

Exercising After Surgery

If you have ever had surgery, chances are exercise has been part of your recovery process. Depending on the type of surgery, exercise is typically used to help you return to pre-operative activities. If done properly, exercise will definitely improve your balance and make you more flexible. Exercise will strengthen the muscles that help stabilize your joints while keeping your cardiovascular and other bodily systems working properly. How quickly you start exercise after major surgery will vary with the type of surgery you had. Simple outpatient surgery may only require a week or two whereas major surgery will likely sideline you for six to twelve weeks. Even if you begin to feel better prior to full recovery, you should not attempt any exercises without first consulting a physician. Any type of surgery that causes you to suspend your daily activities or exercise routines, will reduce your metabolic level likely leading to weight gain. You would want to incorporate light weight training and cardio into your exercise program only after your physician has given you the okay. If you were an exerciser prior to surgery, slowly build up to the level you were prior to the surgery. Remember, always stay well hydrated no matter what your level of fitness. Water is helpful in keeping your joints lubricated and your synapse firing. Again, take it slow and return to pre-operative exercise levels gradually. If you are not an exerciser, it would be beneficial to solicit the help of a physical therapist or personal trainer. Here are a couple of exercise routines you may consider with two types of surgery. Again, it is very important your physician says it is okay to begin exercising.

Breast Surgery Typically, a week or two after surgery you will still be experiencing some type of discomfort. You can help your recovery along by performing a couple of simple arm exercises. It's always important to remember to breathe during any exercise you may perform. It may seem a little silly so consider doing this in the bathroom if others are around, or, you may not care. Lift your arm which is on the same side the breast surgery was performed. Now simulate the eating motion, going from the bathroom counter up to your mouth. Perform 10 up-and-down motions before stopping. Next, lift your arm higher and simulate a hair brushing movement. Again, perform 10 repetitions prior to quitting. Repeat this cycle two or three times unless you feel discomfort, then discontinue immediately. While you're on the couch watching television, keep that same arm above heart level for an hour or two as this will help to reduce swelling. While your arm is elevated, slowly open and close your hand. As your discomfort decreases, gradually build up to the point where you can clench a tennis ball. To avoid soreness in your elbow, occasionally straighten your arm and bring it back. After a couple of weeks performing the above exercises, you should feel strong enough to do the following: You'll need a broom handle to complete this exercise, and you will also need to cut the broom portion off. With the handle in both hands, palms up and arms stretching outward, lift the broom handle above your head and hold for a count of five, then lower to your pelvis area and repeat up to 10 times unless you feel great discomfort.

Hysterectomy Again, before starting any exercise program after surgery, be sure to consult your physician first. With these exercises, you will work your abdominal area, pelvic region and back muscles. Lie on the floor with your knees bent and your hands behind your head. Start by pressing the small area of your back gently into the floor, then even more firmly. If pain increases don't continue, stop immediately. Do up to 10 repetitions, rest and repeat for as many sets as you feel comfortable doing.

For the abdominal area, a traditional crunch works very well. If you are not familiar with the crunch, lie on the floor with your knees bent and your hands behind your head. Slowly lift your head and shoulders off of the floor roughly 6 inches. While you're lifting, be sure not to tuck your chin into your chest. Then slowly lower your head and shoulders back to the floor and to repeat up to 10 times, again for as many sets as you feel comfortable doing.

The third exercise is from the same position. Lift your hips off the floor a couple of inches, hold for a few seconds, and then lower them back to the ground repeating the same repetition recipe, up to 10 repetitions and as many sets as you feel comfortable doing.

The fourth exercise is performed lying flat on the ground. Slowly raise your right arm and your left leg. Then alternate bringing down your right arm while raising your left arm. In the same motion, begin lowering your left leg while raising your right, much like a scissors movement. Again, 10 repetitions and as many sets as you feel comfortable performing.

In all of these exercises, I mentioned you should perform 10 repetitions and as many sets as you feel comfortable doing. Realistically, start with one set, then the next day if you are able, do two sets, third day three sets and so on. Again, never continue exercising if you feel pain.

About the Author

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