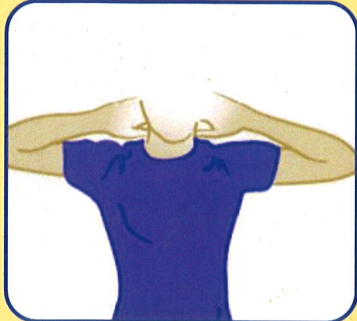
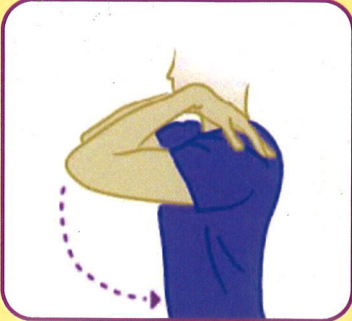
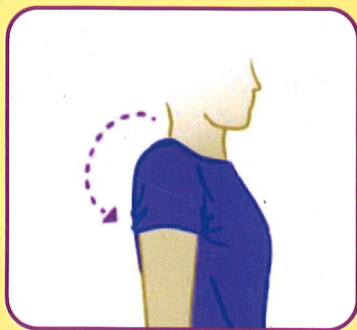




Exercises after breast cancer surgery



JASCAP a registered charitable trust provides information to patients & their families, on various aspects of cancer and its treatment, in different Indian languages, since 1996.

The information in this booklet can help cancer patients and their families to understand the disease and its treatment and thus cope with it better.

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EXERCISES AFTER BREAST CANCER SURGERY

1. Why do the exercises?

These exercises aim to help you regain arm and shoulder movement after surgery for breast cancer.

They have been devised with the help of breast surgeons and physiotherapists.

The exercises are suitable for people who have had:

- breast surgery
- lymph node removal
- radiotherapy.

The exercises in this leaflet can help:

- get back the range of movement and function you had before surgery
- improve symptoms of tight scars and cording - when you feel as if you have a tight cord running from the armpit to your elbow in your affected arm, or sometimes down the whole length of the arm
- prevent long-term problems with arm and shoulder movement, posture and stiffness
- reduce the risk of lymphoedema - swelling caused by a build-up of lymph fluid.

If you're worried about any of these, or have symptoms of cording, speak to your surgeons or physiotherapists.

If you've had breast reconstruction

If you've recently had a breast reconstruction, talk to the surgeon who did the operation or your physiotherapist before you start or continue with any exercises, and follow their advice.

2. When should I start the exercises?

Start the exercises as soon as you can, ideally the day after your surgery.

In the first week after your surgery, you can start the warm-up and basic exercises.

In the second week, you can do the more advanced exercises as well (if you have removable stitches or a drain, wait until these have been removed).

These timings are meant as a guideline only. Complete the exercises at your own pace.

3. How much exercise should I do?

You should do the exercises every day.

Repeat each exercise 5 times before you move on to the next one.

Try to do the exercises 3 times a day - in the morning, around midday and in the evening.

Don't worry if you can't manage to do all the exercises every time. For example, during radiotherapy you may find the exercises more difficult.

Do as much as you feel able to at a pace you're comfortable with.

4. How hard are the exercises?

The more you do the exercises, the easier they should become.

You shouldn't feel pain when doing the exercises. However, a stretching or pulling sensation is normal.

Always do the warm-up at the start and the cool-down at the end of each session to help avoid injury and prevent stiffness.

If you become concerned about your range of movement or level of discomfort, speak to your physiotherapist.

5. How long should I do the exercises for?

Muscles seize up very quickly if they're not used, so it's important to do these exercises as part of your daily routine.

Arm stiffness or weakness can occur long after surgery and following radiotherapy.

If you've just had surgery, keep doing the exercises until you have got back the range of movement you had before your operation. Continue doing the exercises if you're going on to have radiotherapy as they will help your shoulder flexibility.

If you've had radiotherapy, it's a good idea to do the exercises for as long as you're still experiencing tightness and stiffness, and you may want to continue doing them after this.

Talk to your physiotherapist if you're not sure how long to keep up the exercise programme or if you have any concerns about your recovery after surgery.

