

## After you go home

- Continue to take your medications as indicated by your physician.
- You may feel very tired so take things slowly (you may need to take extra rest breaks, such as an afternoon nap, and have someone help you with groceries, housework, cooking and/or yardwork). Do not let this get you down. It is normal to feel tired and this will improve over a few weeks.
- Gradually, try to get back into your normal routine.
- Avoid lifting, pushing and pulling objects heavier than 10 lbs (5kg) for 6-8 weeks.
- Check with your doctor to see when you can start working and/or driving again.
- If you are wondering about a specific activity such as golfing, swimming, or traveling, you should ask your surgeon.
- If you experience excessive sweating, shortness of breath or fatigue during any activity, you may be increasing your activity level too quickly. If this happens to you, stop, rest and resume the activity at a slower pace. If these signs persist, contact your doctor.
- Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet and avoiding smoking.

### Exercise

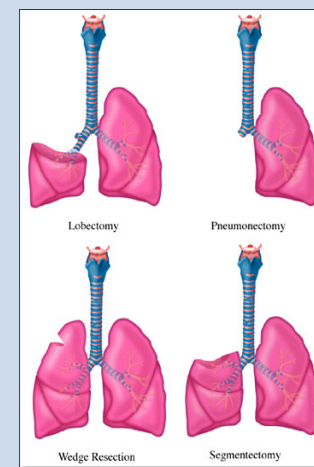
- After surgery, you need to gradually increase your exercise/activity levels.
- Walking is the easiest way to exercise. Once you leave the hospital, you can start with 2-3 walks per day (the same distance you were walking in the hospital). Over time, you can slowly increase this distance so that in 6-8 weeks you can walk for 30 minutes or more (this will depend on your fitness level before your surgery and you can discuss walking distance with your doctor or a physiotherapist). Remember that you should be able to talk while you are walking. If you are too short of breath to talk, stop, rest and recover before you continue.

## Physiotherapy/SMH

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# Physiotherapy After Thoracic Surgery



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# Thoracic Surgery

## During your hospital stay

A physiotherapist will usually see you the day after your surgery to:

- Listen to your lungs and review breathing exercises to make sure that you can clear any phlegm.
- Teach you some exercises.
- Help you to stand and march on the spot, walk and/or transfer to a chair.

A physiotherapist will continue to see you until:

- You are managing to do the exercises on your own.
- You can safely walk by yourself or with a staff member.

Before you go home, the physiotherapist may also check that you are able to climb stairs.

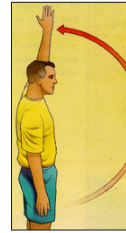
## Breathing Exercises

These exercises are important as they keep your lungs expanded and prevent complications. They should be done every hour while you are awake.

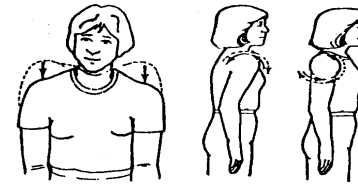
- If you are having pain, ask your nurse for pain medication prior to doing breathing exercises
- Make sure you are sitting in an upright position with your shoulders relaxed.
  1. Take a slow deep breath through your nose and hold for a count of 3. You can put your hand on your abdomen and feel it rise as you breathe in.
  2. Try and sniff in an extra bit of air before you breathe out.
  3. Breathe out gently through your mouth.
  4. Repeat 4 times.
  5. Breathe normally for 4 breaths.
  6. Repeat steps 1-5.
  7. After doing the breathing exercises, try a strong cough while supporting your incision with a pillow or blanket.

## Arm Exercises

All exercises should be done on the side of your operation, up to the point where you start to feel either a stretch or pain. You should not push through the pain or overstretch at this point. Try to do these exercises twice a day.



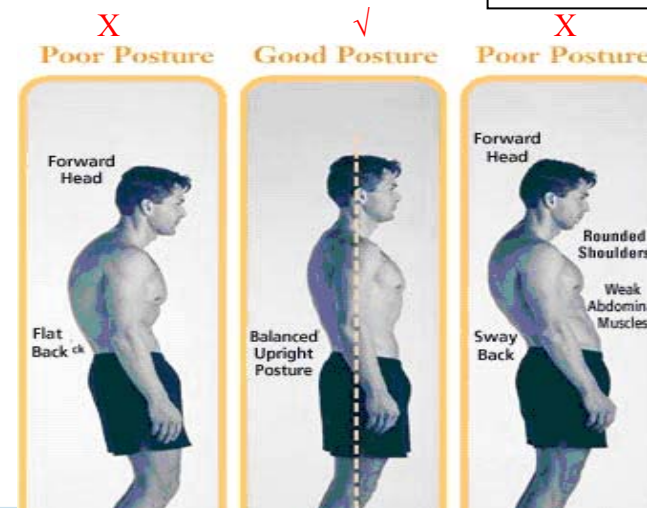
1. Lying on your back or sitting up raise your arm until you feel a stretch. Take a deep breath as you raise your arm and breathe out as you lower your arm. Repeat 10 times.



2. Shrug both your shoulders and relax. Roll shoulders forward and back. Repeat 10 times.



3. Lying on your back, put your hand on your shoulder and push your elbow back towards the bed. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 5 times.



After surgery, when sitting and standing, try to keep your shoulders comfortably back and your neck in line with your body to prevent poor posture.