

Exercise program during and after radiotherapy for breast cancer

Radiotherapy treatments can cause decreased flexibility or stiffness in the areas that have been irradiated. This is caused by tissue scarring. This discomfort can last for more than a year after the treatments are over.

This exercise program will allow you to minimize the loss of flexibility and maintain functional mobility in the shoulder on the operated side.

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

It is recommended that you do this exercise program **once a day during your radiotherapy treatments, and this, until one year after the end of your treatments.**

Please note that these exercises should be done according to your tolerance and without pain. However, it is normal to feel some stretching during the exercises in the areas that have been irradiated.

Complete shoulder flexion, lying on your back

Starting position: Lying on your back with your knees bent. Grasp the wrist on your operated arm with your other hand, while keeping your arm extended and thumb pointing towards the ceiling.

Movement: Slowly bring both arms as far above your head as possible. Hold for 5-10 seconds, depending on your tolerance. At the end of the movement, exhale to get the air out of your lungs to increase the stretch. Return to the starting position. ***Do not arch your lower back

Parameters: 10 repetitions



Shoulder abduction

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

Movement: Slide your arm along the mat as far away from the body as possible, without lifting it off the mat at any point during the movement. Hold for 20-30 seconds, depending on your tolerance. 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: 3 repetitions

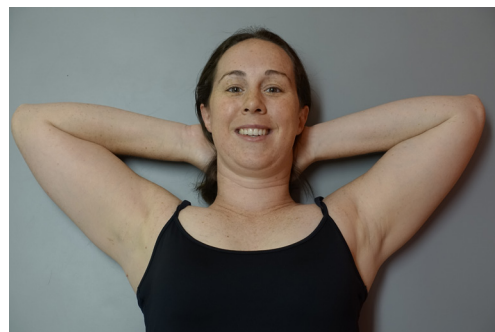


Hands behind your neck

Starting position: Lying on your back with your knees bent. Place your hands behind your neck, fingers interlaced and elbows pointing towards the ceiling.

Movement: Slowly lower your elbows to the side to touch the mat. Hold for 20-30 seconds, depending on your tolerance. 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: 3 repetitions

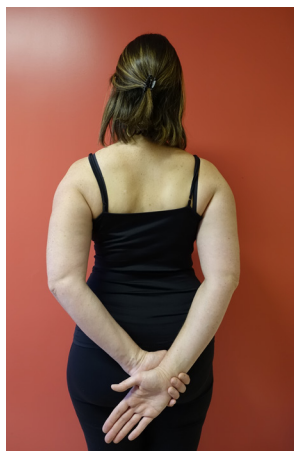


Hand behind your back

Starting position: Standing, place the hand of the operated side in your lower back. Grasp the wrist of your operated side with your other hand.

Movement: Raise the hand of the operated side as high as possible with the help of the other hand. Hold for 20-30 seconds, depending on your tolerance. 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: 3 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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