

## Muscle strengthening exercise program

### This muscle strengthening exercise program:

1. Will allow you to regain or maintain functional muscle strength in the arm of the operated side.
2. Will help you stimulate your lymphatic system. The following factors influence lymphatic circulation: muscle contractions, body movements, pressure changes in the chest during breathing and arterial pulsations.

You can start this exercise program **4 to 6 weeks after your surgery**. However, it is still important to continue the “Post-mastectomy exercise program” until you have regained full pain-free shoulder mobility on the operated side

Also, during your radiation treatments, it is important to prioritize the “Exercise program during and after radiotherapy for breast cancer”.

If you had **breast reconstruction** during your surgery, you should talk to your plastic surgeon before starting this exercise program.

It is recommended that you perform this program once a day until your arm of the operated side has functional muscle strength and is symmetrical to the other arm. Thereafter, it is suggested to continue these exercises 2 to 3 times a week to stimulate your lymphatic system.

For the exercises done lying on your back, you can use an exercise mat on the floor or lie flat on your mattress, without pillows.

Please note that these exercises must be done according to your tolerance and without pain.

### General tips

- It is important to do the exercises slowly and to always breathe well during the execution of the exercises (exhale during the effort and inhale while returning to the starting position).

**\*\*\* It is also suggested that you take a 1-2 minute break between exercises.**

- Start with 1 pound weights, then gradually increase the weights (2 pounds).

#### **Suggested progression for the exercises:**

- 12 to 15 repetitions;
  - 15 to 20 repetitions;
  - 2 sets of 12 to 15 repetitions with a 4 minute break between sets;
  - 2 sets of 15 to 20 reps with a 4 minute break between sets;
  - Repeat the progression, but with slightly heavier weights.
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- A minimum of 4 sessions with the same load (e.g.: 1 lb. weight) must be completed without difficulty before increasing the load used.
  - The exercises must not produce pain under any circumstances. If this occurs, decrease the weight or number of repetitions to avoid pain or stop the exercise(s) in question.
  - Always make sure that the exercises do not produce swelling in your arm. If this occurs, stop the exercises and consult a health care professional.
  - Always wear your compression garment when exercising if it has been prescribed for an existing lymphedema.

**Don't forget an aerobic component to stimulate your lymphatic system!**

**(examples: walking, swimming, cycling, etc.)**

**3 to 5 times a week,  
30 to 60 minutes,  
at moderate intensity**

### Warm-up

While moving your arms, walk for 5 minutes or go up and down the stairs a few times.

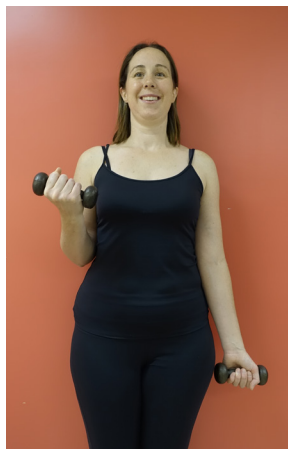


### Biceps

**Starting position:** Standing or sitting, arms at your side, palms facing forwards, weights in hands.

**Movement :** Bend your elbows slowly. You can also do the exercise one side at a time. Return to the starting position while controlling the movement.

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions



### Deltoid

**Starting position:** Standing or sitting with your back straight, arms at your side, palms facing forwards, weights in hands.

**Movement:** Raise your arms diagonally (in a “V” shape at about a 45° angle), thumbs pointing towards the ceiling, to shoulder height. Do not shrug your shoulders. Slowly lower your arms back down.

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions

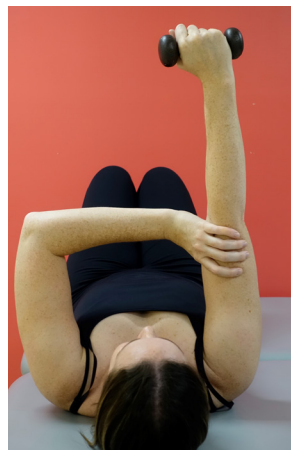


### Triceps

**Starting position:** Lying on your back, knees bent, a weight in the hand of the operated side. Place the arm of the operated side vertically towards the ceiling, palm towards your feet. Hold this arm below the elbow with the other hand. Bend the elbow of the operated side to bring the weight towards the opposite shoulder.

**Movement:** Straighten your elbow. Slowly return to the starting position (elbow bent).

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions



### Pectorals (Option 1)

**Starting position:** Lying on your back, knees bent, arms out in a “T” shape with elbows bent at a 90° angle, a weight in each hand.

**Movement:** Raise arms over your chest until the weights are touching. Slowly lower your arms back down to the mat.

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions



### Pectorals (Option 2)

**Starting position:** Standing facing a wall, one arm's length away. Rest your hands on the wall at shoulder height with your arms slightly more than shoulder width apart.

**Movement:** Slowly bend your elbows, leaning your body toward the wall. Keep your abdominal muscles contracted and your chin tucked in throughout the movement. Slowly return to the starting position.

If the exercise is too difficult, move your feet closer to the wall.

**Parameters :** 8 to 10 répétitions



### Infraspinatus

**Starting position:** Attach a resistance band to a doorknob or to a fixed object on your non-operated side. Standing, grasp the resistance band with the hand of the operated side. Press your arm against your body, with your elbow bent to 90° and thumb pointing towards the ceiling.

**Movement:** Open the forearm of the operated side outwards, keeping the elbow pressed against the body. Slowly return to the starting position.

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions



### Subscapularis

**Starting position:** Attach a resistance band to a doorknob or to a fixed object on your operated side. Standing, grasp the resistance band with the hand of the operated side. Press your arm against your body, with your elbow bent to 90° and thumb pointing towards the ceiling.

**Movement:** Bring the forearm of the operated arm towards your abdomen, keeping the elbow pressed against the body. Slowly return to the starting position.

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions

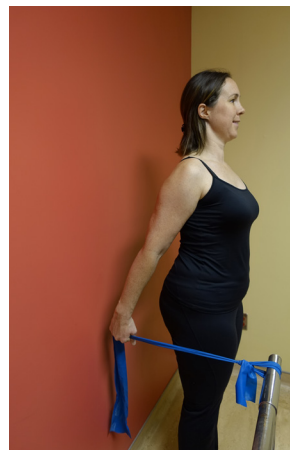
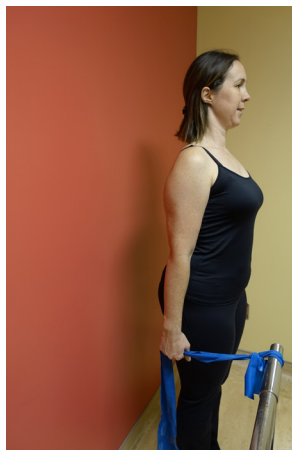


### Latissimus dorsi

**Starting position:** Attach a resistance band to a doorknob or to a fixed object in front of you. Standing, the arm of the operated side alongside your body, palm facing you, and holding the resistance band in your hand.

**Movement:** Keeping your arm straight, extend it backwards, stretching the resistance band. Slowly return to the starting position.

**Parameters:** 8 to 10 repetitions



This guide provides recommendations based on scientific information available at the time of its publication on December 12, 2018. However, these recommendations in no way to replace the judgement of a clinical practitioner. If you have any questions, we suggest you contact your health professional. Should you in any way misuse the information contained in this document, the CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre shall not be liable for damages in this regard.

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