

Post-mastectomy exercise program

You should begin the exercise program the day after your surgery.

These exercises are meant to keep the shoulder on the operated side mobile while increasing tissue flexibility in the operated areas.

During the exercises you may feel discomfort in the operated areas. You should gradually and gently stretch the sensitive area without making any sudden movements and without straining.

For the first days, it may be helpful to take a painkiller 30 minutes before doing the exercises.

You can do any exercises requiring you to lie down on an exercise mat on the floor or on your mattress without a pillow.

You should do each exercise 2 or 3 times a day. Schedule around 10 to 15 minutes per session.

Note

We have divided the exercises into two sections : “Exercises with drains” and “Exercises without drains”. If you have drains, you should only do the exercises in the section “Exercises with drains”. If you don’t have a drain, you should do the exercises in the sections “Exercises with drains” and “Exercises without drains”.

You can find the post-mastectomy exercise program at cicm.quebec (educational capsules for breast cancer, capsule 3).

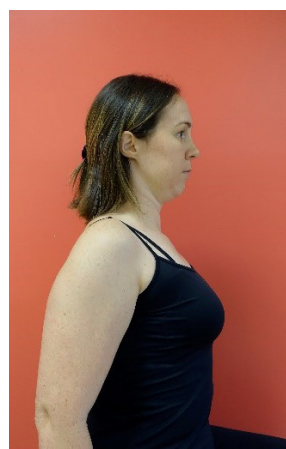
Exercises with drains

Making circles with your shoulders

Starting position: Standing or sitting, arms at your side.

Movement: Make small circles with your shoulders. Gently move your shoulders upwards, backwards, downwards, then back to the front.

Parameters: 5 repetitions

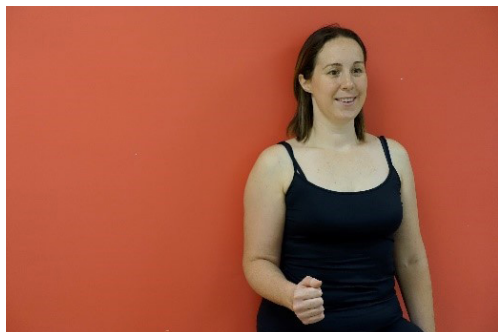


Shoulder rotation

Starting position: Standing or sitting, with your back leaning against the wall, elbow on the operated side pressed against your body, bent 90 degrees, thumb pointing towards the ceiling.

Movement: Open your forearm outwards while keeping your elbow pressed against your body. Return to the starting position.

Parameters: 5 repetitions

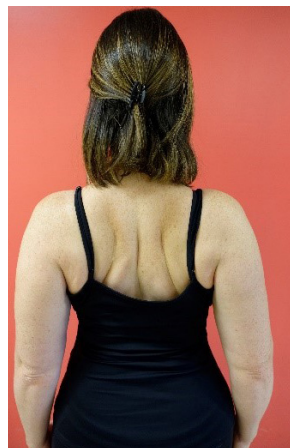
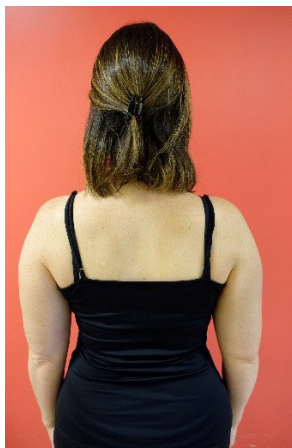


Scapular retraction

Starting position: Standing or sitting, arms at your side.

Movement: Move the shoulders backwards to squeeze your shoulder blades together. Hold for 5 seconds. Return to the starting position.

Parameters: 5 repetitions

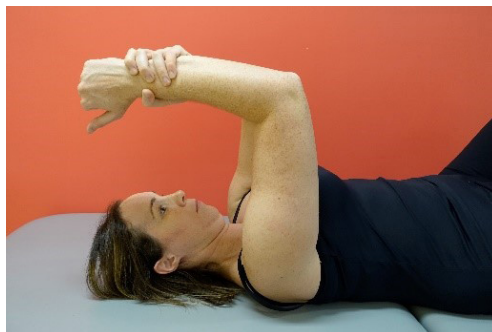


Partial shoulder flexion, lying on your back

Starting position: Lying on your back with your knees bent. Bend the elbow on your operated side to 90 degrees and grasp the wrist with your other hand.

Movement: Raise the arm of your operated side to a 90-degree angle, using your other hand to help. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the starting position. ***Be careful not to arch your lower back.

Parameters: 5 repetitions



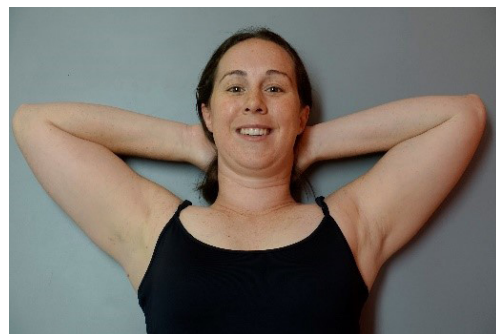
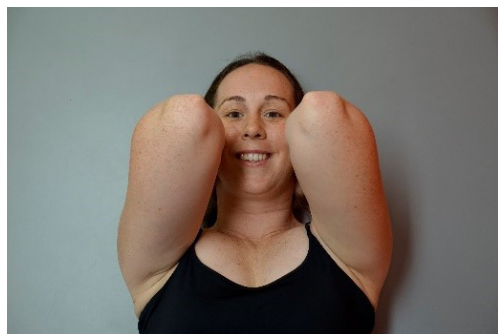
Exercises without drains

Hands behind your neck

Starting position: Lying on your back with your knees bent. Clasp your hands together and put them behind your neck with your elbows pointing towards the ceiling.

