

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 left.
- 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		

Goal Training Zone (bracketed next to RPE 2-4)

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

Protect Your Abdomen

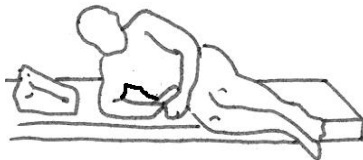
- Do not lift anything that weighs over 10 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of milk) until your doctor says it is okay.
- Make sure to not hold your breath or strain with movement.
- Do not do any movements or exercises that strain your abdominal muscles, such as sitting straight up from a laying 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:
