

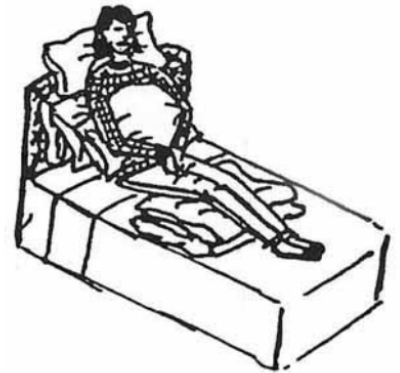
Activity After Breast Reconstruction

Following breast reconstruction, you will have additional precautions to follow depending on your type of reconstruction. There may be slight variations depending on your plastic surgeon's preference.

TRAM Flap (Transverse Rectus Abdominus Flap)/DIEP Flap (Deep Inferior Epigastric Perforator Flap)

You will ambulate with a flexed trunk posture for the first week to reduce tension on the abdominal closure. At about one week after surgery, you should be able to stand up straight.

Use pillows on your bed at home to elevate your head and feet, with the head raised to 45 degrees (see picture). Use your arms to scoot up or down in bed. To get out of bed, roll to your side and then push up with your arms in order to avoid tension on the abdominal closure. Do the reverse to lie back down.



Short Term (for 2 weeks after surgery):

- No rolling/twisting of trunk. At two weeks you may begin a light walking exercise program.
- No arm range of motion greater than 90 degrees (level of shoulders) on the affected side.
- Normal activities of daily living are OK (bathing, dressing, cooking, etc.) as long as you do not raise your arm above shoulder height.
- No driving until cleared by your physician.
- No pressure over chest. You may use a pillow to splint over abdominal incision only. When using a seatbelt in the car, place a pillow between your chest and the chest strap.
- Sponge bathe only until the dressings or drains are removed, unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.
- Use pillows to keep your arms elevated above your heart at night for the first week to decrease swelling.

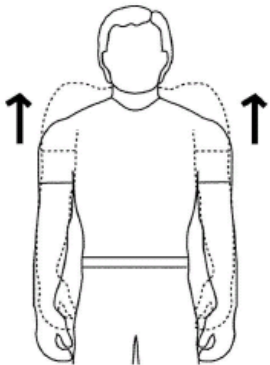
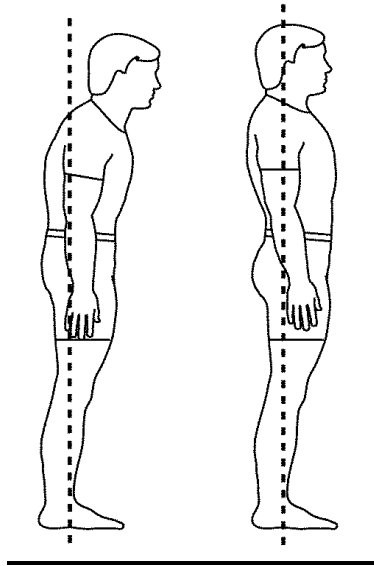
Long Term (3 weeks to 3 months after surgery):

- No heating pads or ice over flap at any time. Your flap will have impaired or absent sensation possibly for a year following surgery, so excessive heat or cold may burn or damage the skin and the breast tissue.
- At 2 weeks you may resume a light walking program. At 4 weeks, you may resume extremity range of motion greater than 90 degrees (level of shoulders) on affected side.
- No heavy lifting greater than 5 lbs for 6 weeks after surgery, or until cleared by your plastic surgeon.
- At 6 weeks, you may begin full physical activity EXCEPT for abdominal exercises.
- Abdominal exercises may be resumed at 3 months, pending your surgeon's approval.
- Do not wear a bra until cleared by your surgeon at your 3rd or 4th week follow-up visit.
- Avoid beverages/food that are high in caffeine. Caffeine constricts blood vessels and can impair blood flow to the healing skin flap.
- No sexual activity for 6 weeks.

Therapeutic Exercises for patients who have undergone the DIEP procedure:

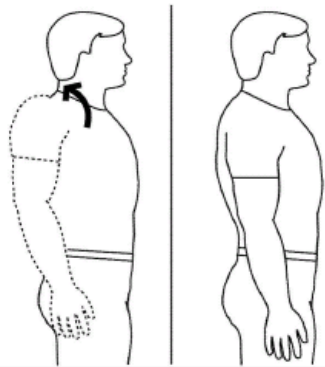
Posture: Because of abdominal discomfort, it will be very important to be aware of your posture while sitting and while walking. However your abdominal incision will be tight and will limit how upright you are able to stand and walk. Things you should remember are:

- Keep your chin up and shoulders back **as able**, do not force a full upright position
- Work gradually and gently toward a full upright position as the tension in your incision allows. This may take several weeks.



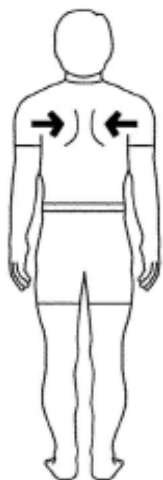
Shoulder Shrug:

- Raise shoulders upward toward ears and hold for 3-5 seconds
 - Return to start position. Focus on relaxing shoulders downward at rest.
 - Inhale as you bring your shoulders up and exhale as you relax your shoulders down
- Perform 1 set of 10 repetitions twice daily



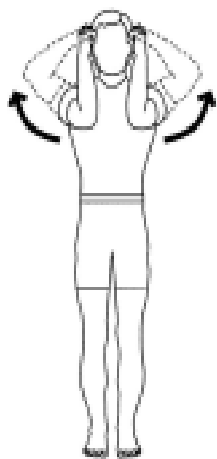
Shoulder Rolls:

- Raise shoulders up toward ears and roll shoulders backwards
- Perform 1 set of 10 repetitions twice daily



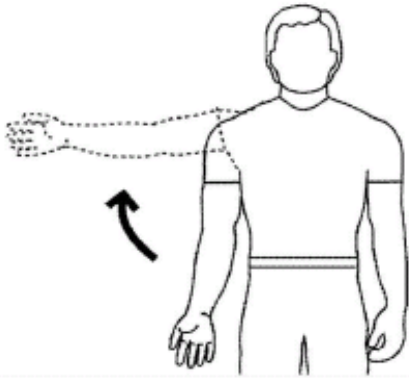
Scapular Retraction:

- Sit or stand as upright as possible
- Squeeze both shoulder blades together, sticking out chest at the same time
- Perform 1 set of 10 repetitions twice daily



Butterfly Exercise:

- Stand with hands against side of head with elbows touching in front
- Palms should be turned inward
- Move elbows out to side until even with the shoulders
- **Do not allow elbows to go higher than shoulders**
- Return to start position and repeat.
- Perform 1 set of 10 repetitions twice daily

**Arm Raises:**

- Begin with arms at side, elbow straight, and palm forward
 - Slowly raise arm upward out to the side.
 - Stop at shoulder height (90 degrees).
 - Slowly return to side
- Perform 1 set of 10 repetitions twice daily

**Back Scratch:**

- Reach behind back and hold hands together
- Gently slide hands up back and slowly return to start position
- Perform 1 set of 10 repetitions twice daily