

# Post-operative Exercises - TRAM & DIEP



These exercises should be started following your breast surgery. Breast surgery is complex surgery and can affect the shoulder joint, arm and abdominal muscles. Post-operative physiotherapy exercises can help prevent problems such as pain, reduced movement and reduced strength.

Your physiotherapist may also go over some breathing exercises with you. It is important that you do these exercises regularly throughout the day to prevent complications such as a chest infection.

You should avoid lifting and vacuuming for up to six weeks post-operatively, possibly longer if your wound takes longer to heal.

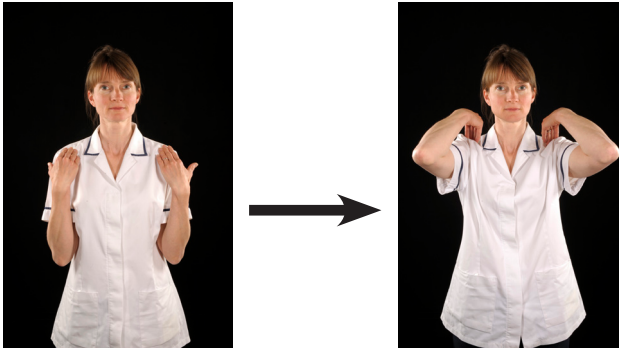
You may be able to resume driving between four and six weeks post-op, depending on your progress and ability to control the car. It is important that you gain permission from your consultant and inform your insurance company of your surgery before you start to drive again.

You should perform the following exercises three times a day for the first six weeks following your surgery:

## Day 1

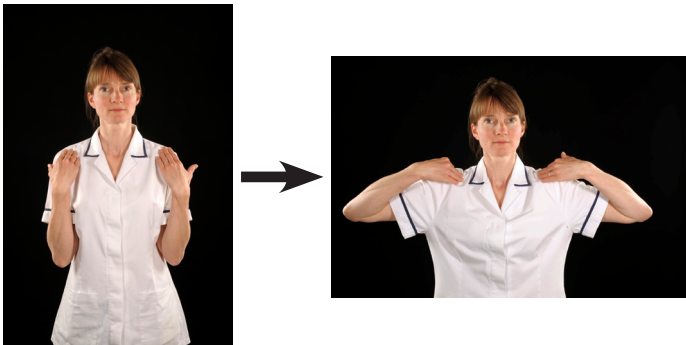
### Short Lever Flexion

- Bend your elbows and rest your hands lightly on your shoulders.
- Raise both your arms out in front of you so they are at right angles to your body; do not lift elbows above the height of your shoulders
- Slowly lower down to your side.
- **Repeat 5-10 times.**



### Short Lever Abduction

- Bend your elbows and rest your hands lightly on your shoulders.
- Raise both your arms out to the side so they are at right angles to your body; do not lift your elbows above the height of your shoulders.
- Slowly lower down to your side.
- **Repeat 5-10 times.**



### Short Lever Internal Rotation

- Reach your hands behind you trying to touch the middle of your back.
- You can do both hands together or one at a time.
- **Repeat 5-10 times.**



### Short Lever External Rotation

- Reach your hands behind your head/neck.
- Make sure you do not pull on the back of your head/neck.
- **Repeat 5-10 times.**



## Day 2-3

### Pelvic Tilt

- Lie on your back with knees bent and arms by your sides.
- Squeeze your buttocks together to flatten your back into the bed.
- Relax and allow your back to arch away from the bed.
- **Repeat 10 times.**



### Leg rolling

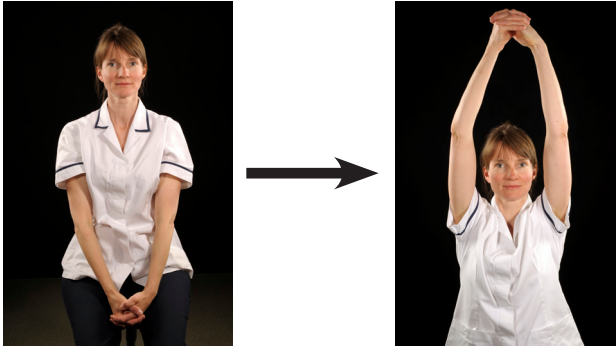
- Lie on your back with knees bent and together.
- Slowly roll your knees from side to side as far as is comfortable, keeping your shoulders flat on the bed.
- **Repeat 10 times to each side.**



## Day 7

### Active assisted flexion

- Clasp your hands in front of you.
- Lift both arms straight forward over your head, hold for 5 seconds.
- **Repeat 5-10 times.**



### Abdominal Hollowing in crook lying

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and arms by your sides.
- Pull your belly button in towards your spine, ensuring you keep breathing.
- Hold for 10 seconds then relax.
- **Repeat 10 times.**



## 4 weeks

### Abdominal hollowing in four-point kneeling

- Position yourself on your hands and knees with shoulders over your hands and hips over your knees.
- Pull your belly button in towards your spine, hollowing your stomach.
- Holds for 10 seconds, making sure you keep breathing.
- **Repeat 10 times.**



## 6 Weeks

### Curl-ups

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the bed, and arms by your sides.
- Place both hands on your thighs.
- Tighten your stomach muscles and slide both hands up your thighs, lifting your head and shoulders off the bed.
- Make sure you keep your neck relaxed.
- **Repeat 10 times.**



## Oblique curl ups

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the bed, and arms by your sides.
- Tighten your stomach muscles, reach over to your left knee (Picture A) lifting your head and shoulders off the bed.
- Return to the starting position then repeat to the right side (Picture B).
- **Repeat 10 times to each side.**



**A**



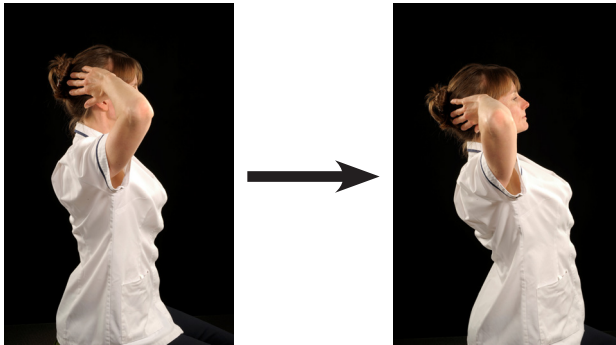
**B**





## Abdominal Stretching

- Sit on the edge on a chair.
- Place your fingers behind your ears with your elbows out.
- Bend back until you feel a stretch down the front of your abdomen.
- Hold for 10 seconds.
- **Repeat 5-10 times.**



## Scar Massage

You should start scar massage once your wounds have healed (about 2-3 weeks). Massage over the donor site and chest wall to ensure that the skin remains supple and prevent the scar from adhering.

- You can use oil (for example sunflower oil; we do not advise you use vitamin E oil or olive oil) or a non-perfumed moisturising cream (we do not advise aqueous cream) to massage.
- Your scars are susceptible to sun damage and you should keep them covered with clothing or wear factor 50 sun block.
- You should massage in small circular movements over the scar. Your therapist will demonstrate this for you.
- You should begin gently to get used to the massage and gradually increase pressure. You are aiming to massage firmly enough to blanch or lighten the skin.

# Future management

If at six weeks you are experiencing shoulder pain or reduced active range of movement in your shoulder, please contact your GP for referral to your local physiotherapy department.

Therapist's Name.....

Phone: 01342 414255



Please ask if you  
would like this leaflet  
in larger print or an  
alternative format.

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