6. Reasons to stop exercising

Stop doing the exercises and speak to your surgeon or physiotherapist if you have:

- a seroma (a collection of fluid under the arm or in the breast or chest wall)
- wound infection or healing problems
- prolonged pain or pain that gets worse.

It's important to start the exercises again once these issues have been resolved and your surgeon or breast care nurse says it's safe to do so.

7. Warm-up and cool-down

Do exercises 1 and 2 to warm up before you do any other exercises on this leaflet. Repeat them at the end to cool down. You can do them standing up or sitting down.

1

Shoulder shrugs

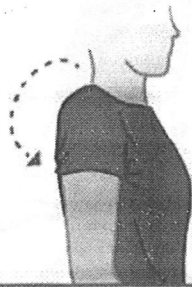


- Keep your arms loose and relaxed by your sides.
- Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and lower gently back down.

2

Shoulder circling

- Keep your arms loose and relaxed by your sides.
- Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears, then circle them back and down.

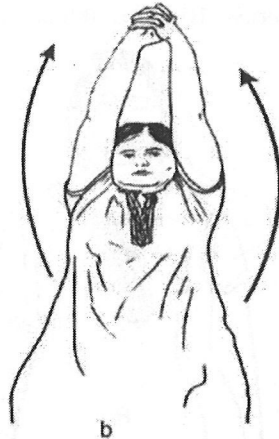


Exercise 1

Sit in a relaxed manner; take the affected arm with the help of the normal hand up over head as shown below. Keep your arm straight throughout the exercises. Return to your starting position. Repeat 10 times. (Figure 1)



Fig1



Exercise 2

Sit in a relaxed manner; with palms facing downwards, move your affected arm with assistance (therapist or relative) away from your body and up towards your head. Return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. (figure 2)

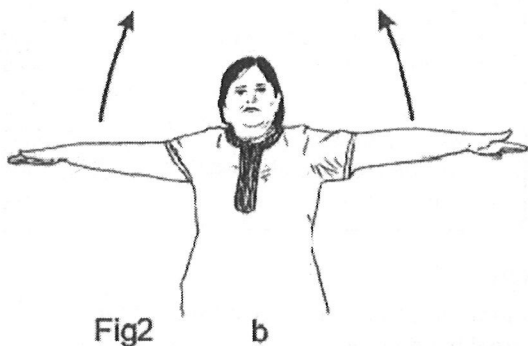


Fig2

Exercise 3

Sit in a relaxed manner; gently lift your shoulders up towards your ears. Hold for 5 seconds and then return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. (Figure 3)

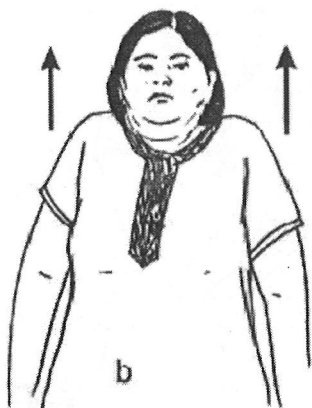


Fig 3

Exercises 4

Sit in a relaxed manner; pinch your shoulder blades together as tight as possible. Hold for three seconds and then relax. Repeat 10 times. (Figure 4)

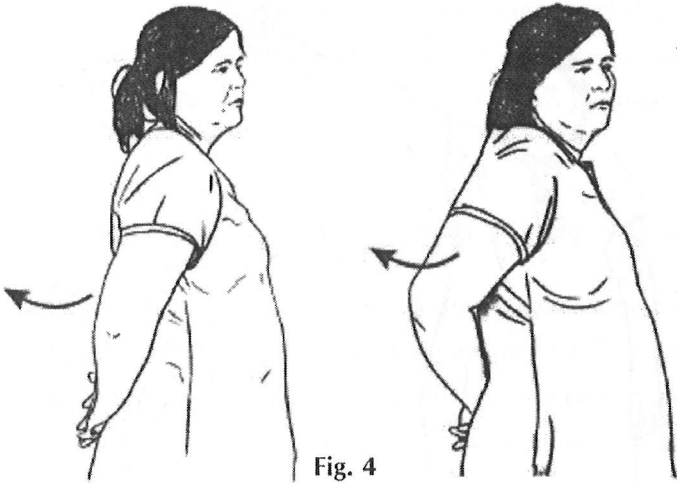


Fig. 4

Exercises 5

Sit in a relaxed manner; cross your forearm and clasp each other just below the elbow joint and raise over head and move either side for 10 times (figure 5)