Movement: Slowly lower your elbows to the side to touch the mat. Hold for 5 seconds. At the end of the movement, exhale to get the air out of your lungs to increase the stretch. Return to the starting position.

Parameters: 5 repetitions

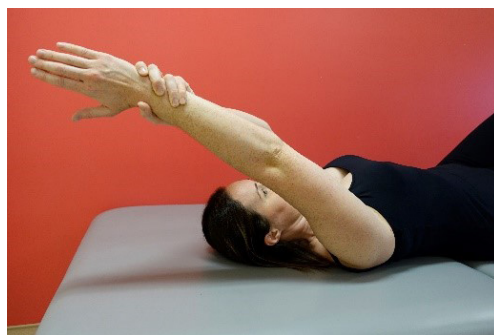
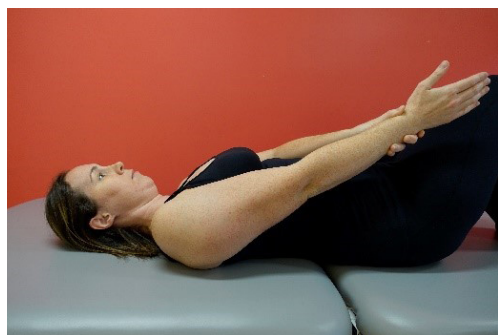


Full shoulder flexion, lying on your back

Starting position: Lying on your back with your knees bent. Grasp the wrist on your operated side with the other hand, keeping your arm along the side of your body with your thumb pointing towards the ceiling.

Movement: Slowly bring both your arms as far above your head as possible. Hold for 5 seconds. At the end of the movement, exhale to get the air out of your lungs to increase the stretch. Return to the starting position. *** Be careful not to arch your lower back.

Parameters: 5 repetitions



Shoulder abduction

Starting position: Lying on your back, knees bent, arm along the body, palms towards ceiling.

Movement: Keeping your arm straight, slide it along the surface of the mat to move it away from the body, without lifting it off the mat at any point during the movement. Hold for 5 seconds. At the end of the movement, exhale to get the air out of your lungs to increase the stretch. Return to the starting position.

Parameters: 5 repetitions



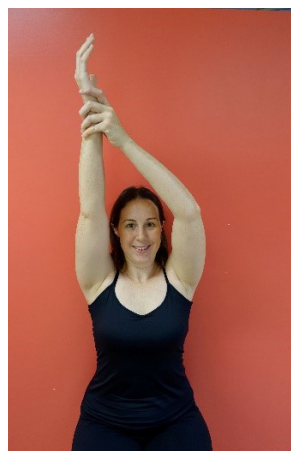
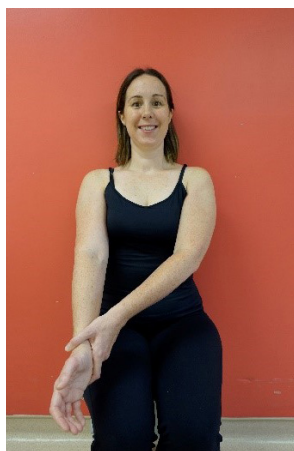
Shoulder flexion, sitting

Starting position: While sitting, grasp the wrist on your operated side with your other hand, keeping the arm on your operated side straight and the thumb pointing towards the ceiling.

Movement: Slowly raise your arms towards the ceiling while keeping the arm on your operated side straight. Hold for 5 seconds while keeping your shoulders relaxed. At the end of the movement, exhale to get the air out of your lungs to increase the stretch. Return to the starting position.

***Be careful not to arch your lower back.

Parameters: 5 repetitions

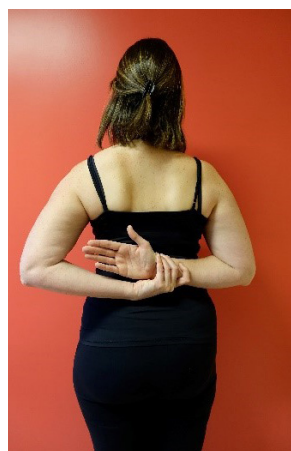
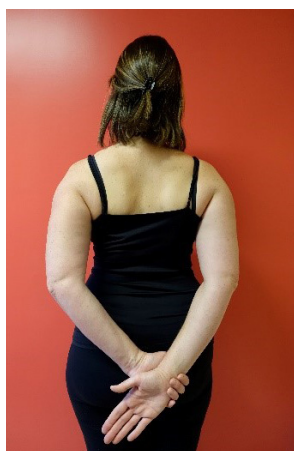


Hand behind your back

Starting position: While standing, put the hand on your operated side on your lower back. Grasp the wrist on your operated side with your other hand.

Movement: Slide the hand on your operated side up as high as possible using your other hand to help. Hold for 5 seconds. At the end of the movement, exhale to get the air out of your lungs to increase the stretch. Return to the starting position.

Parameters: 5 repetitions



Recommendations

You should do each exercise as long as it takes to get movement in your arm back to what it was prior to your surgery without feeling any discomfort in the operated areas.

If, despite the exercises, you are no longer seeing any improvement in the mobility of your arm and/or if any discomfort persists in the operated areas, you may do the exercises according to the following progression:

1. Hold for 10 seconds, 5 reps.
2. Hold for 20 seconds, 3 reps.

This guide provides recommendations based on the scientific information available at the time of its publication on December 19, 2018. However, these recommendations in no way replace the judgment of a clinical practitioner. If you have 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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