



Recommended Exercises after Breast Surgery

Why are these exercises important?

After surgery, these seven exercises help you to regain shoulder movement on your operated side. It is important to regain movement in your shoulder so that you can return to your daily activities (like bathing, cooking, dressing, and driving). When movement is back to normal, try adding more exercises to keep your body, muscles, and bones strong.

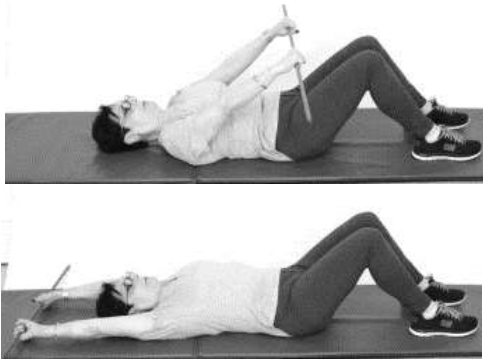
When should I do these exercises?

- If you had a lumpectomy or mastectomy, try these exercises within days after surgery.

How should I do these exercises?

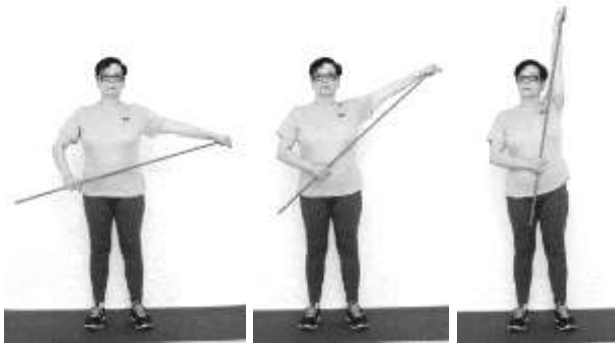
- These exercises help to regain the mobility in your affected arm, which is on the side of your breast treatment
- **If you have drains** after surgery, do not to move your affected arm above your shoulder height when doing these exercises. After the drains are removed, try these exercises with full arm movement, as tolerated. Drains are small tubes that connect your surgical incision to a small container.
- Perform these exercises every day for 4-6 weeks until your shoulder movement is back to normal. If you find that your movement has not returned to normal 6 weeks after your surgery, please consult a physiotherapist.
- When you are doing these exercises, dress comfortably in loose clothing, do them slowly, and breathe deeply. Listen to your body and progress at your own pace.

1. Cane or stick* over the head



1. Lie on your back with knees bent as shown, holding a cane or stick with both hands, shoulder width apart
 2. Raise both hands overhead slowly, so that you feel a stretch
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

2. Cane or stick* to the side



1. Stand holding stick as shown with your *affected arm* out to side
 2. With the stick, use your opposite arm to push your *affected arm* away from your body
 3. Slowly return to the starting position
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

*For exercises #1 and 2, you can use a household item like a broomstick or long umbrella

3. Snow angels



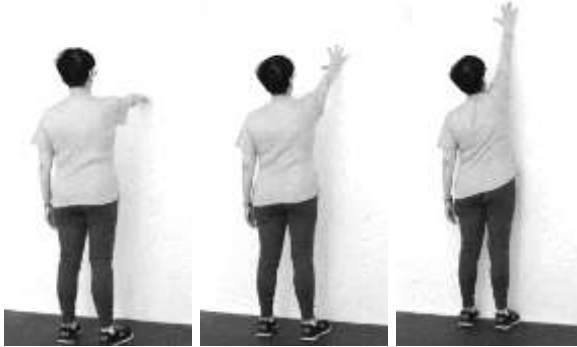
1. Lie on your back with knees bent and shoulder width apart
 2. With palms of hands facing up, slowly glide arms towards the ears, until hands touch
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

4. Towel or scarf pull behind the back



1. Stand with towel as shown with *affected arm* behind back
 2. Stretch the arm up behind your back by pulling upward on the towel with the other hand for assistance
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

5. Front spider crawl



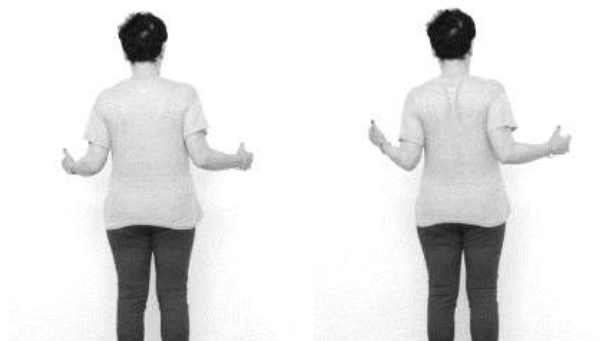
1. Stand facing a wall with *affected arm*, as shown
 2. Slowly “walk” or “crawl” your fingers up the wall, so that you feel a stretch
 3. As your fingers go higher, keep your arm straight and move your body closer to the wall
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

