

Fitness - The Importance Of Exercise For Women After Surgery

Some form of exercise following surgery may well be recommended by your doctor as part of a physical therapy program or, alternatively, may simply be something that you decide to do to get yourself back into your pre-operative routine. Whatever the reason, exercise can help you to strengthen your muscles and stabilize your joints, giving you back your flexibility and balance and keeping your cardiovascular and other body systems functioning properly. Just when you can begin to exercise and what sort of exercise you can do will depend upon the type of treatment you have had and most doctors will recommend anywhere from a week to perhaps two or three months of recuperation before even attempting regular routines. Most women will want to do some sort of toning exercises and will also probably want to achieve a little bit of weight loss. One unfortunate side-effect of many forms of surgery is that both your metabolic rate and activity levels drop and this often leads to weight gain and, dare I say it, flabbiness. Two things to remember before any exercise program following surgery. First, make sure that you keep yourself well hydrated. No matter what type of exercise you do water is essential to keep your endocrine system functioning properly and to help the process that keeps your joints lubricated. Second, don't try to rush things but take it slowly and return your body to its pre-operative level gradually. Here are some specific exercises to try for two different types of surgery. Before trying them though remember that no two surgeries are the same and that no two people will react to surgery in the same way, so consult your doctor before trying any exercise program.

Breast Surgery Although you'll still be experiencing some discomfort a week or so after surgery, some simple arm exercises, carried out while breathing deeply but normally, will help your recovery. For the first couple of weeks after you start exercising try this exercise two or three times each day. Start by lifting the arm on the operative side and simulate the act of eating and then hair brushing. Do a few repetitions raising your hand first to about the height of your mouth and then slowly bringing it up and back as if you were brushing your hair. After a few repetitions of this sit comfortably with this same arm raised above the level of your heart for about an hour, perhaps while you're watching television or listening to the radio. At the same time slowly open and close your hand and, as the discomfort lessens, begin to use a ball (a tennis ball is an ideal size) and gently squeeze and release the ball while your arm is elevated. This will help to reduce swelling in your arm and will also help circulation within the arm and tone up your muscles. As an alternative to clenching your fist, try bending and straightening your elbow. After a couple of weeks you should feel fit enough to move on to the following exercise. Take hold of a broom handle (without the broom head), or something similar, in both hands and hold it with your arms outstretched and your palms facing up. Slowly lift the broom handle above the head and hold it there for a few seconds before lowering it to waist height. Do several repetitions of this exercise for as long as you feel comfortable two or three times each day.

Hysterectomy These exercises are designed to your abdominal, pelvic, and back muscles. Lie on the floor with your hands behind your head and your knees bent. Slowly press the small of your back gently onto the floor and then gradually increase the pressure. Do several repetitions of this exercise but, if it becomes painful, try pressing less hard onto the floor or stop altogether and try again later. Next, raise your head and shoulders slightly off the floor (without moving your head forward so that chin moves towards your chest) and pay particular attention to the contraction of your abdominal muscles. Then slowly lower the head and shoulders back to the floor. Repeat this several times. Now, lift your hips and hold this position for a few seconds before lowering them. Try to do this about ten times. Okay so far? Let's keep going then. Roll over onto your knees, making sure you're on a soft carpeted floor or have something under your knees to protect them. Slowly raise your right arm and your left leg and hold this position for a second or two before returning them to the ground. Now repeat this using your left arm and your right leg. Once and, try to repeat this exercise about ten times. In all cases, take things slowly and if exercising is at all painful then stop immediately and take a good break before trying again. Mild discomfort is fine and indeed is to be expected when you start to exercise but pain is your body's way of telling you that you're trying to do too much too soon.

About the Author

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