

INTRODUCTION

Women with Breast Cancer may have many different kinds of treatments. Many women with Breast Cancer have some kind of surgery. You may have had:

- Breast Biopsy
- Lymph Node Biopsy or Removal
- Breast Conservation Surgery
- Mastectomy
- Breast Reconstruction

Any of these can affect how well you can move your shoulder and arm, take a deep breath, or do your daily activities, like dressing, bathing and combing your hair.

No matter what type of surgery you had, it is important to do exercise afterwards. Exercises help to decrease any side effects of your surgery and make you able to go back to your normal daily activities.

Exercises during your Radiation Therapy are important to help keep your arm and

your shoulder and arm, which is why this leaflet has been given to you.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- It may be helpful to do exercises after a warm shower when the muscles are warm and relaxed.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing when doing exercises.
- Do the exercises until you feel a slow stretch. Hold each stretch at the end of the motion and slowly count to 5. It is normal to feel some pulling as you stretch the skin and muscles that have been shortened because of the surgery. Do not bounce or make any jerky movements when doing any of the exercise. You should not feel pain as you do the exercises, only gentle stretching.
- Do each exercise 5-7 times and try to do each exercise correctly. If you are having trouble with the exercises, talk to your doctor.
- Do the exercises twice a day.

- Have headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, new numbness, or tingling in arms or chest.

LYING DOWN EXERCISES

These exercises should be done on a bed or the floor. Lie down on your back with your knees and hips bent and your feet flat.

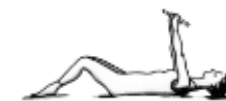
Wand Exercise:

This exercise helps increase the forward motion of your shoulders. You will need a broom handle or another stick-like object to use as the wand.

1. Hold the wand in both hands with palms facing up.



2. Lift the wand over your head as far as you can. Use your unaffected arm to help lift the wand until you feel a stretch in your affected arm.



3. Hold for 5 seconds.

shoulder flexible. Radiation Therapy may affect your arm and shoulder for up to 6-9 months after it is finished.

This leaflet serves as a guide for exercises that may improve your flexibility in advance of starting your Radiation Therapy treatments. If you have been given exercises by a Physiotherapist, it is important that you continue with this programme: these exercises are not meant to replace the programme that you were given after your surgery.

In order to achieve the optimum position for your breast Radiation Therapy, it is important to be able to achieve and maintain a wide range of movements in

- Be sure to take deep breaths, in and out, as you do each exercise.
- The exercises are set up so that you start them lying down, move to sitting and finish them standing.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Start exercising slowly and increase it as you are able. Stop exercising and talk to your doctor if you:

- Get weaker, start losing balance, or start falling.
- Have pain that gets worse.
- Have new heaviness in your arm.
- Have unusual swelling or swelling gets worse.

4. Lower arms and repeat 5-7 times.

Elbow Winging:

This exercise helps increase the movement in the front of your chest and shoulder. It may take many weeks of regular exercise before your elbows will get close to the bed or floor.

1. Clasp your hands behind your neck with your elbows pointing towards the ceiling.



2. Move your elbows apart and down toward the bed or floor.



3. Repeat 5-7 times.

SITTING UP EXERCISES

Shoulder Blade Stretch:

This exercise helps increase your shoulder blade movement

1. Sit in a chair very close to a table with your back against the back of the chair.



2. Place the unaffected arm on the table with your elbow bent and palm down. Do not move this arm during the exercise.
3. Place the affected arm on the table, palm down, with your elbow straight.
4. Without moving your trunk, slide the affected arm forward, toward the opposite side of the table. You should feel your shoulder blade move.
5. Relax your arm and repeat 5-7 times.

Shoulder Blade Squeeze:

STANDING EXERCISES

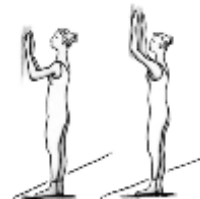
Chest Wall Stretch:

1. Stand facing a corner with your toes about 8-10" from the corner.
2. Bend your elbows and put your forearms on the wall, one on each side of the corner, Your elbows should be as close to shoulder height as possible.
3. Keep your arms and feet in place and move your chest toward the corner. You will feel a stretch across your chest and shoulders.
4. Return to the starting position and repeat 5-7 times.



Shoulder Stretch:

1. Stand facing the wall with your toes 8-10" from the wall.
2. Put your hands on the wall. Use your fingers to 'Climb the Wall', reaching as high as you can until you feel a stretch.



EXERCISES AFTER BREAST SURGERY



This exercise also helps increase shoulder blade movement.

1. Facing straight ahead, sit in a chair in front of a mirror. Do not rest against the back of the chair.



2. Your arms should be at your sides with your elbows bent.
3. Squeeze your shoulder blades together, bringing your elbows behind you. Keep your shoulders level as you do this. Do not lift your shoulders up towards your ears.



4. Return to the starting position and repeat 5-7 times.

3. Return to the starting position and repeat 5-7 times.

This Guide was developed using references from the American Cancer Society:
<http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer/MoreInformation/exercises-after-breast-surgery>

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address: UPMC Whitfield Cancer Centre, Cork Road, Co. Waterford

Telephone: 051337444

Website: UPMCWhitfieldCancerCentre.ie