

# Activity After Bariatric Surgery

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

## Daily Activity After Surgery

Gentle exercise helps to speed up recovery. It also helps prevent respiratory infections, blood clots, and constipation.

**You should begin the walking program the day after surgery.**

- When you are walking, it should feel like gentle to moderate activity or less than a 5 on the *rating of perceived exertion (RPE)* scale. The RPE scale is a way to measure the amount of effort you are using during exercise. See the table to the right.
- Start with 3-4 short walks daily and gradually increase the time of each walk as you start to recover. The goal is to build up to one 30-minute walk daily after 6-8 weeks. See the sample exercise program below.
- After you have been cleared by your doctor, you can return to your pre-operative exercise routine.

### Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

RPE	Workload	Talk Test	
0	Very, very light	At rest	
1	Very light	Gentle walking or strolling	
2	Fairly light	Steady pace, not breathless	
3			
4	Somewhat hard	Brisk walking, can hold a conversation	
5	Hard	Very brisk walking, must take a breath every 4 to 5 words	
6			
7	Very hard	Cannot talk and keep pace	
8			
9	Very, very hard		
10			

Table adapted from Avers, D., & Brown, M. (2009). White Paper Strength Training for the Older Adult. *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy*, 32(4), 148-152.

## Sample Exercise Program

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
4 walks for 5 minutes	4 walks for 7 minutes	3 walks for 10 minutes	2 walks for 15 minutes	1 walk for 20 minutes + 1 walk for 10 minutes	1 walk for 30 minutes



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## Protect Your Abdomen

- Do not lift anything that weighs over 10 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of milk) until your doctor says it is okay.
- Make sure to not hold your breath or strain with movement.
- Do not do any movements or exercises that strain your abdominal muscles, such as sitting straight up from a lying position. Use a “log roll” to get in and out of bed.
  - See picture below.

## “Log Roll” Technique

### Step 1:



### Step 2:



### Step 3:



***Walking is an important part of recovery after bariatric surgery.***

## Questions?

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

**My provider:**