

# Post-operative Physiotherapy advice after Thoracic Surgery

## Immediately post operatively

### Breathing exercises

- Get into a comfortable upright position.
- Take a **slow** deep breath in (through your nose if possible) filling the bottom of your lungs.
- Hold this breath for three seconds then relax and breathe out gently through your mouth.
- Repeat two more times and then rest (more than this may make you feel dizzy or light-headed).
- Supporting your wound if needed, cough as strongly as possible to clear any phlegm from your chest.
- If you are having difficulties deep breathing/coughing or it is too painful please let us know.
- Your physiotherapist will go through these exercises with you on the first day.
- Continue these breathing exercises while you are in hospital.

### Mobilising and exercises

- You will be assisted to sit out of bed as soon as possible, this will enable you to do your breathing exercises effectively in a good position.
- Walking is very important to help your recovery and you should try and do this regularly, it can help to minimise the length of time you need to stay in hospital.
- You will be assisted to walk from day 1. Once you are able to walk independently around the ward please do this **regularly aim for every 2 hours if possible**, please ask for help if you need to, increasing the distance you walk gradually.

### Shoulder exercises

- Your shoulder may be stiff from the surgery, it is important to move your affected arm regularly.
- Slowly reach your hand up above your head as far as you comfortably can and lower.

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## Once discharged home

### Walking

- Carry on with the walking you have been doing in hospital, increasing the distance walked daily.

### Upper body exercises

- Your physiotherapist will discuss the following exercises with you.
- It is important to do these twice a day, to prevent you developing a stiff shoulder.
- Take the operated arm forwards above your head.
- Take the operated arm sideways above your head.
- Bend to one side sliding your hand down your leg, return to the middle and then repeat to the other side.
- With arms crossed over your chest and hands on your shoulders turn to look left and right alternately, keep your back straight.

### Posture

- It is easy to develop poor posture after surgery, therefore try to sit and stand in an upright posture. Look in a mirror if it helps.
- Try to use both sides of your body.

### Rest and fatigue

- It is normal to feel tired after discharge and it is important to rest for several periods of the day between activities.
- Increase activities gradually as you feel able.
- Try to go to bed at reasonable times and don't be afraid to restrict visitors as this too can be tiring.
- You should be able to manage **light** work around the house as you feel able, but avoid any **heavy** lifting for the first 6-8 weeks after surgery.

If you have any concerns please call

Docking Ward Physiotherapist: Ring switchboard 01603 286286 and ask for bleep 1015 (Working hours 8.30-4.30 Mon to Fri)

Docking Ward: 01603 286431 (24 hours)

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