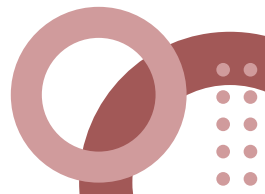


# Post-Operative Care and Exercises

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- Post-operative rehabilitative exercises are a crucial part of your recovery after breast cancer surgery. A physiotherapist will assist you in developing your exercise plan.
- Rehabilitate at your own pace, but ensure you perform shoulder exercises three times a day, every day, as tolerated. This helps prevent stiffness.
- Push yourself until you feel a gentle stretch and stop if you experience pain.
- These exercises can help you resume normal activities such as brushing your teeth, walking, and light housework.
- If you have undergone breast reconstructive surgery, avoid doing shoulder exercises until your surgeon gives you clearance.
- Continue wearing a well-supporting bra (preferably front-opening) after your breast conservation surgery during the day.
- You will receive a pillow in your post-surgery kit. You can place this pillow between your arm and the operated side for added comfort.



# Benefits of doing Exercises

- Helps Resume Normal Activities
- Reduces/prevents stiffness in your shoulder joint.
- Improves strength of your muscles around the shoulder.
- Increases your overall stamina and energy.
- Helps you better tolerate ongoing cancer treatments.

## First 2 weeks after surgery

- When you start your exercises, you may feel some stretching and joint stiffness. Don't worry, this is normal.
- After surgery, you might experience tingling or numbness on the inner side of your arm or chest wall. This is normal as well.
- Be sure to do the exercises taught by the physiotherapist at discharge. They will help improve your shoulder mobility and assist you in resuming daily activities during the first two weeks after surgery.



# 1. Ball Squeeze Exercise

This exercise helps release stiffness around the chest wall after surgery.

- Find a comfortable position.
- Take the yellow smiley ball provided in the kit.
- Squeeze the ball as hard as you can with your fist.
- Hold for 2-3 seconds.
- Slowly release.
- Repeat the exercise 10 times.



## 2. Deep Breathing Exercise

This exercise helps release stiffness and tightness around the chest wall after surgery and also helps you relax.

- Sit in a comfortable chair.
- Take deep, slow breaths through your nose, letting it fill your chest.
- Hold for about 2-3 seconds.
- Slowly exhale.
- Repeat the exercise 10 times.



**Breathing In**



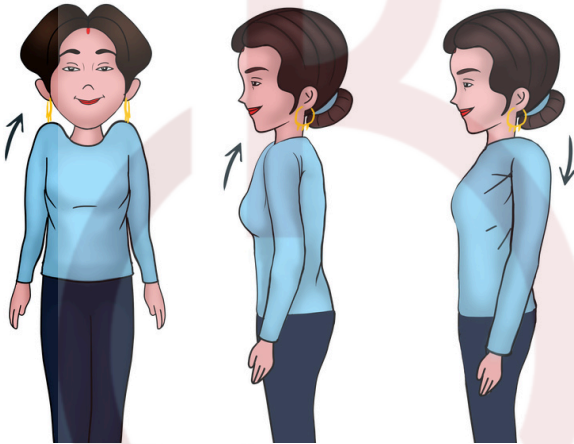
**Breathing Out**

### 3. Shoulder Shrug Exercise

These exercises can be done in a sitting or standing position.

#### Exercise 1

- Relax your shoulders.
- Gently rotate your shoulders forward, then upward.
- Slowly drop them back down, making a circle.
- Repeat this exercise 10 times in the opposite direction.



#### Exercise 2

- Lift both shoulders up to your ears and hold for 5 seconds.
- Drop your shoulders and relax for 5 seconds.
- Repeat.



## 4. Arm Lifts Exercise

These exercises can be done in a sitting or standing position.

- Clasp your hands together in front of your chest, pointing your elbows out.
- Stretch your arms out in front completely and hold for 5 seconds.



- Slowly lift your arms above your head until you feel a gentle stretch, and hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 times.

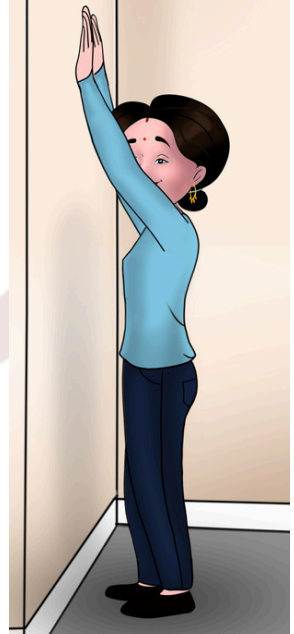


## 5. Wall Climbing Exercises

These exercises improve your range of motion in the shoulder.

