

# Enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) for a Whipples operation

Exercise and nutrition guidelines

Information for patients

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with guidelines on exercise and nutrition, to help you recover from your operation as quickly as possible.

The ERAS pathway also aims to encourage you to eat and drink normally as quickly as possible. Good nutrition and regular exercise are the key to aid your recovery. Each day you can track your goals and keep daily reflections of your progress. If you have any problems, or further questions please speak to your ward physiotherapist, dietician or ERAS clinical nurse specialist.

## **What is enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS)?**

ERAS is an evidence-based approach that helps people recover more quickly after major surgery, while aiming to improve their experience and wellbeing.

Having an operation can be both physically and emotionally stressful. ERAS programmes try to get you back to full health as quickly as possible. In order to achieve this, we will guide and help you to take an active part in your recovery after surgery.

As you may be aware, staying longer than you need to in hospital can increase the risk of post operation complications. The ERAS pathway reduces the risk of complications and reduces the amount of time you need to stay in hospital.

## **Video**

A video is also available via the following link with further information about the HPB ERAS pathway:

<https://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/hpb-enhanced-recovery-after-surgery-eras-pathway>



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## **Exercises and nutrition: The day of your operation (day 0)**

### **My goals:**

- Complete breathing exercises and supported cough
- Ensure you are sitting in an upright position in bed
- Drink sips of water

### **Breathing exercises**

To help prevent the build of phlegm (mucous) and keep your chest clear following surgery, it is essential that you do regular deep breathing exercises and practise coughing every day, starting as soon as you can after your operation.

- To get the most benefit from doing these exercises it is important to make sure that your pain is well controlled.
- If you are on pain medication, the best time to do the exercises is approximately 20 minutes after taking the medication.
- If you are not taking any pain relief and are experiencing pain when doing these exercises please speak to a member of ward staff.

### **Deep breathing**

Sit in an upright position either in the bed or in a chair and try to ensure your neck and shoulders are as relaxed as possible. Take a long slow deep breath in, you should aim to fill up the base of your lungs so that the bottom of your rib cage moves out to the side as your breath in. Then breathe out. Repeat this four or five times every hour or as prescribed by your physiotherapist.

### **Coughing**

Immediately after doing your breathing exercises you should cough as strongly as you feel able to. If necessary support your wound site by gently pressing your hands, pillow or a folded towel over the area.

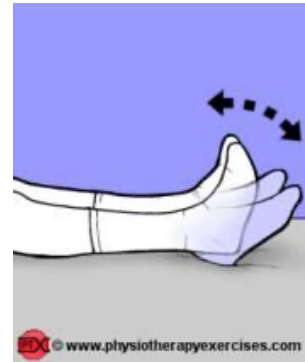
If the cough is strong and dry, rest and repeat the deep breathing exercises every hour or as prescribed.

If you do produce any phlegm, repeat the deep breathing exercises, cough one to two more times and then rest, repeating the exercises every hour or as prescribed.

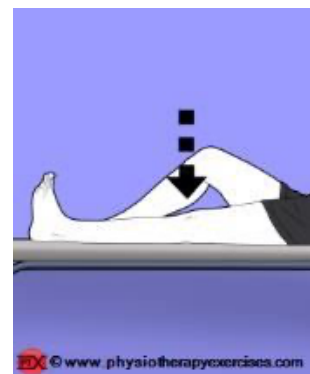
If you produce any phlegm when you cough spit it out if you can (if you have to swallow it, this is also ok).

## Bed exercises

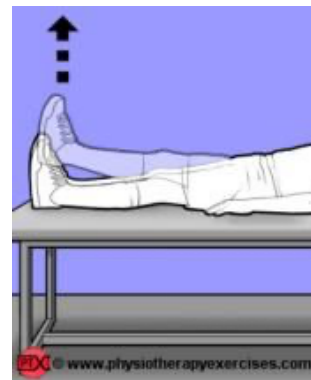
- 1) Position yourself lying on your back. Start with your toes pointing down. Finish with your toes pointing up. Repeat 20 times.



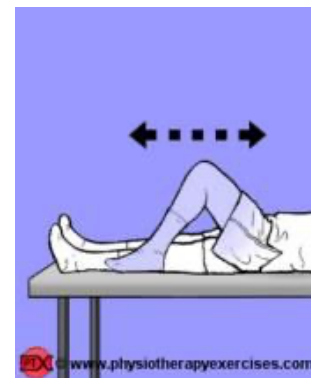
- 2) Lie down on your back with your legs straight. Pull your toes up towards you and tighten the muscles at the front of your thigh by pressing the back of your knee into the bed. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



- 3) Lie down on your back with your legs straight. Start with your leg straight and your heel on the bed. Keeping your leg straight, raise it, and then slowly lower it back down. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



- 4) Lie down on your back. Start with your leg straight. You're your knee, bringing your heel along the bed towards your bottom as far as possible, and back down again. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



## Nutrition

You can have sips of water on day 0, as many times as you would like throughout the day.

## Notes

## Exercises and nutrition: Day 1

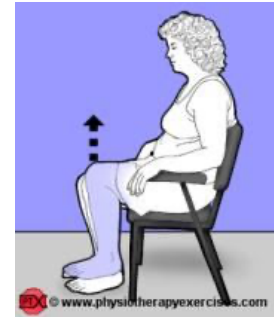
### My goals:

- Continue breathing exercises as per day 0
- Sit out of bed for all meals
- Do bed exercises as per day 0, three times a day
- Ask the doctors if you can have clear fluids

### Day 1 exercises

These exercises should be done sitting in a chair and repeated as often as you can through the day. You can start these exercises as soon as you are able. Make sure you are well supported in the chair and that the chair is pushed back against the wall so that it cannot slip.

