

Exercises Following Neck Dissection



It is natural for your skin and muscles to feel tight after surgery. Gradual introduction to specific exercises will help prevent stiffness and will improve your movement.

These exercises are designed so that you can perform them at home. **The frequency and duration of the exercises are individualised for you by your physiotherapist, and this decision will be made based on the**

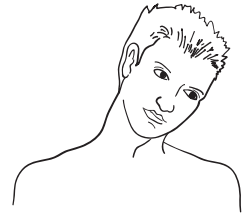
extent of your surgery, possible complications, and your fitness level.

All movements should be performed within your comfort levels. This is to ensure that you do not place unnecessary tension on your new surgical incision site and increase leakage from your wound or drain site. If you experience strong pain cease the exercises and notify your health care professional at your next appointment.

EARLY EXERCISES (WHEN DRAINS ARE STILL IN)

1. Head tilt

Sitting down, look straight ahead and tilt your head towards one side until a gentle pull is felt in the opposite side of your neck. 5 repetitions, 3 times per day.



2. Deep neck flexor strengthening

Sitting down, look straight ahead and gently draw your head back pretending you are holding a ripe peach under your chin. Do not tip head forwards. Keep neck and back straight. Hold end position for 5 seconds and repeat 5 times, 3 times per day. This exercise can also be performed lying down on your back with head supported.



3. Drawing down bottom lip

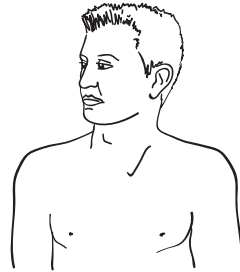
Do this in front of a mirror. Show your bottom teeth. Turn the bottom corners of your mouth down by using the muscles underneath your lower lip. Repeat 5 times, 3 times per day. Do not be concerned if there is asymmetry present. This usually improves with time.



EXERCISES AFTER REMOVAL OF DRAINS

4. Neck rotation

Sitting down, keeping back straight and facing the front, turn your head to one side as far as you can comfortably go. You can also perform this exercise lying down with your head supported. Repeat for both sides. 5 repetitions each side, 3 times per day.



5. Neck stretch looking down

Sitting down, keeping back straight and facing forwards, look down towards opposite armpit. You should feel stretch in opposite side of neck. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times, 3 times per day.



6. Neck extension

Sitting down, keeping back straight and facing the front, support the back of your head with your hands and look up. You should feel a stretch at the front of your neck. 5 repetitions, 3 times per day.



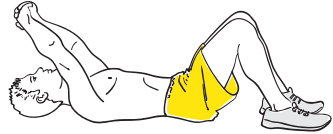
If you are unsure about your exercises, please ask to speak to a physiotherapist or your treating health professional. You may need to discontinue or reduce these exercises if the skin on your neck becomes fragile during radiotherapy.

EXERCISES AFTER REMOVAL OF DRAINS *continued*

If you are having trouble with lifting your arm up after your operation, speak with your physiotherapist, who will modify these exercises to suit your needs.

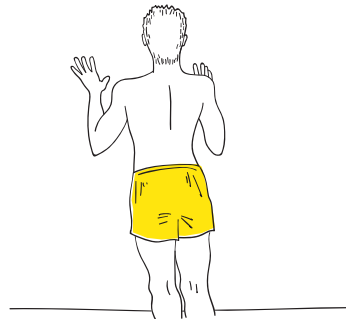
7. Arm lift

Lying on back, keeping shoulder blades in contact with the bed, raise arm up to 90 degrees. You can use your other hand to support your affected arm if necessary. 5-10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



8. Wall push-ups

Standing up, place hands up against the wall around shoulder level. Feet should be shoulder width apart and around 1-2 feet away from the wall. Push up against the wall gently drawing shoulder blades downwards and together. 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Your referrer's details:

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

may also be appropriate if there is a specific muscle or nerve problem. Please speak to your physiotherapist or health professional for further progression of exercises.

This brochure has been supported with funds from Dry July.

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