

BREATHING AND LEG EXERCISES BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY

After any type of operation, especially abdominal surgery, there is a tendency for your lungs to produce more mucous than usual and also not to expand fully. This is partly due to the effect of the anaesthetic, and partly because you are not moving around as freely as usual following your surgery. So in order to keep the lungs clear of mucous and fully expanded it is important to practice deep breathing exercises & coughing frequently after your surgery especially in the first few days.

NO.	EXERCISE AND POSITION	REPEAT TIMES	TIMES DAILY
1.	<p>Breathing Exercises - By breathing deeply and using your lungs as fully as possible you will move the secretions and will be able to cough them up more easily.</p> <p>a) Take a deep breath in through your nose expanding around your lower ribs. Pause:-</p> <p>b) Breathe out through your mouth until all the air is gone.</p> <p>* When you are doing your deep breathing, it is good to hold your breath for 3 seconds on every few breaths. This helps to keep the lungs fully open.</p> <p>If you are able to, changing positions in bed is also important and helps keep the lungs clear. Moving from your back onto your side is good, as is moving from side to side.</p>	5 x	once/hr
2.	<p>Coughing - Coughing may be necessary to clear secretions accumulating in your lungs. To be done after the breathing exercises.</p> <p>a) Bend knees and support your incision firmly with a pillow or your hands to make it more comfortable.</p> <p>b) After several deep breaths, breathe in and cough sharply out.</p> <p>c) Clear sputum into a tissue. Rest for a minute then repeat so long as you have sputum to clear.</p> <p>YOU CANNOT CAUSE ANY DAMAGE TO THE INCISION BY COUGHING.</p>	2 x	once/hr
3.	<p>Leg Exercises - It is important to move your legs in bed plus do the following exercises to maintain good blood circulation in your legs.</p> <p>a) Pump the feet up and down at the ankles.</p> <p>b) Make circles with the feet in each direction with the legs straight.</p> <p>c) Pull toes up and press your knees down into the bed. Hold 3 seconds. Relax.</p> <p>d) Bend one knee and straighten it. Alternate legs.</p>	10 x 10 x 5 x 5 x	once/hr once/hr once/hr once/hr

* Try and practice these exercises before your surgery, so that you know them well. If you have any problems, please ask your physiotherapist or your nurse.