

Advice and exercises following major head and neck surgery

Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy

Who is this information booklet for?

This booklet is for patients who have had major head and neck surgery and who may have also had a tracheostomy. This is a small opening that is created in the front of your neck so a small tube can be inserted into your windpipe to help you breathe.

The aim is to provide you with specific exercises you should do following your surgery to prevent loss of range of movement in your neck and shoulders, and to reduce the chances of getting a chest infection. If you have any questions or concerns about the exercises in this booklet please speak to your Physiotherapist.

Deep breathing exercises

Your Physiotherapist will teach you some basic deep breathing exercises and will encourage you to start sitting out and walking the day after your surgery. The purpose of this is to prevent chest infections developing.

When should I start doing my deep breathing exercises?

You can start doing your breathing exercises immediately. Your Physiotherapist will teach you what to do.

How often and for how long should I do the breathing exercises?

You should do the exercises every 1-2 hours. Your Physiotherapist will advise you how long you should continue to do them for. This is usually until you are moving and walking about more easily on the ward.

What if I have a tracheostomy (a small tube in your windpipe)?

Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns relating to your tracheostomy after your surgery.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

How do I do the breathing exercises?

It is best to do the exercises sitting upright in bed or sitting out in a chair.

1. Take a long big deep breath in through your nose, as much as you can. Hold your breath for 3 seconds. Breathe out through your mouth
2. Repeat this another 3 times. You will need to do 4 in total
3. Rest for 1 minute or longer if you need to
4. Repeat the set of 4 deep breaths

Do the exercises every 1-2 hours.

Neck and shoulder exercises

Why should I exercise?

The range of movement in your neck and shoulders may be reduced as a result of your surgery. The movements may feel restricted - this is often due to swelling from the surgery. You will have one or two neck drains and some clips that will also restrict your movement. Sometimes the nerve that controls some of your shoulder muscles may be injured during the surgery but this is rare.

When should I start my exercises?

Start your exercises when the drains in your neck have been removed. This may be up to 3 days following your surgery.

It is perfectly safe to exercise while the clips are still in. It is also perfectly safe to exercise if you have had a tracheostomy after your surgery.

How often and for how long should I do the exercises?

Little and often is recommended to avoid over exercising and becoming sore, therefore you should try to do your exercises 3 times a day and continue them for up to 3 months. Your range of movement may have returned to normal before this time, however you may be having radiotherapy and the exercises will be of some benefit to you during this time.

What about when I get home?

To reduce pain and discomfort when home, only light housework such as dusting or washing up should be attempted. Slowly introduce heavier/harder activities from 4-6 weeks if you feel able. Your consultant will be able to advise you when you can start driving again.

How do I do the neck and shoulder exercises?

The diagrams on the following pages show you how to do the exercises. Your Physiotherapist will explain them to you and will supervise you to begin with – remember you can ask questions at any time.



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Sitting straight-backed

Pull your chin in, keeping your neck and back straight (not tipping your head forwards). Hold at the end position and feel the stretch in your neck.

Repeat _____ times



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Sitting

Tilt your head toward one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side.

Hold approximately _____ secs.

Repeat to other side.

Repeat _____ times



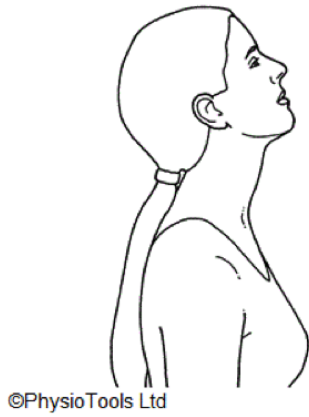
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Sitting

Bend your head forward until you feel a stretch behind your neck.

Hold approximately _____ secs.

Repeat _____ times

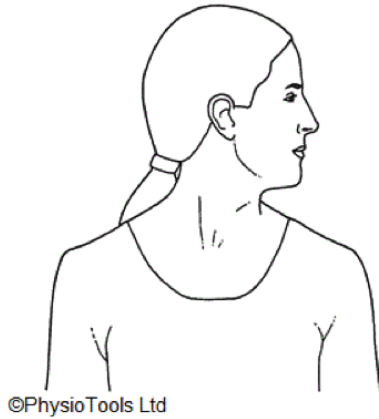


Sitting

Bend your head backwards as far as is comfortable.

Hold approximately ____secs.

Repeat ____times



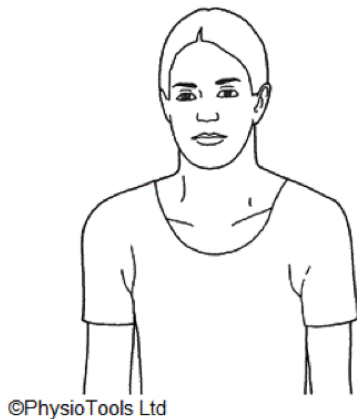
Sitting

Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch.

Hold approximately ____secs.

Repeat to other side.

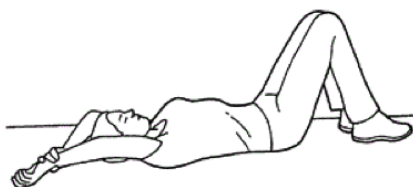
Repeat ____times



Sit or stand

Roll your shoulders in both directions.

Repeat ____times



Lying on your back with elbows straight

Use one arm to lift the other arm up keeping it as close to the ear as possible.

Repeat ____times



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Sit or stand

Keep upper arms close to the sides and elbows at right angles.

Turn forearms outwards.

Repeat _____ times



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Lying on your back with hands behind your neck and elbows pointing towards the ceiling

Move elbows apart and down to touch the floor.

Repeat _____ times

Who can I contact if I have any concerns or questions?

If you have any questions about this leaflet or your exercises please speak to your Physiotherapist:

Physiotherapy Department

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:00pm

01902 695597

Please ask to talk to any Respiratory Physiotherapist.

Alternatively the ward will be able to contact your Physiotherapist for you.

Useful Contacts

Head and neck specialist nurses: 01902 307999 ext 85419

Support Group:

Heads Up Head & Neck Cancer Support Group

Where: Long Knowle Community Centre

When: Third Tuesday of each month

Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Contact: 01902 695419. Please ring before attending to confirm the group is meeting.

Web: www.headsup-wh.org.uk

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。