

Exercises After Breast Surgery

Exercising after breast surgery can help you feel stronger and return to your normal activities sooner. In the first 1 to 2 weeks after surgery, avoid straining your muscles with sudden movements. You should be able to do most of your routine daily activities, such as opening doors and pushing yourself off the bed with minimal discomfort. You should be able to lift your arm above your shoulder or push with your arm (on the side you had surgery) slowly with some discomfort. Avoid lifting heavy items (no more than 20 lbs).

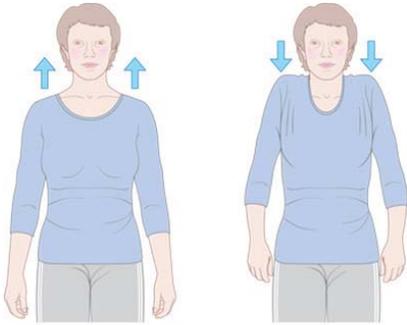
Feeling pain or discomfort after breast surgery is normal. The exercises on this fact sheet will help you to keep moving and stop your shoulder and back from getting too stiff or tight.

Do the exercises slowly until you feel a gentle stretch. You should feel minimal pain as you do them.

Between 4-6 weeks after surgery, you should be able to move your arm and shoulder more. In 6-8 weeks, you should be able to do light housework. After 12 weeks, you should be able to do everything you were doing before the surgery.

Always talk to your doctor before starting any new exercises, or if you have questions or concerns. If you had breast reconstruction surgery, talk to your plastic surgeon before starting any exercises.

THE FIRST WEEK AFTER SURGERY



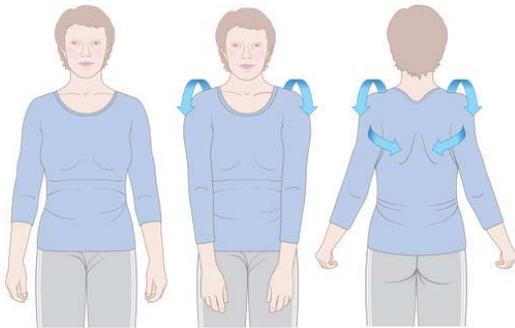
Shoulder Shrugs

1. Raise your shoulders up towards your ears slowly. Then slowly relax back down.
2. Do this five times every hour. Slowly build up to ten every hour over two weeks.



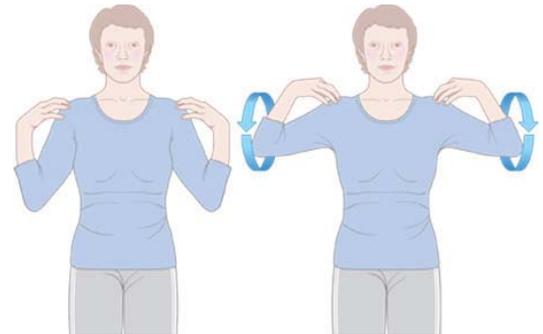
Arm Swings

1. Hang arm slightly in front of you or to the side.
2. Slowly draw imaginary circles and lines with your arm.
3. Start with five and with small circles and short lines.
4. Increase the size of the circles and length of the lines over the next two weeks if it feels comfortable.



Shoulder Rolls

1. Roll your shoulder forwards and then slowly backwards.
2. When you roll them backwards, squeeze the shoulder blades together at the back.
3. Take a deep breath as you do each exercise.
4. Do this five times every hour. Slowly build up to ten every hour.

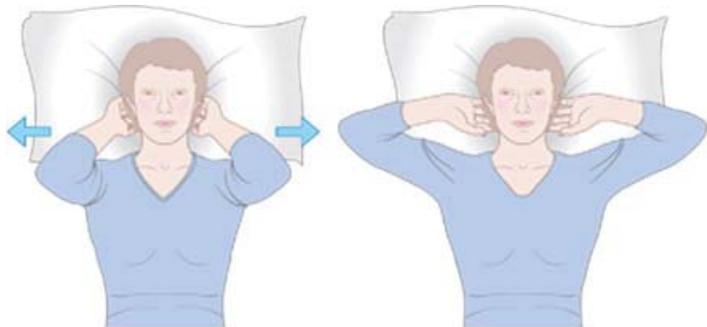


Shoulder Raise

1. Place your fingertips onto your shoulders.
2. Slowly raise the elbow up to the side and then move it clockwise (forwards), gently circling your arm.
3. Repeat it the other direction. Do this five times in each direction. Slowly build up to ten. Repeat every 2-3 hours.

