

Exercises for Patients with a Midline Incision

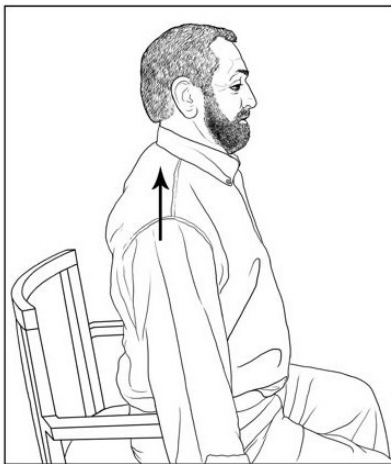
You may begin these exercises in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

- Complete the exercises in a sitting position. Sit upright looking straight ahead with your chin tucked and shoulders pulled back.
- Make sure that you are relaxed and rested before starting. These exercises are not intended to be a difficult workout for your heart.
- These exercises will speed your recovery. They will prevent pain from developing in your shoulders and upper body. They will also help your breathing. It is important you begin these exercises the day after your surgery and do them daily during your recovery.

Perform the exercises below twice a day. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

Shoulder Shrugs

Bring your shoulders up to your ears, and then relax your shoulders down. Repeat.



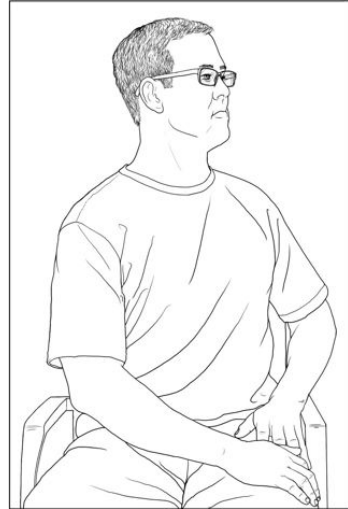
Shoulder Circles

Sitting upright, roll your shoulders in a smooth motion up, back and down in a circle. Repeat, and then reverse direction.



Trunk Twists

Slowly rotate your trunk to the right, looking over your shoulder. Hold and stretch. Then rotate your trunk to the left, hold and stretch. Repeat sequence.



Trunk Sidebending

Hold your arms relaxed at your sides and maintain your trunk upright. Lean to your right side slowly, hold and stretch. Then lean to your left side, hold and stretch. Repeat sequence.

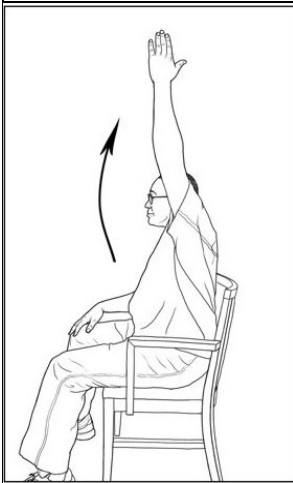
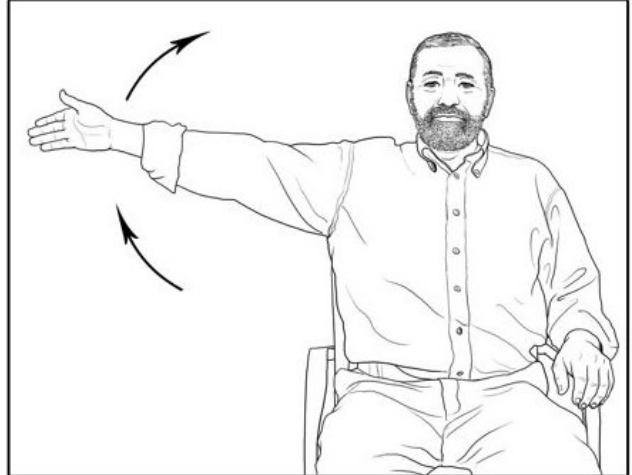
Chest Stretch

Place your hands behind your head while sitting upright. Move your elbows back until you feel a stretch, hold. Relax elbows forward to rest, and then repeat.



Forward Arm Raise

Sitting with upright posture, straighten your arm with your thumb facing up. Raise your arm up to the front over your head. Your elbow should be next to your ear. Repeat with your other arm.

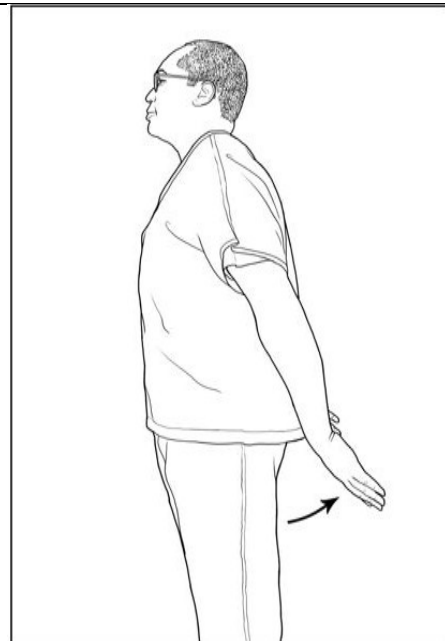


Out, Up and Over

Hold your arm straight out to your side with your thumb up. Raise your arm up to the side over your head, hold and stretch. Repeat with your other arm.

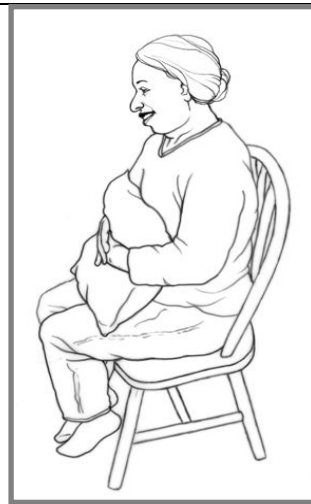
Backward Reach

With your arms relaxed at your side, elbows straight, reach your arms straight backwards. Hold and stretch. Then repeat.



Hands behind your back and reach

Grasp your hands together behind the small of your back. Slowly lift your hands off your back. Hold and stretch. Then repeat.



Coughing and Breathing Exercises

Remember to use your incentive spirometer 10 times per hour when you are awake. You may use a pillow or blanket to hold over your incision when you cough. This will provide support and decrease pain.

Precautions to take when you have a midline incision: (until otherwise stated by your doctor):

- No lifting, pushing, or pulling greater than 10 pounds with your arms. This applies when you:
 - Climb stairs
 - Stand up from a chair
 - Get out of bed

(Roll onto your side before sitting when getting out of bed.)

Strengthening:

After you have gained full motion in your shoulder (s), increase your strength

with the Forward Arm Raise and Out, Up, and Over exercises by performing them with a light weight in your hands.

- Start with 1 pound, then slowly progress to more weight as tolerated.
- Many objects around the house can be used as weights: a can of soup, tools, a plastic bottle filled with rice or pennies, etc.

Walking:

- Begin by walking multiple times daily in the ICU to build your endurance.
- You can walk inside or outside.
- Walk at a comfortable speed, timing yourself as you walk so you can continue to walk the same amount of time once you return home.
- Each day, add another minute to your walk. When you make it to 30 continuous minutes, increase your pace. Continue walking for 30 minutes 4-6 days a week.

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