

Exercises After Breast Surgery (Without Drains)

General Guidelines

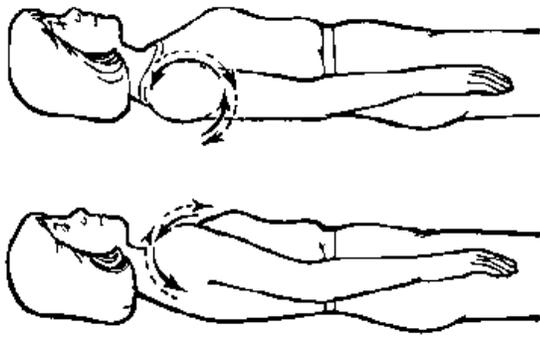
Begin these exercises immediately after your surgery. If you had reconstructive surgery, discuss the timing of these exercises with your plastic surgeon. These exercises are designed to improve the range of motion (flexibility) and the strength of your shoulder and arm. They can help to reduce stiffness in the shoulder and the formation of scar tissue. You will feel some tightness in your chest and underarm after surgery. This is normal and should decrease as you continue with your exercise program.

Many women experience burning, tingling or soreness on the back of the arm and/or chest wall. This occurs because the surgery can irritate nerve endings. Although the sensations may increase a few weeks after surgery, continue to do these exercises unless you notice unusual swelling or tenderness.

You should do the exercises so you feel a slow stretch. Do not bounce or jerk your arm when doing any of the exercises. Continue doing these exercises until you have achieved full shoulder range of motion, which should occur within one to two months after surgery. If you continue to have limitation of motion or difficulty resuming normal dressing, bathing, grooming or other daily activities, ask your doctor for specific instructions or a referral to a physical therapist.

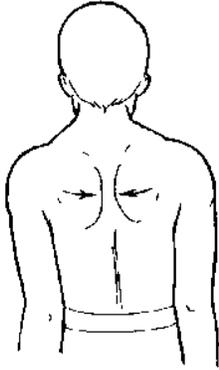
Exercise #1

Lie on your back with your shoulders relaxed. Slowly rotate your shoulders backward. Repeat, this time rotating your shoulders forward. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



Exercise #2

Lie on your back with your arms at your sides. Pinch your shoulder blades together as shown. Hold for five seconds. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



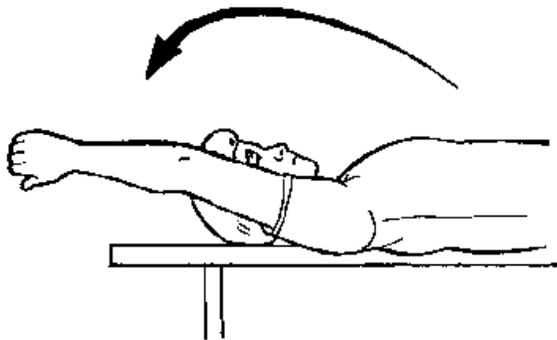
Exercise #3

Lie on your back. Grasp the elbow that is on the side of your breast surgery with your other hand as shown. Pull the elbow and arm across your chest so that you feel a stretch. Hold for five seconds. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



Exercise #4

Lie on your back as shown. Raise the arm that is on the side of your breast surgery overhead as far as you can. Lead with your thumb and keep your elbow straight. Hold for five seconds and slowly lower your arm. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



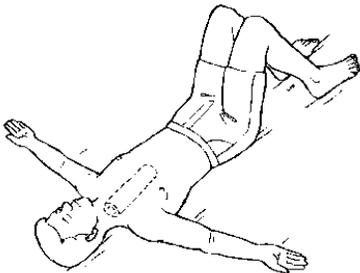
Exercise #5

Lie on your back with your hands behind your neck and your elbows pointing toward the ceiling. Move your elbows apart and down to touch the bed. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



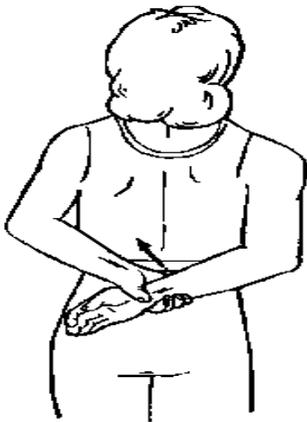
Exercise #6

Roll up a small towel so that it makes a firm roll two to three inches thick. Lie on your back with the towel aligned between your shoulder blades as shown. Stay in this position for five minutes. Do three times per day.



Exercise #7

While standing, reach behind your back with the arm that is on the side of your breast surgery. Grasp your arm with your other hand. Try to pull your arm upward as shown so that you feel a gentle stretch in your shoulder. Hold for five seconds. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



Exercise #8

Stand in a corner about one to two feet from a wall. Place your hands on the wall as shown. Lean into the corner so that you feel a stretch in the shoulder that is on the side of your breast surgery and in the front of your chest. Vary the stretch by moving your arms higher, lower or by standing farther away from the wall. Hold for 30 seconds. Do five repetitions, three times per day.