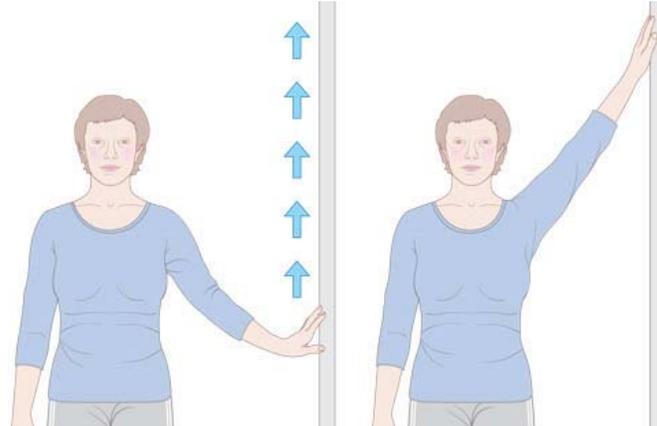


EXERCISES FROM THE SECOND WEEK AFTER SURGERY



Beach Pose (Elbow Wings)

1. Lie on your back.
2. Put your fingers lightly on your ears, with your elbows in the air above your head.
3. Slowly let your elbows fall back to the sides gradually.
4. Gently push them further apart until they reach the floor, as long as you don't increase your pain. You may feel a stretch, which is normal.



Wall Crawl

1. Stand with the side you had the surgery next to the wall.
2. Slowly take your arm out to the side and reach up towards the ceiling.
3. If you can, walk your fingers up the wall so the palm of your hand is facing the wall.

To Reduce Swelling After Surgery

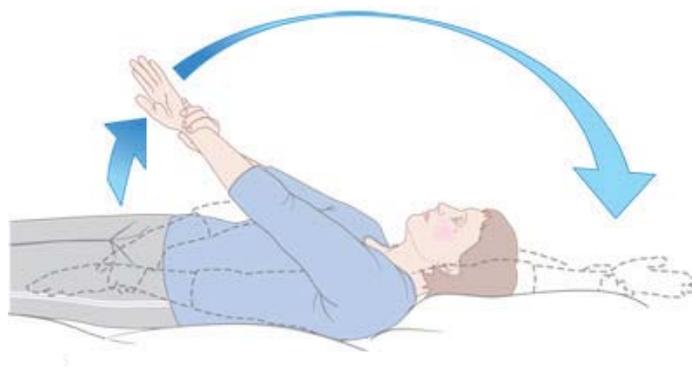
1. **Breast Swelling:** Wear a loose-fitting bra or surgical bra, even while sleeping, for one week.
2. **Arm Swelling:**
 - Do the exercises on this fact sheet and try light weight lifting after 6 weeks.
 - Prevent infection by practicing good personal hygiene. Avoid cuts. If you get a cut, wash and bandage the area. Check for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, tenderness, fever, or fatigue. Call your doctor if you think you have infection; it should be treated right away.
 - Massage the affected arm, starting from the fingers, hands, and up to the shoulder.

When to Ask for Help

Tell your doctor if you:

- Get weaker, start losing your balance, or start falling.
- Have pain that gets worse.
- Have unusual redness, swelling or swelling that gets worse.
- Have headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, new numbness, or tingling in your arms or chest.
- Have shortness of breath.

Always ask your doctor and physical therapist before starting any new exercises.



Arm Lifts

1. Lie on your back and hold your affected arm (on the side you had the surgery) with your other hand.
2. Gently lift your arms as far as you can above your head without increasing your pain.
3. You may feel a pull across the breast area or into your arm. The pull is normal but if you feel any pain don't lift your arm too high.
4. Lift as far as is comfortable over the next few days. It will become easier in time and you will gradually be able to lift it higher.
5. As you feel more comfortable you can try this exercise sitting and standing.