

Patient information

Male post-operative exercises following axillary surgery

These exercises will help you regain the strength and use of your arm and prevent your shoulder from becoming stiff. The exercises are suitable for people who have had breast surgery, lymph node removal and Radiotherapy.

Please remember that while exercises are important, rest is necessary too. Use these exercises and the suggested frequency as a guideline.

Using your arm for normal activities, such as eating or hair brushing will also help you regain motion and strength.

It is important to relax before you do these exercises. Do the exercises slowly. It will take you time to fully stretch your arm. In each exercise, stretch to the point where you feel pulling, rest, then stretch once more.

The arm you are exercising should be the one on the side you had your surgery.

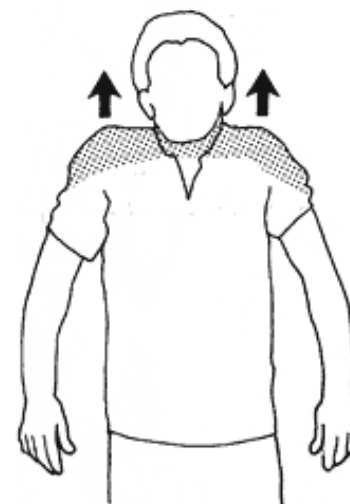
Week 1

Exercise 1

Warm up

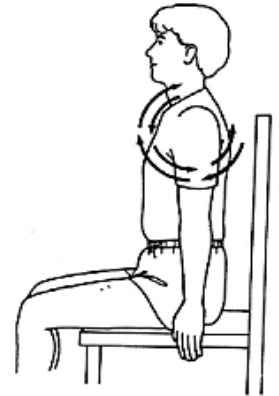
Shoulder shrugs

- Keep your arms loose and relaxed.
- Shrug shoulders up towards your ears and lower gently back down.



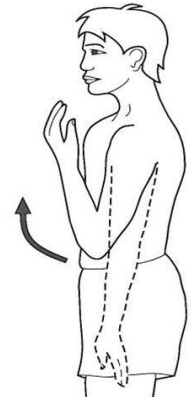
Shoulder circling

- Keep your arms loose and relaxed.
- Shrug shoulders up towards your ears, then circle them back down.



Exercise 1

- Bend and straighten your elbow taking your hand to your shoulder.
- Bend and straighten your elbow, taking your hand to your opposite shoulder.



Exercise 2

- Hold your arms out to the side and bend your elbows.
- Slowly reach behind your back to just under the shoulder blades.



Exercise 3

- Place your hands behind your head with elbows pointing out to the side.
- Bring your elbows together in front of your face.



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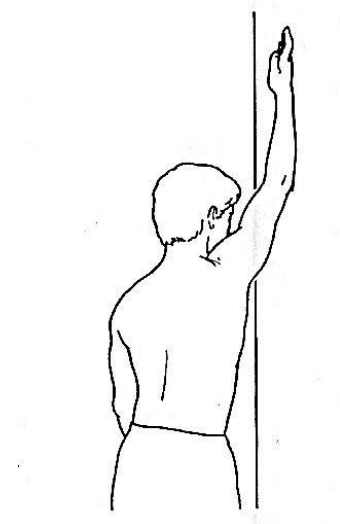


Week 2

Warm up, week 1 and 2

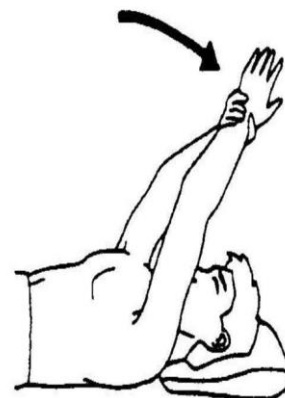
Exercise 4

- Feet apart, stand affected side closest to a wall.
- Put your hand on the wall, keeping elbows bent, creep your hand up the wall as far as you can.
- Hold here for 10, then lower.



Exercise 5

- Clasp your affected arm with the opposite hand. Lift both arms up, trying to raise above your head. Bring your arms back down to the starting position, slowly.



Exercise 6

- Lie on your back with your hands behind your head, elbows out to sides.
- Gently push elbows downwards in the floor/bed as far as comfortable.
- Hold and count to 10 then relax.



These exercises are particularly helpful if you go on to have radiotherapy as the treatment will require you to be in a position, with arms raised above your head.

How much exercise should I do?

Aim to do the exercises every day.

Each exercise to be repeated 5 times before you move on to the next one.

Try to do all the exercises three times a day, morning, midday and evening.

The exercises should get easier each day. Do continue the exercises until you can move your arm as you did before the operation.

In about 4 weeks your arm strength and motion should be fully returned.

It is advisable to avoid any heavy lifting with your arm for 6 weeks following your surgery.

If you have any concerns please contact:

Breast Care Nursing Team

Telephone: 01284 713281

Monday—Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Donations in support of our work may be made to the West Suffolk Hospital Breast Cancer Fund.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the disabledgo website link below:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>