### Exercise 1

- Stand facing a wall, a few inches away, and place both hands on the wall at shoulder level.
- Slowly use your fingers to climb/slide up the wall as high as you can until you feel a stretch.
- Return to shoulder level.
- Repeat 10 times.



## Exercise 2

- Stand a few inches away from the wall and place both hands on the wall at shoulder level.
- Slowly use your fingers to climb the wall as high as you can until you feel a stretch.
- Return to shoulder level.
- Repeat 10 times.

## Exercise 3

- Clasp your hands together in front of your chest, with your elbows pointing out.
- Stretch your arms out in front of you completely and hold for 5 seconds.
- Slowly lift your arms above your head until you feel a gentle stretch, and hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 times.

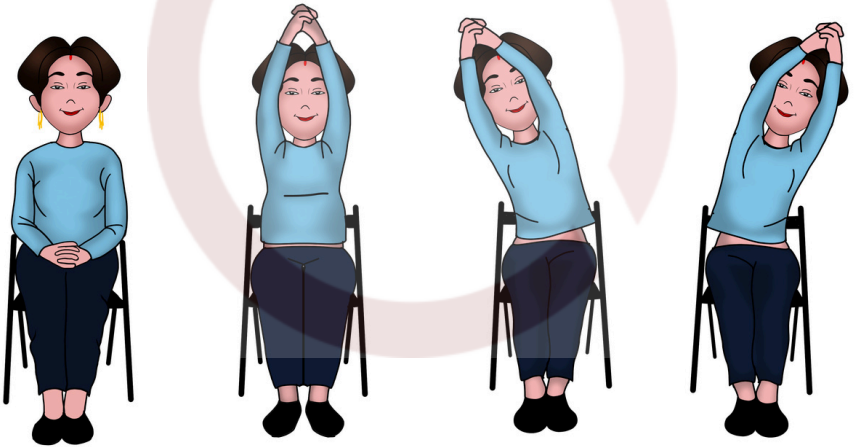




## 6. Side Bends Exercise

These exercises improve your range of motion on both sides of your body and are to be done in a sitting position.

- Clasp your hands together on your lap and lift your arms straight above your head (you can slightly bend your elbows).
- When your arms are above your head, bend sideways to the right and hold for 5 seconds. You can use your right hand to pull your left arm further to the right.
- Return to the center and repeat the same while bending sideways to the left.



These are general instructions applicable to all breast cancer patients. If indicated, the surgeon will give you instructions specific to you.

## **Upto 6 weeks after surgery**

**After the drain is removed (around 2 weeks post-surgery), focus on regaining the full range of motion in your shoulder.**

- You should be able to do all the above exercises with ease and have a full range of motion in the affected shoulder.**
- Continue doing the basic exercises until both arms are equally strong and have complete range of motion.**
- Light housework is fine in the first 6 weeks after surgery, but remember to take rest.**
- Do not start lifting heavy weights immediately. Gradually increase weight lifting after a couple of weeks.**
- Let the pain be your guide -- if you feel pain, you may be doing too much.**

These are general instructions applicable to all breast cancer patients. If indicated, the surgeon will give you instructions specific to you.

# From about 6 weeks after surgery

- **Try to maintain your optimal weight, as evidence shows that weight gain may increase the risk of cancer recurrence in hormone-positive disease.**
- **General conditioning and strengthening exercises can now be started. Brisk walking, aerobics, cycling, swimming, and yoga are excellent for improving stamina and reducing muscle fatigue after surgery.**
- **If you wish, you can start strengthening with light weights (500 gms to 1 kg). Build up slowly, starting with lighter weights if you haven't exercised in a few days.**
- **If your arm begins to swell or your sleeve feels tight on the affected arm, consult your breast surgeon.**
- **A few weeks after surgery, you might feel a tight, cord-like structure running down your armpit, known as axillary cording. This can make it difficult to reach for objects overhead. Continue your daily stretching until you feel a gentle stretch.**



## Scar Massage

**After surgery, it's normal for the scar to tighten and harden. About 4 weeks after the scar heals, you can begin massaging your breast/scar.**

- **Use olive oil and massage in the direction away from the breast/scar towards your armpit.**
- **Try to massage for the length of one song, 1-2 times a day.**

These are general instructions applicable to all breast cancer patients. If indicated, the surgeon will give you instructions specific to you.