

Chapter 2: Preparing for Surgery

Strengthening Program Before Surgery

You may have discovered you have been less active because of your spine discomfort. When muscles are not used, they become weak and do not perform well in supporting and moving your body.

Important

Talk with your primary care provider about starting your exercise program.

Having your spine surgery can help to correct the problem, but you will need a regular exercise program to strengthen your muscles and properly support your body.

Beginning an exercise program before surgery can greatly help your recovery.

The following pages list several exercises for you to work on before your surgery. Because everyone responds to exercise differently, you need to be the judge of how much exercise you can do each day. **If an exercise causes an increase in discomfort, stop doing that exercise.**

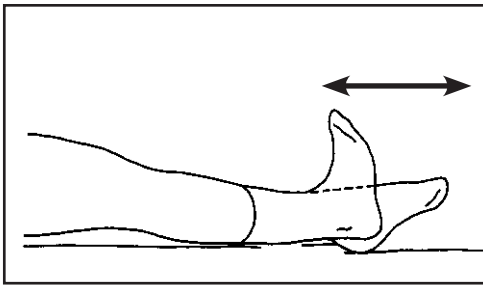
Tip

Turn to chapter 5 for information about body mechanics (posture and movement).

You should try to exercise 1 to 2 times a day, every day, before surgery. Do 5 repetitions of each exercise.

If you are comfortable with the exercise, increase the repetitions by five each week until you reach 20 repetitions (week one: 5 to 10 repetitions, week two: 10 to 15 repetitions and week three: 15 to 20 repetitions).

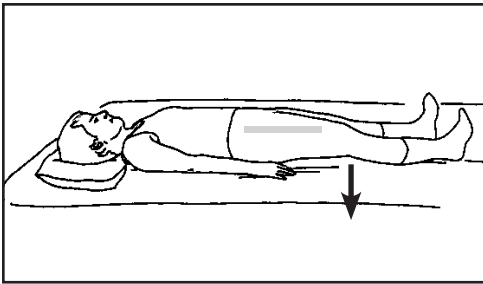
For the most comfort, do the exercises lying down. Your bed is an excellent place to do your exercises.



Exercises — before surgery

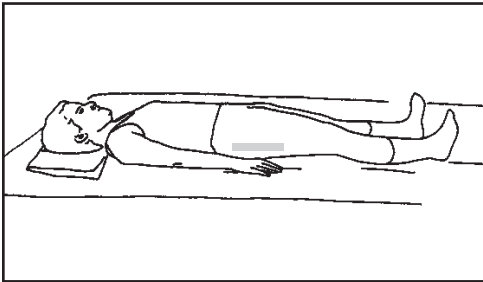
Ankle pumps

Pump your feet up and down by pulling your feet up toward you, then pushing your feet down away from you.



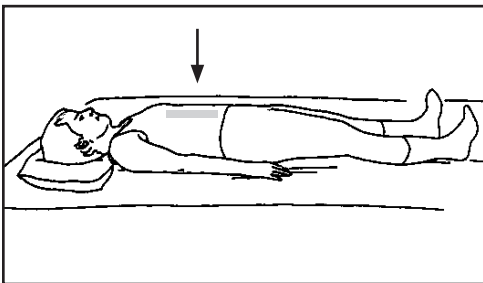
Thigh squeezes (quadriceps sets)

Tighten the muscles on the top of your thigh by pushing the back of your knee down into the bed. Hold for 5 seconds and relax.



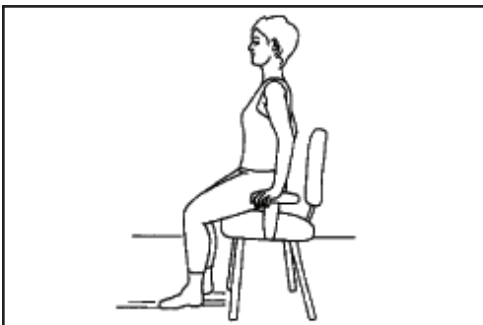
Buttocks squeezes (gluteal sets)

Tighten your buttocks muscles by squeezing the muscles together. Hold for 5 seconds and relax.



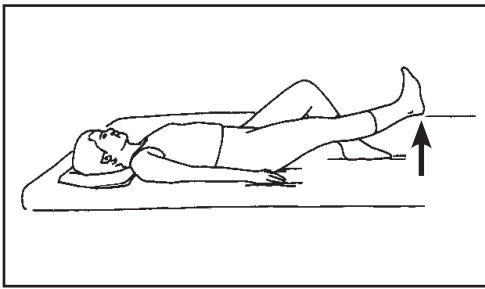
Abdominal sets

Tighten your stomach muscles by pulling your belly button in toward your spine. Do not move your spine. Hold for 5 seconds.



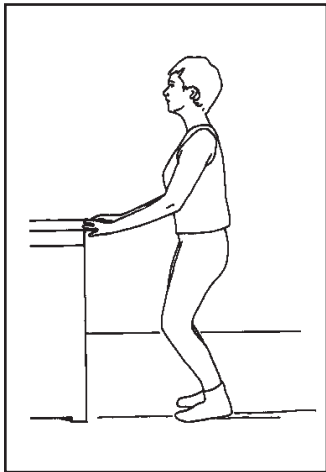
Chair pushups

Sit on a sturdy chair with arms. Hold the arms of the chair. Push down on the chair arms, straightening your elbows so you raise your buttocks off the seat of the chair. Lower yourself slowly back into the chair. If your arms are weak, use your legs to help raise your buttocks off the seat of the chair.



❑ Straight leg raises

Bend your leg with your foot flat on the bed. Raise your leg up about 12 inches, keeping your knee straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly lower your leg down and relax. Repeat with the other leg.



❑ Mini squats

Stand facing a counter. Place your hands lightly on the edge of the counter to help you keep your balance. Bend your knees slightly. Hold for 5 seconds. Straighten your knees to stand up and relax.

Drawings © Allina Health System

Walking

Tip

See chapter 4 for information about starting a walking program.

Walking before surgery can help you have a successful recovery. Regular walking can also help to:

- prevent constipation
- make you feel better
- manage your weight
- improve muscle tone
- keep your joints flexible
- improve healing by promoting blood flow (circulation)
- promote sleep.

It may be helpful to set a time of day such as morning or evening to add a walk.

Before surgery exercise program

Check the box under the appropriate day and week after you perform the exercises selected for you. If you feel comfortable doing 10 repetitions of each exercise, increase the repetitions by 5 each week until you get to 20 repetitions.

Exercise	Week 1							Week 2							Week 3							Week 4						
	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
Ankle pumps																												
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