- 1) Position yourself sitting with both feet on the floor. Start with your knee bent and foot on the floor. Raise your knee so that your foot is off the floor, and then lower slowly. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



- 2) Position yourself sitting with your knees bent. Practice straightening your knee as much as possible and hold for two to three seconds. Then bend your knee as much as possible. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



- 3) Position yourself sitting with your feet together in front of you. Start with your feet flat on the floor. Keeping your heels on the floor, bring your toes towards you. Then perform the opposite lifting your heels up keeping your toes on the floor. Repeat 20 times.



## Nutrition

Your doctor will advise you if you are able to have clear fluids on day 1 post-operatively.

## Notes

## Exercises and nutrition: Day 2

### My goals:

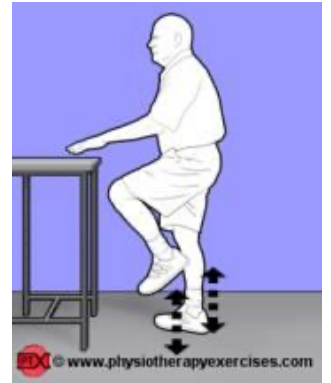
- Continue breathing exercises as per day 0
- Sit out of bed for all meals
- Mobilise one lap of the ward
- Ask the doctors if you can have an unrestricted amount of fluids
- To take oral nutritional supplements three times a day

### Day 2 exercises

These exercises should be completed standing up, holding onto a firm surface and can be completed as often as you can throughout the day.



- 1) Position yourself standing with a table nearby for support. Practice marching on the spot. Ensure that you lift up your legs an equal amount. Repeat 30 seconds to one minute.



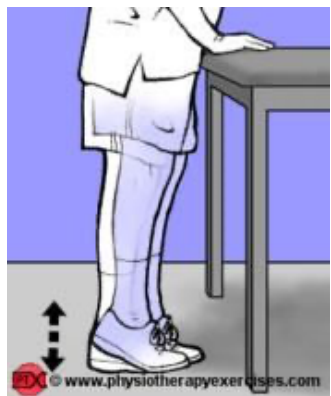
- 2) Position yourself standing with your hands holding onto a firm surface and squat. Repeat 10 times.



- 3) Position yourself standing with your feet together. Start with one leg beside your body. Lift your leg out to the side. Ensure that you keep your body upright and your toes pointing forward. Bring your leg back down to your side. Repeat 10-20 times on each leg.



- 4) Position yourself standing with your feet together. Start with your heels on the ground and stand on your top toes. Lower back down onto your heels slowly. Repeat 20 times.



## Exercise and nutrition goals: Day 3

### My goals:

- Continue exercises as per day 2
- Sit out of bed for all meals
- Mobilise two laps of the ward
- Drink unrestricted fluids and follow a soft diet
- Take oral nutritional supplements three times a day

### Notes

## Exercise and nutrition goals: Day 4

### My goals:

- Continue exercises as per day 2
- Sit out of bed for all meals
- Mobilise freely on ward with/without walking aid as required
- Drink unrestricted fluids and follow a soft diet
- Take oral nutritional supplements three times a day

### Notes

## Exercise and nutrition goals: Day 5

### My goals:

- Continue exercises as per day 2
- Sit out of bed for all meals
- Mobilise freely on ward with/without walking aid as required
- Drink unrestricted fluids and follow a normal diet
- Take oral nutritional supplements three times a day

### Notes

## Exercise and nutrition goals: Day 6

### My goals:

- Continue regular exercises and gradually increase mobilisation
- To have good pain control with oral analgesia (pain medication)
- Drink unrestricted fluids and follow a normal diet
- Return to near pre-admission level of function
- Be aware of the discharge plan

### Notes

## Exercise and nutrition goals: Day 7

### My goals:

- Continue regular exercises and mobilisation as tolerated
- To have good pain control with oral analgesia (pain medication)
- To drink unrestricted fluids and follow a normal diet
- To return to near pre-admission level of function
- To be aware of discharge plan
- If you have difficulty managing a normal meal portion, try having smaller meals more often and gradually increase to your normal portion sizes and frequency.

Your doctor will advise you about heavy lifting and driving as required. Your physiotherapist can provide you with advice you if you find you require more support at home or any equipment on discharge from the hospital.

Please write down any concerns you may have so your healthcare professionals can discuss these with you.

### Notes

## Contact us

### HPB clinical nurse specialist

Email: [rf-tr.hpb-cns@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.hpb-cns@nhs.net), Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

### ERAS enquiries

#### ERAS clinical nurse specialist

Tel: 020 7794 0500, bleep 4014.

Outside of office hours, at weekends and bank holidays you can call the HPB ward at any time and speak to a nurse.

### 9 West ward

Tel: 020 7830 2718

Visiting times: Monday to Friday, 2pm to 8pm.

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust  
Pond Street  
London  
NW3 2QG

## More information

For more information about the hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: [www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/liver-services/](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/liver-services/).

## Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: [rf-tr.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.communications@nhs.net).

## Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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Service: HPB

Version number: 1

Leaflet reference: RFL1214

Approval date: March 2025

Review date: March 2028

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