NHS
Royal Papworth Hospital
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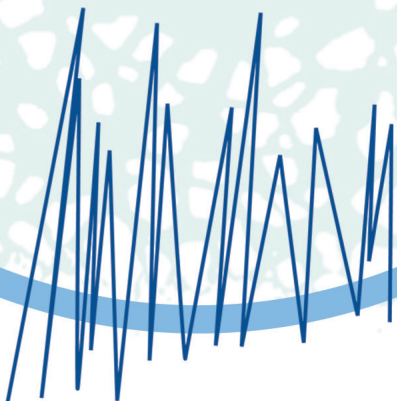
General exercise programme

A patient's guide



Compassion
Excellence
Collaboration

These exercises have been developed for people who are weak and/or breathless. If performed regularly, they will increase muscle strength, improve your circulation and reduce shortness of breath.

Guideline for safe exercise

- Try to find a comfortable position and relax the muscles not involved in the exercise.
- Avoid holding your breath while exercising.
- Give yourself time to recover your breath after each exercise. Rushing to finish the exercise can make you feel more breathless. Your breathing should sound quiet. Breathe in and out at a comfortable pace. Repeat until your breathing feels settled and comfortable.
- You do not have to complete all the exercises in one session. It may be better for you to do several short sessions of exercise each day, rather than one long session.
- If you feel unwell you may need to stop exercising or reduce the amount you are doing. Gradually build it up again as you start feeling better.
- Try to find a regular pattern for exercise that fits into your daily routine. Avoid exercising for an hour after a meal.
- You may find that some of the exercises become too easy for you; read the last sentence of each exercise to see how to progress each exercise.
- You may feel stiff after you first start exercising. This is quite normal but it is important you keep exercising. The stiffness will reduce as your body becomes used to the exercises.

Flexibility exercises

These exercises will help to keep your body and shoulders flexible; do them slowly, five times in each direction. Start these exercises by sitting on an upright chair.

1. Shrug shoulders up and down

2. Keeping hips and feet facing straight forwards, turn your head and trunk as far as you can comfortably go, first to the right and then to the left. You may find it easier to place your arms across your chest.

3. Breathe out and slowly slump down. Slowly straighten up whilst taking a breath in.

Strengthening exercises

Warm-up exercise: sitting on a bed or chair, pump your feet up and down for approx. 30 seconds. This helps the movement in your ankles and the blood flow in your legs.

Aim: to strengthen your thigh muscles.

Static quads

1. Lying or sitting on a bed, squeeze your knee into the bed so that you tense your thigh muscles
2. Count to five
3. Relax
4. Repeat using other leg

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions

Inner range quads

1. Lying or sitting on a bed, place a rolled up towel under knee, pull foot up towards you
2. Lift foot to straighten knee
3. Count to five
4. Relax down
5. Repeat using other leg

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Add a weight to the ankle (reduce repetitions at first)

Straight leg raise

1. Lying or sitting on a bed - pull foot up towards you
2. Keeping knee straight lift leg six inches
3. Count to five
4. Relax down
5. Repeat using other leg

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Add a weight at the ankle (reduce repetitions at first)

Static glutes/bottom clenches

1. Sitting on a chair or in bed, gradually tense your bottom muscles.
2. Aiming to raise yourself an inch whilst staying in the same position. Avoid leaning forwards or pushing down through your feet
3. Count for five
4. Relax gently.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Increase time held for (reduce repetitions at first)

Middle and inner range quads

1. Sitting on a chair or over edge of the bed
2. Lift your foot to straighten knee
3. Count to five
4. Relax gently down
5. Repeat using other leg.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Add a weight at the ankle (reduce repetitions at first)

Sit to stand to sitting

1. On a chair with hands on your knees (or on arms of chair)
2. Stand up, and then sit down slowly
3. Do not push through your arms.

To make this exercise harder:

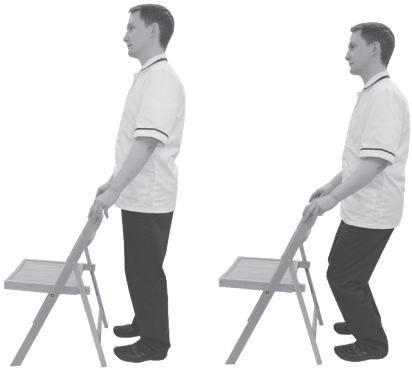
- Increase number of repetitions
- Use a lower chair or stool

Squats

1. Hold onto the back of a chair, standing up
2. Slowly bend your knees slightly, hold for 5 seconds, then stand up straight.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions



Step ups

1. Standing in front of a step or bottom stair
2. Hold onto a hand rail. Slowly step up onto the stair with both feet, then step down again
3. Alternate the leg you lead with.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Increase the height of the step

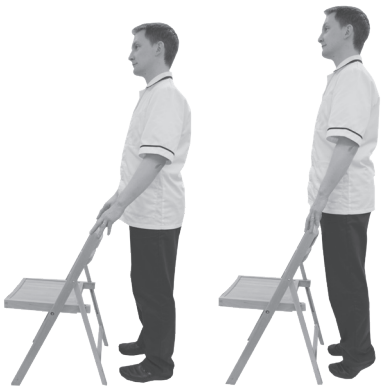
Aim: To strengthen your calve muscles

Heel raises

1. In standing, hold onto the back of a chair, standing
2. Rise up onto toes and lower back down to floor.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Progress onto one foot (reduce repetitions at first)



Aim: to strengthen your arm muscles

Bicep curls

1. Standing up or sitting in a chair, starting with your palm facing forward in a fist.
2. Bend elbow bringing hand to shoulder and slowly lower straight down.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Add weight (reduce number of repetitions at first)

Reaching forward

1. Standing up or sitting in a chair, start with hand at shoulder - stretch an arm out in front.
2. Increase the number of repetitions.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Add weight (reduce number of repetitions at first).

Reaching upward

1. Standing up or sitting in a chair, start with hand at shoulder level, extend arm and stretch above your head.

To make this exercise harder:

- Increase number of repetitions
- Add weight (reduce number of repetitions at first).

Walking
Whether you can walk a few steps or a few miles, walking is a good way of maintaining your fitness. Here is some simple advice to ensure that you get the maximum benefit from walking:

- Dress in loose fitting clothes and wear comfortable shoes

- Walk at a pace that enables you to maintain your breathing. If you become too breathless, stop and rest until you recover and then continue. Stop before you feel you have to, this will help your recovery time.

- Start with a distance you can comfortably manage and gradually build it up as you are able to. If you have been advised to do so, you can then increase your walking speed.

- Try to vary the route to make it more interesting.

- Avoid extreme weather conditions i.e. too windy, wet, cold or too hot, as this may make you feel more tired or breathless.

- Static exercise bicycle or pedals.

- Some people find using a 'static' bicycle or pedals a good way of exercising particularly during the winter months. Discuss this with your physiotherapist if you feel you would like to do this.

- If you experience any problems with these exercises, or need advice about exercise, please contact us at Papworth Hospital on **01223638215**. Please leave a voice message including your name, Hospital number (RGM) and telephone number and one of the team will phone you back at the next convenience.

Physio name:

Notes

Notes

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A member of Cambridge University Health Partners

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