

General exercise programme

A patient's guide

These exercises have been developed for people who are breathless or weak. If done regularly, they will increase muscle strength, improve your circulation and help with your shortness of breath.

Guideline for safe exercise

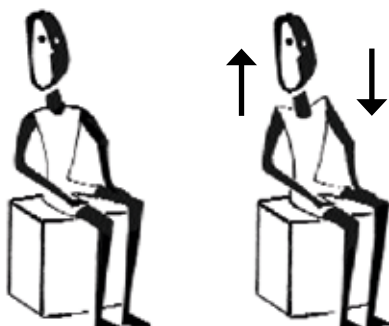
- Try to find a comfortable position and relax the muscles not involved in the exercise.
- Avoid holding your breath while exercising.
- Give yourself time to recover your breath after each exercise. Rushing to finish the exercise can make you feel more breathless. Your breathing should sound quiet. Breathe in and out at a comfortable pace. Repeat until your breathing feels settled and comfortable.
- You do not have to do all the exercises in one session. It may be better for you to do several short sessions of exercise each day, rather than one long session.
- If you feel unwell you may need to stop exercising or reduce the amount you are doing. Gradually build it up again as you start feeling better.

- Try to find a regular pattern for exercise that fits into your daily routine. Avoid exercising for an hour after a meal.
- You may find that some of the exercises become too easy for you; read the 'progression' column to see how to make your muscles work harder.

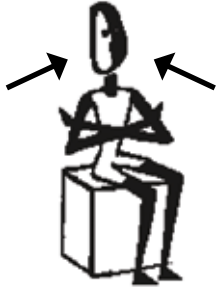
Flexibility exercises

These exercises will help to keep your body and shoulders flexible; do them slowly, five times in each direction. Start these exercises by sitting on an upright chair.

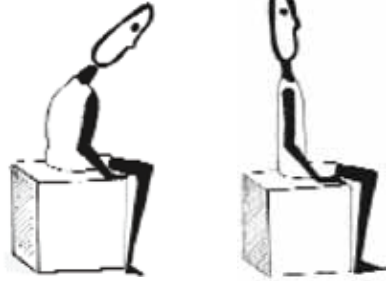
1. Shrug shoulders up and down.



2. Keeping hips and feet facing straight forwards, turn your head and trunk as far as you can comfortably go, first to the right and then to the left.




3. Breathe out and slowly slump down. Slowly straighten up whilst taking a breath in.




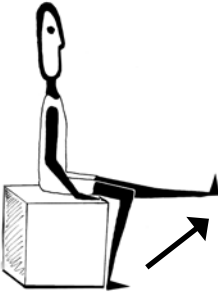
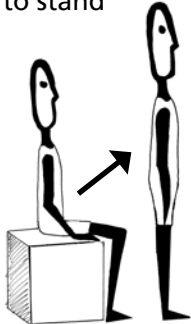
Strengthening exercises

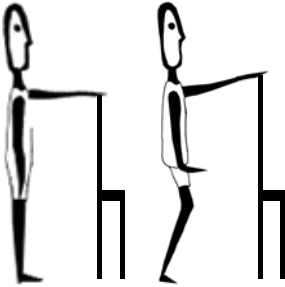
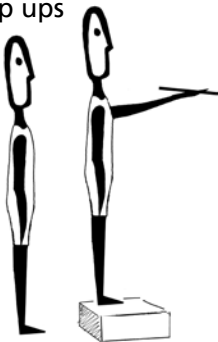
Warm-up exercise: sitting on a bed or chair, pump your feet up and down. This helps the movement in your ankles and the blood flow in your legs.