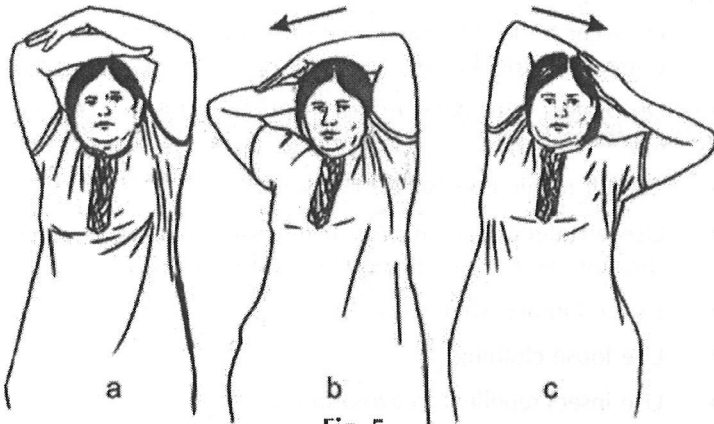


Fig. 5

Exercises 6

Sit in a relaxed manner. Hold a soft ball in your hand. Raise the hand slightly above your shoulder level and squeeze the ball and release it in slow rhythmic manner. (Figure 6)

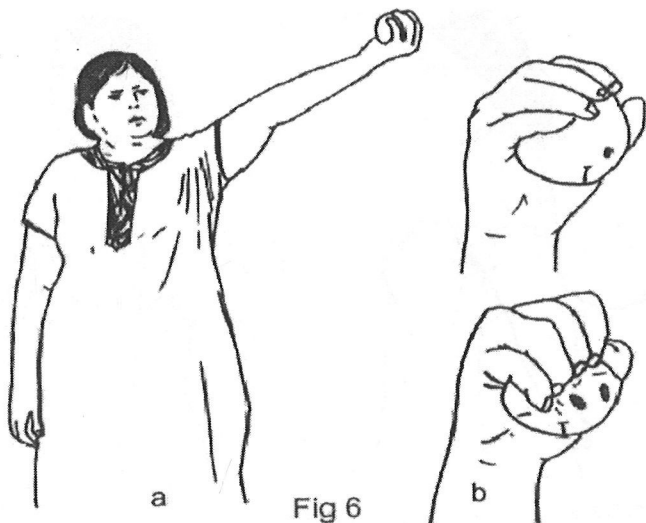


Fig 6

Please follow these rules

Do's

- Do wear a loose rubber glove on your hand when washing dishes or gardening
- Do protect your hand from pin pricks, scratches or cuts of any kind
- Careful manicure should be practiced
- Use an electric razor with a narrow head for underarms shaving, reduce the risk of nicks and scratches
- Use a thimble while stitching
- Use loose clothing.
- Use insect repellent to avoid bites.

Dont's

- Do not allow injections of any kind on the affected arm.
- Do not allow blood to be drawn for tests from the affected arm.

- Do not take blood pressure recordings on the affected arm.
- Do not wear tight clothing or jewelery on the affected arm.
- Do not expose the affected arm or hand to extremes of temperatures

Please remember

- Exercises should be started second day after your surgery or when instructed by your surgeon.
- It should be performed 3 times a day and 10 repetitions each.
- Please continue exercises for a minimum period of 6 months.
- It is important to do your exercises during radiation therapy.
- If you notice any swelling of the arm please contact us at the following address.

We at Physiotherapy Department are keen to provide assistance as per your needs.

Contact :

Physiotherapy Department,
Tata Memorial Hospital
Main Building, Ground floor, Room No. MBG-96,
Dr. E. Borges Road, Parel 400 012.
Tel.: 022 24177226



***This patient information book has been compiled
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Important

DISCLAIMER

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