6. Side spider crawl



1. Stand beside a wall with *affected arm*, as shown
 2. Slowly “walk” or “crawl” your fingers up the wall, so that you feel a stretch
 3. As your fingers go higher, keep your arm straight and move your body closer to the wall
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

7. Shoulder blade squeezes

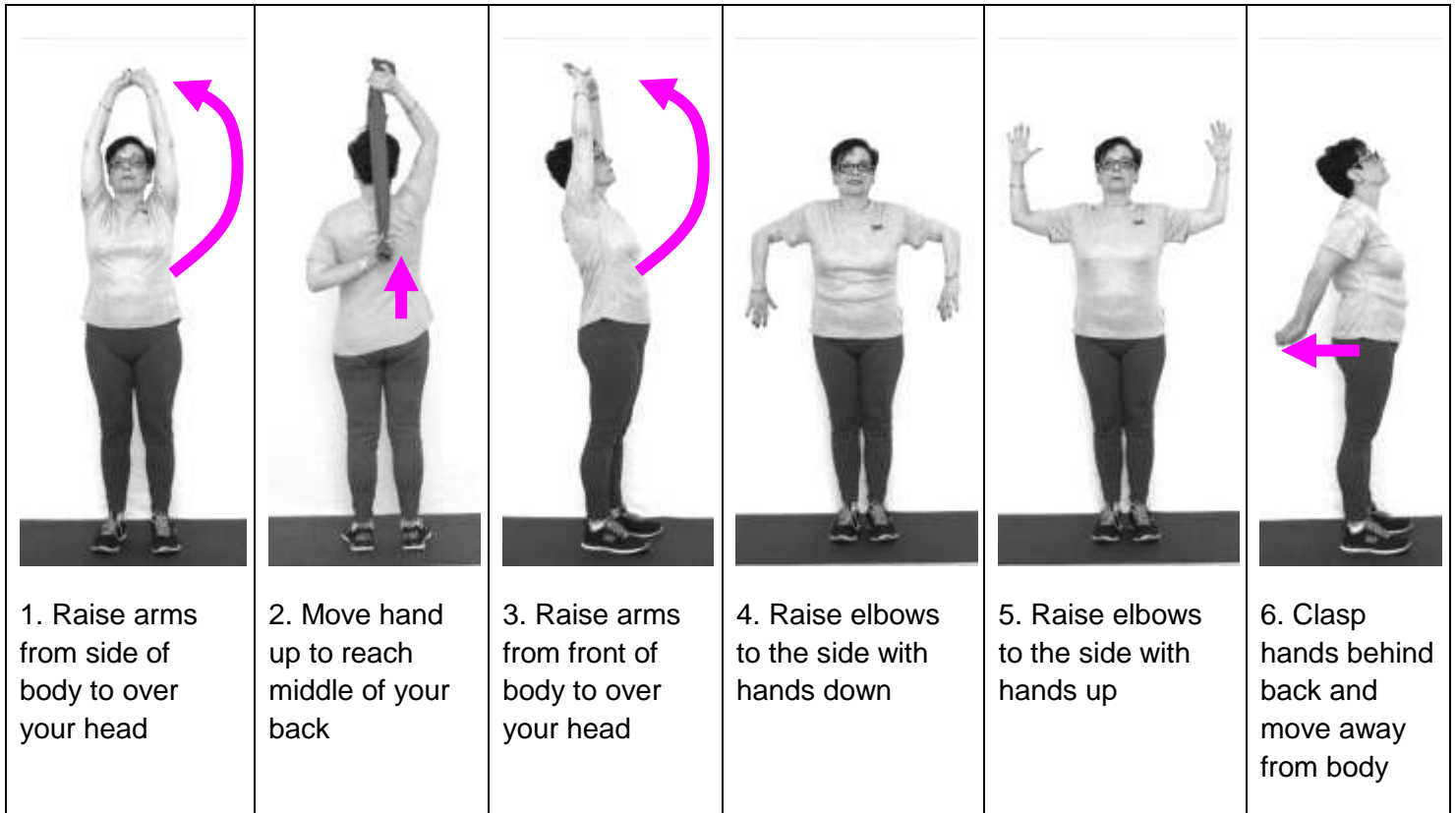


1. Stand with arms at sides as shown
 2. Pull your shoulder blades together slightly and try to push shoulder blades down
- Hold 3-5 seconds
 - 8-10 repetitions, 2-3 sets, 2 times a day

When should I see a physiotherapist?

Please consult a physiotherapist if:

- You are not sure if you are doing the exercises properly
- 6 weeks after your surgery, you find it hard to do the following 6 movements:



This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse, physiotherapist, or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.

The Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation is proud to promote bone health in women with breast cancer through financial support of the Breast & Bone Health Program.



Quebec
Breast Cancer
Foundation



HOPE & COPE
L'ESPOIR C'EST LAVIE