Aim: To strengthen your thigh muscles

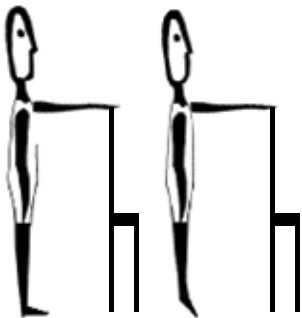
Type of exercise	Reps	Method	Progression
<p>1. Inner range</p> 		<p>Lying or sitting on a bed, place a rolled up towel under knee, pull foot up towards you</p> <p>Lift foot to straighten knee</p> <p>Count to five</p> <p>Relax down</p> <p>Repeat using other leg</p>	<p>Increase number of repetitions</p> <p>Add a weight to the ankle (reduce repetitions at first)</p>

Aim: To strengthen your thigh muscles


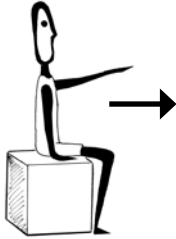

Type of exercise	Reps	Method	Progression
<p>2. Straight leg raise</p> 		<p>Lying or sitting on a bed - pull foot up towards you</p> <p>Keeping knee straight lift leg six inches</p> <p>Count to five</p> <p>Relax down</p> <p>Repeat using other leg</p>	<p>Increase number of repetitions</p> <p>Add a weight at the ankle (reduce repetitions at first)</p>
<p>3. Middle and inner range</p> 		<p>Sitting on a chair or over edge of the bed</p> <p>Lift your foot to straighten knee</p> <p>Count to five</p> <p>Relax gently down</p> <p>Repeat using other leg</p>	<p>Increase number of repetitions</p> <p>Add a weight at the ankle (reduce repetitions at first)</p>
<p>4. Sit to stand</p> 		<p>Sitting on a chair with hands on your knees (or on arms of chair)</p> <p>Stand up, then sit down slowly</p>	<p>Do not use your arms</p> <p>Increase number of repetitions, then use lower chair or stool</p>

Type of exercise	Reps	Method	Progression
<p>5. Squats</p> 		<p>Hold onto the back of a chair, standing up. Slowly bend your knees a small way, hold, then stand up straight</p>	<p>To make this exercise harder, increase the depth of squat by bending your knees more</p>
<p>6. Step ups</p> 		<p>Standing in front of a step or bottom stair. Hold onto a hand rail. Slowly step up onto the stair with both feet, then step down again. Alternate leg you lead with</p>	<p>To make this exercise harder, increase the height of the step</p>

Aim: To strengthen your calves

Type of exercise	Reps	Method	Progression
<p>7. Heel raiser</p> 		<p>Hold onto the back of a chair, standing up Rise up onto toes and back down to floor</p>	<p>Increase number of repetitions Then progress onto one foot (reduce repetitions at first)</p>

Aim: To strengthen your arm muscles

Type of exercise	Reps	Method	Progression
<p>8. Bicep curls</p> 		<p>Sitting on a chair or over edge of the bed, starting with your palm facing forward</p> <p>Bend elbow bringing hand to shoulder</p>	<p>Increase the number, of repetitions</p> <p>Add weight (reduce number of repetitions at first)</p>
<p>9. Reaching forward</p> 		<p>Sitting on a chair or over edge of the bed</p> <p>Start with hand at shoulder</p> <p>Stretch arm out in front</p>	<p>Increase the number, of repetitions</p> <p>Add weight (reduce number of repetitions at first)</p>
<p>10. Reaching upward</p> 		<p>Sitting on a chair or over edge of the bed</p> <p>Start with hand at shoulder</p> <p>Stretch arm above head</p>	<p>Increase the number, of repetitions</p> <p>Add weight (reduce number of repetitions at first)</p>

Walking

Whether you can walk a few steps or a few miles, walking is a good way of maintaining your fitness. Here is some simple advice to ensure that you get the maximum benefit from walking:

- Dress in loose fitting clothes and wear comfortable shoes
- Walk at a pace that enables you to maintain your breathing. If you become too breathless, stop and rest until you recover and then continue
- Start with a distance you can comfortably manage and gradually build it up as you are able to. If you have been advised to do so, you can then increase your walking speed
- Try to vary the route to make it more interesting
- Avoid extreme weather conditions ie too windy, wet, cold or too hot, as this may make you feel more tired or breathless

Static exercise bicycle or pedals

Some people find using a 'static' bicycle or pedals a good way of exercising particularly during the winter months. Discuss this with your physiotherapist if you feel you would like to do this.

If you experience any problems with these exercises, or need advice about exercise, please contact us at Papworth Hospital on 01480 364215.

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