exercise diary

# Week six

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Marching							
Bicep curl							
Star jacks							
Heel raise							
Step up							
Lateral raise							
Sit to stand							
Wall press							
Marching							
Punching							
Tap back							
Rowing							
Step count							

## Goal setting

My goal this week is :

Confidence scale: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being no confidence and 10 being extremely confident, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”

Other activities (such as gardening)

Activity:

Duration (minutes)

How did you feel exercising this week?

What has gone well?

Concerns or questions:

## Useful telephone numbers

If you need to contact the physiotherapy department, please use the appropriate number below:

**Chelsea** tel. 020 7808 2821 (answer phone)

**Sutton** tel. 020 8661 3098 (answer phone)

## References

This leaflet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Freephone: 0800 783 7176

Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

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