

Chest wall mobility following heart surgery: weeks 4 to 12

Prescribed for:

Prescribed by:..... Date.....

Goal

To restore posture after surgery

Warning

- Do not attempt these stretches until *4 weeks* after surgery
- If stretching causes pain *stop* and consult a member of the rehabilitation team

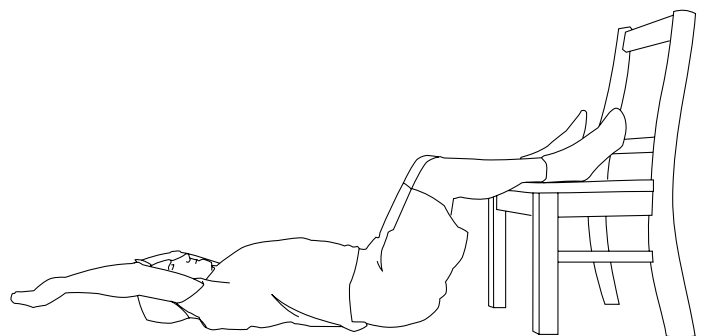
Instructions

- Do the exercises twice daily
- Repeat each exercise 2 to 5 times
- Hold each stretch for 10 to 15 seconds
- Continue to do these exercises until 12 weeks following surgery

1. Posture

Lying on back with chair

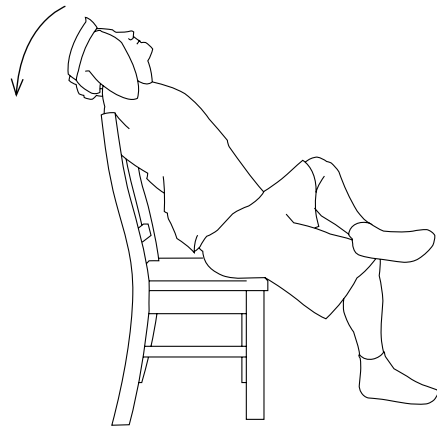
- Place a rolled towel between the shoulder blades
- Put feet up on a chair or bend knees with feet on the floor
- Tuck chin in and stretch hands above head and hold for one minute



2. Stretching upper back (thoracic spine)

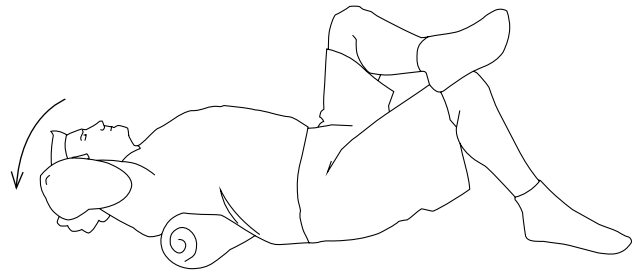
Sitting

- Bring bottom forward on chair and cross one ankle onto the opposite knee (to protect low back)
- Place hands behind neck
- Stretch back over the chair to feel stretch between shoulder blades



Lying on back

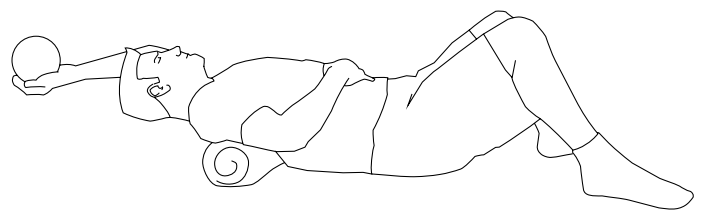
- Place a rolled towel between the shoulder blades and place hands behind the neck
- Cross ankle onto opposite knee (to protect low back)
- Stretch back over towel to feel stretch between shoulder blades



3. Stretching of rib cage

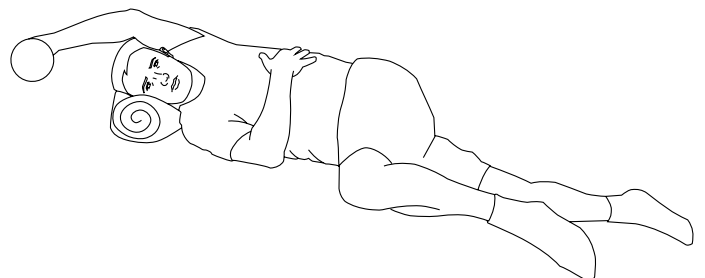
Lying on back

- Bend knees and a small weight in one or both hands (approx. 500 gms rice). Raise the weight above your head to feel a stretch in the front of the chest



Lying on side

- Raise a small weight above your head to feel a stretch at the side of the trunk / rib cage



This is a general guide only. Exercises may vary according to individual needs.