

# Patient information

## Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Physiotherapy advice following laparoscopic robotic assisted radical prostatectomy (RARP)

### Information for men

This leaflet is intended for men who will be undergoing the RARP procedure. It has been written as a guide to give you information and advice about looking after yourself following surgery. If you have any questions, please speak to your physiotherapist.

### Admission advice

Please ensure you have your parking permit and an allocated driver for your journey home from surgery.

You will need something comfortable to wear in hospital due to abdominal tenderness and the catheter being attached to your upper thigh i.e. boxer shorts and short pyjamas.

Ensure you have loose fitting clothing to wear home. You may also wish to bring some change for vending machines/trolley. You are advised not to bring personal items of high value.

### Post-operative exercises

#### Circulation exercises

After having an anaesthetic and surgery, it is important to help keep your blood circulating during the first 6 weeks. From the first day post op, it is advisable to get up and keep your feet moving as soon as possible, wearing anti-embolism support stockings. Whilst still in bed, we recommend you do the following exercise:



Move both feet up and down briskly 20 times every hour. **Do not cross your ankles or legs.**

#### Deep breathing exercises

After anaesthetic you might feel your breathing is shallower than normal or you might feel a little chesty. With discomfort you are less able to cough effectively. This can put you at a higher risk of developing a chest infection.

Whilst you are less able to move around start taking two to three deep breaths every hour. Stop if you feel light headed. Get up and move around carefully after the operation as this will help you take deeper breaths.

#### Clearing your chest

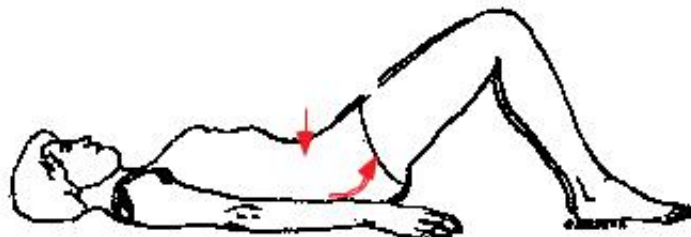
If you feel you need to clear any phlegm from your chest take a deep breath in and then breathe out quickly and forcefully through an open mouth. Make a huffing sound and imagine you are steaming up a mirror. Repeat two to three times before breathing normally. Repeat this as often as you feel necessary.

## Wound support

If you need to cough, sneeze or laugh, support your wounds (five port holes and a drain) by holding on to your wound and applying a gentle firm pressure with both hands, a towel or pillow over your abdomen. This will make coughing, sneezing and laughing more comfortable.

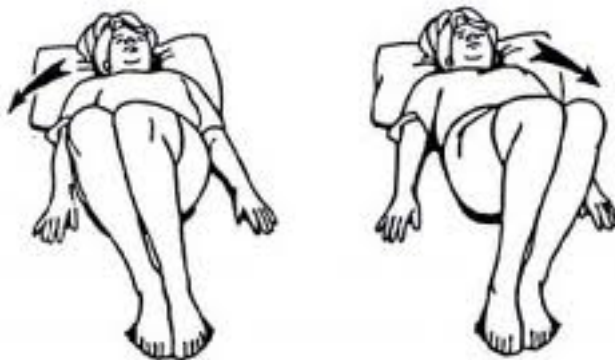
## Exercise – pelvic tilting

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Draw in your lower abdominal muscles and gently tilt your pelvis backwards, flattening your lower back into the bed and curling your tailbone upwards. Repeat a few times and as you feel more confident and comfortable with this exercise you can aim to repeat up to 10 times, three times a day. This will relieve back ache.



## Exercise – knee rolling

Lie on your back with your knees bent at 45 degrees. Draw in your lower abdominal muscles and gently rock your knees left to right within a comfortable range. Repeat a few times and as you feel more confident and comfortable with this exercise you can aim to repeat up to 10 times, three times a day. This is an exercise to clear wind and ease lower back ache.



## Bed mobility

Try to keep mobile around the bed. Lie on either side to relieve back ache.

Get out of bed by bending your knees and rolling onto your side. Do not try to pull yourself up the bed by using the bedframe behind your head. Once fully on your side push up with your elbow and hand and drop your feet over the edge of the bed.

## Mobility

You will be getting out of bed the morning after your operation. Only walk short distances in the first week as you will feel tired and sore. Try to stand up straight rather than bending forwards. Gradually increase the distance each week within your range of comfort. Ensure that you are fully mobile, pain-free and also not tired before returning to work.

## Going to the toilet

It is important to avoid constipation and straining. Straining puts pressure onto the pelvic floor and will feel uncomfortable. You may experience wind pain in the early days following the procedure.

Ensure that you have a balanced diet and adequate fluids. Avoid pain relief containing codeine as this can cause you to become constipated. The following tips may be helpful in avoiding straining.

Sit comfortably on the toilet with your legs slightly apart. Check that your knees are higher than your hips. A foot stool may help especially if your toilet seat is high. Rest your elbows on your knees. Relax your jaw. As you relax your pelvic floor to open your bowels relax your abdominal wall and make a gentle effort to widen your waist. You may need to take movicol /laxido or lactulose to help soften stools.

## Exercise – pelvic floor contraction

NO pelvic floor contractions while you have a catheter (up to 10 days). See separate pelvic floor instruction leaflet to start pelvic floor exercises once the catheter has been removed.

## Functional Activities

Do not do anything which gives you pain or discomfort. Let others help you at home. You must avoid heavy lifting for up to twelve weeks. For six weeks you are to avoid any lifting, pushing, pulling or straining.

Check with your consultant or general practitioner when it is safe to return activities such as driving, exercise, physical activities such as gardening/decorating/dog walking and returning to work, during this post-operative period. When you are able to resume driving be sure you could do an emergency stop without hesitation or pain. It is advisable to let your insurance company know that you have had surgery.

## Smoking

It is advisable to reduce/stop smoking before and this operation to ensure a clear chest for the anaesthetic.

## Sources of information

ESHT Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team

## Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

**Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:  
Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Department

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:  
Community Health & Integrated Care

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Responsible clinician/author: Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Department

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