

Patient's name: _____

Physiotherapist: _____

Date: _____

**ST. JAMES'S
HOSPITAL**
James's, St. Dublin 8, Ireland.



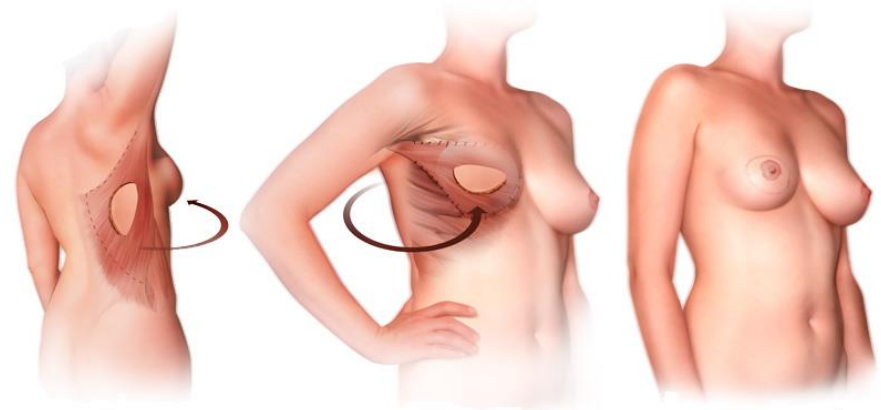
Physiotherapy Department,

St James's Hospital,

Dublin 8.

Phone: 01 - 4162503/4

Opening hours: Monday – Friday,
8.00am - 4:30pm



If you experience pain or any unusual symptoms while performing the exercises contained in this booklet, please consult your doctor or your physiotherapist.

Physiotherapy Latissimus Dorsi Flap Reconstruction

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with information and advice after your breast surgery. It is intended to guide you in completing the exercises shown to you by your physiotherapist. Please ensure you fully understand these exercises. If you have any questions about the information given in this booklet, please contact your physiotherapist.

Breast reconstruction using the Latissimus Dorsi Flap affects the shoulder joint and the function for the arm but also the region around the shoulder blades and upper back. After surgery, physiotherapy is commenced to regain arm and shoulder movement to prevent stiffness. However, to avoid stretching the wounds, there are some movements you should not do in the first weeks following surgery.

Physiotherapy Department St. James's Hospital

Useful websites:

For additional information please consult some of the following useful websites;

- Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists:
www.iscp.ie
- Physical activity guidelines:
www.getirelandactive.ie

Day 1

Deep Breathing Exercises:

- Take 3 deep breaths in through the nose, holding for 3 seconds.
- Then do a strong cough to clear any phlegm.
- This is important to prevent chest infections and should be repeated regularly throughout the day.

Day 5 After your operation

Complete these exercises **3** times a day/ **10** reps each.

All movements should be performed slowly and should not cause pain.

Stop the exercises if you have an infection and contact the breast care nurses.

Signs and symptoms to look out for:

- Swelling in one or all of the following areas: fingers, hand, arm, upper trunk/chest
- Sensation of heaviness/fullness in the arm
- Feelings of soreness or discomfort in the arm or shoulder
- Skin harder, less supple or less soft
- Loss of movement in the joints of the arm

These signs can appear at any time after surgery, or during or after radiotherapy treatment.

If you have any questions about lymphedema or begin to develop any of these signs and symptoms, please contact the physiotherapy department.

What is a Seroma?

It is not unusual to have fluid collect in the wound on your abdomen or around your breast once the drain has been removed following surgery. This is known as a seroma. It may resolve naturally or it may be necessary to have the excess fluid drained. If you notice a seroma developing, contact the Breast Care Nurse for a review appointment.

Lymphoedema

If you have any axillary lymph node removal, it is important to be aware of the risk of developing lymphoedema. This is a gathering of lymph fluid in the soft tissue of the arm, chest or trunk, with accompanying swelling of these areas. This is due to a disruption in the lymphatic system.

1. Hands on your shoulders. Lift your elbows forwards and up to shoulder height. Repeat 10 times.



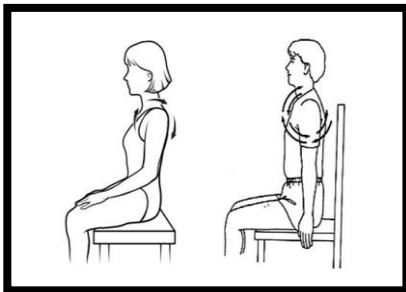
2. Hands on your shoulders. Lift your elbows out to the sides, up to shoulder height. Repeat 10 times.



3. Arms hanging down by your sides, slowly draw imaginary circles and lines on the floor. Repeat 10 times.



4. Relax your shoulders and roll them forwards and the slowly backwards with your arms down by your sides. Repeat 10 times.



5. Bring your hand up behind your back as far as you can. Repeat 10 times.



General Exercise

Physical activity is another key element of your rehabilitation following breast surgery. Research has shown that regular exercise can aid your recovery and lower your risk of developing cancer in the future. 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise is recommended on all, or most, days of the week. Examples include brisk walking, stair climbing. Start slowly, perhaps 15 minutes walking per day and gradually increase the time and intensity of the physical activity you are doing. Your physiotherapist will help you plan your exercise programme.