

Activity After Bariatric Surgery

Physical therapy and exercise

This handout gives exercise goals and activity precautions to follow after bariatric surgery.

Why is exercise important?

- Activity after surgery helps prevent:
 - Upper respiratory infections
 - Blood clots
 - Constipation
- An exercise and strength training program will help you:
 - Strengthen your muscles and bones
 - Burn calories, helping you lose weight
 - Relieve stress
 - Improve your overall health
 - Maintain a healthy weight over time



Exercise is very important after having bariatric surgery.

In the Hospital

While you are in the hospital, you will:

- Get out of bed with help from your nurses or therapists
- Meet with a physical therapist (PT) and an occupational therapist (OT)
- Sit in a chair for at least 6 hours
- Walk in the hall 5 times, for a total of 9 to 18 laps around the unit

For Your Safety

- Log-roll in and out of bed to protect your incision. Your PT or OT will teach you how to do this.
- Breathe normally while moving in bed, getting to a chair, and exercising. Do not hold your breath.

Effort When Exercising

0	At Rest
1	
2	
3	
4	Goal Range 5 = working hard
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	Most Effort

- Do **not** lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds until your doctor says it is OK. (A gallon of water weighs almost 9 pounds.) Your doctor will talk with you about this at your 6-week follow-up visit.

How hard should I exercise?

The table at left shows your target exercise range, on a scale from 0 to 10.

- For your home workouts, exercise in the goal range between 4 and 5.
- Use the “walk and talk test” to check how hard you are exercising. You want to be a little short of breath but still able to talk with someone.

Ways to Increase Your Daily Activity

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park farther away from the store.
- Walk instead of drive.
- Get off the bus a few stops earlier and walk to where you are going.
- Walk at the mall.
- Dance around the house.
- Play with your children, grandchildren, or pets.
- Stretch, do sitting exercises, or lift hand weights while watching TV.
- Do housework or yardwork.
- Join an exercise club or class. Water exercise programs may be best if you have joint pain.
- Buy a pedometer or smart watch to track your progress and set goals.

Activity Goals at Home

- As soon as you can, return to your home exercise program that your outpatient physical therapist created with you.
- For the most weight loss, aim to walk 10,000 to 12,000 steps a day.
- Return to the gym as you can. Start with light weights that weigh less than 10 pounds. Make sure you are not holding your breath or straining.
- Return to swimming when your incisions are healed and your doctor says it is OK.
- Start with the exercises in this packet and progress to more challenging exercises as you can. Strength training will help your muscles get stronger. This is very important after bariatric surgery.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Physical Therapy:
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