

Activity After Ostomy Surgery

Guidelines and self-care

This handout gives activity guidelines to follow after abdominal surgery. Following these guidelines will protect your abdomen and incisions and help you recover.

Protect Your Abdomen

For **6 weeks** after surgery:

- Do **not** lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 10 pounds. (A gallon of water weighs almost 9 pounds.) This includes groceries, laundry, children, pets, heavy pots and pans, and other items. Ask for help with these tasks.
- Do **not** hold your breath during any activity. Holding your breath increases pressure on your abdomen. This can delay healing.
- Do **not** open tight jar lids, stuck windows, or heavy doors. Ask for help with anything that requires effort.
- Do **not** do anything that causes you to bend, twist, or bounce a lot. This means you cannot bowl, golf, ski, run, ride a horse, or do similar activities. Ask your medical team and physical therapist (PT) when it will be OK to return to these types of activities. You should be able to slowly resume these activities after about 6 weeks.
- Wear an abdominal binder for support, if your doctor advises you to do this.
- We encourage you to do light activity. You may stand at the sink to wash light dishes, fold laundry, make simple meals and do easy exercises.

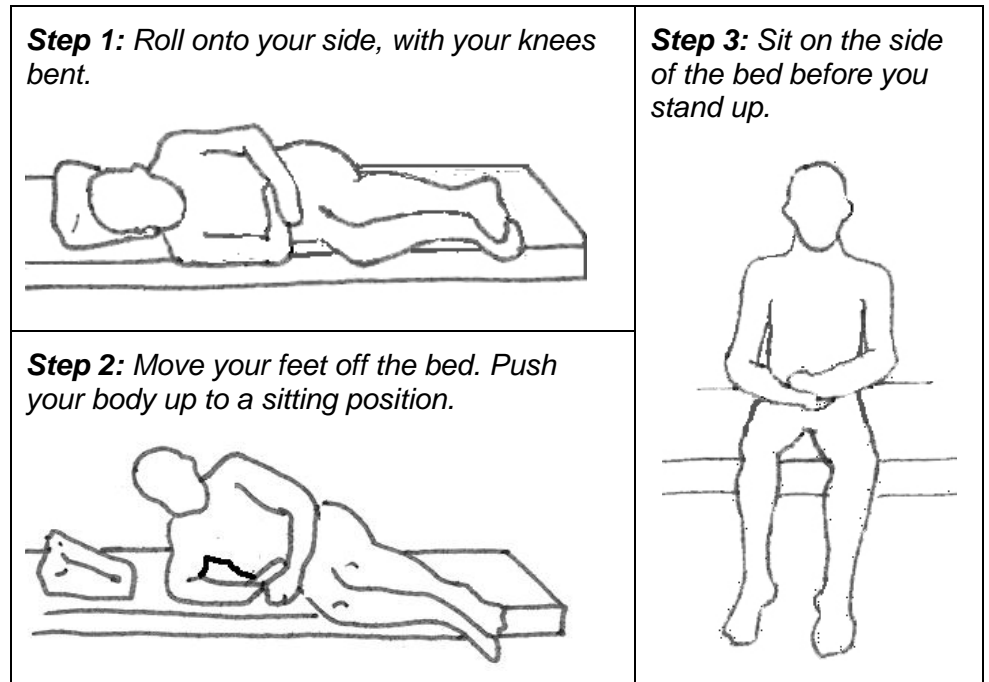


Take gentle walks every day to help you recover from ostomy surgery.

Getting Out of Bed

- Use the “logroll” method to get out of bed.
- Do **not** hold your breath. Count out loud or talk to make sure you are not increasing pressure on your abdomen.

Log-roll to Get Out of Bed



Exercise

Exercise is very important for your health and well-being. We suggest setting up a long-term exercise program. Talk with your PT about the type of exercise that will work best for you.

Walking is a good way to stay active and help your body heal. We also advise gentle exercises to strengthen your abdomen.

Walking

- While you are in the hospital:
 - Walk 3 to 4 times a day for a total of at least 18 laps of the unit. This is about 1 mile.
 - Spend at least 6 hours out of bed each day.
- At home, slowly increase your walking time day by day. Your goal is to walk 30 to 45 minutes every day at a *moderate* level. This means it is OK to breathe harder than usual, but do not work so hard that you are out of breath.

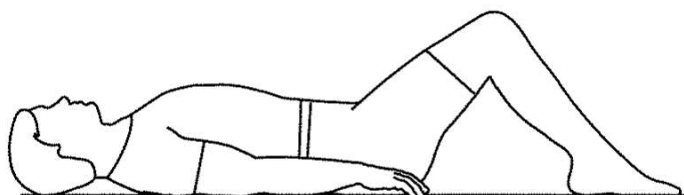
Strengthening Your Abdomen

Do gentle abdominal strengthening exercises. These will help your muscles work better during your daily activities. Avoid sit-ups, double-leg lifts, and abdominal crunches.

These 2 exercises should not cause any pain. Do them very gently for the first 6 weeks.

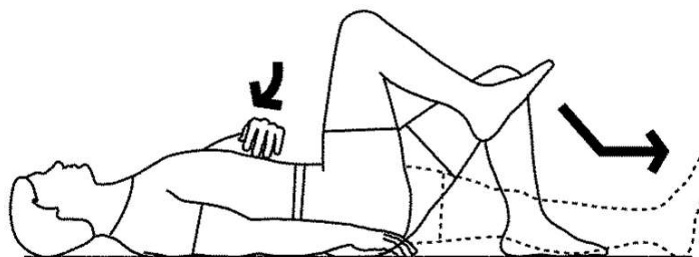
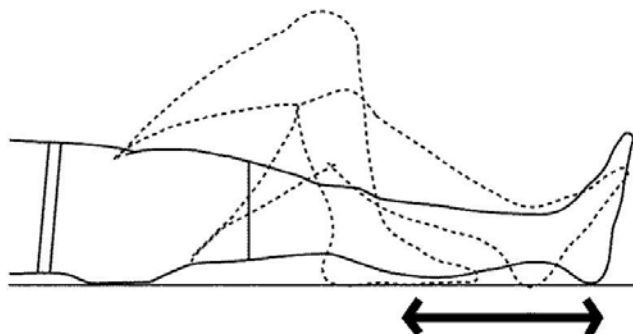
Exercise 1

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and your feet flat on the bed. Breathe in through your nose, feeling your belly and pelvic floor relax. As you breathe out, tighten your pelvic floor muscles and gently pull your belly button toward your spine. This exercise should feel easy and relaxing, about 30 to 50% of full effort.



Exercise 2

Engage your core muscles as in Exercise 1. Keeping these muscles active, slide 1 foot toward you as shown. Return to starting position and repeat on other side. Reset your core before each repetition (rep) when first learning this exercise. Work toward doing 5 reps in a row before you reset.



Questions?

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

Ostomy Clinic: 206.598.4532
Weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.