



West Yorkshire  
Critical Care & Major Trauma  
Operational Delivery Networks

# REHABILITATION AFTER CRITICAL CARE

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Exercise Programme and  
Exercise Diary

Name:

Date Commenced:

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# INTRODUCTION

This booklet aims to help you recover after your critical illness. It is normal for you to feel weak after your hospital stay and these exercises will help you develop your strength and fitness.

The exercises will be explained to you by your physiotherapist while you are in hospital, and they are designed so that you can continue them at home.

You will find some exercises more difficult than others. You should not give up on a particular exercise, instead do a few repetitions and try to build up gradually.

When you are exercising it is normal to feel breathless, however, you should not be so breathless

that you cannot hold a conversation. Two to three minutes recovery time is acceptable. If you need more than five to recover you have probably done too much.

You can be guided by the 'Borg Scale' on page 5 to help pace yourself. Aim for a score of between 12 and 14.

**You should not exercise if you feel unwell. If you are unsure, please check with your GP, nurse or physiotherapist.**

This exercise diary was developed by the West Yorkshire Critical Care Operational Delivery Network Rehabilitation group.

**Disclaimer:** You should understand that when participating in any exercise or exercise programme there is a possibility of physical injury. If you engage in this exercise or exercise programme you agree that you do so at your own risk, are voluntarily participating in these exercises and assume all risk of injury to yourself.

## WARM UP

It is worth while spending up to 5 minutes on a simple warm up to prepare your body for exercise and to reduce the risk of injury. It is advisable to wear loose fitting comfortable clothing and flat supportive footwear when exercising.

### Checks

- Make sure you are sitting in an upright position.
- Ensure the temperature of the room is comfortable.
- Ensure you have adequate space all around you to exercise.
- Allow adequate uninterrupted time to complete your exercises.

### Repeat each warm up exercise 5 to 10 times in sitting

- 1) Look over your shoulder – to left then right
- 2) Looking forward tuck in chin- repeat
- 3) Circle your shoulders forward then backwards.
- 4) Toe tap then heel raise alternating feet
- 5) Slouch and stretch your back in the chair

### **SUGGESTION:**

Try doing it to music but at a pace which is comfortable to you.



# BORG SCALE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION

SCORE	PERCEPTION OF EXERTION
6	<b>NO EXERTION AT ALL</b> Extremely light exertion  <b>VERY LIGHT</b> For a normal, healthy person it is like walking slowly at his / her own pace for some minutes  <b>LIGHT</b>
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	<b>SOMEWHAT HARD</b> But it feels OK to continue
13	
14	
15	<b>HARD (HEAVY)</b>  <b>VERY HARD</b> It is very strenuous – a healthy person can still go on, but he/she really has to push themselves. It feels very heavy, and the person is very tired
16	
17	
18	<b>EXTREMELY HARD</b> For most people this is the most strenuous exercise they have ever experienced
19	
20	

**You should be aiming to work at Level 12 – 14.**

Reference: Borg GAV (1982) Psychological bases of perceived exertion.  
(Med Sci Sports Exercise: 14 5 377-381)

# EARLY STAGE

Some exercises incorporate the use of light weights (1kg to 2kg). If you don't have weights, you could use tins of beans or a small bottle of water.

# 1. BICEP CURLS

“

**In sitting position**  
with arms relaxed down,  
turn your palms forward.  
Bend alternate elbows  
up to chest.

”

Progress to  
completing exercise  
with weights and  
then in a standing  
position.

A



B



REPEAT

• • • • •  
TIMES

## 2. ARM PUNCHES

“

In the **sitting position** with fist clenched, punch alternate arms forward and backwards.

REPEAT

.....  
TIMES

A



B



”

Progress to completing exercise with weights and then in a standing position.

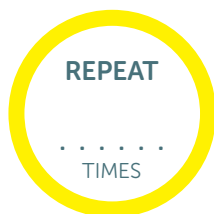


### 3. OVERHEAD ARMS



“

**Sit holding your hands  
on your chest**, lift alternate  
arms from your chest straight  
up and bring back down.



”

Progress to  
completing exercise  
with weights and  
then in a standing  
position.

## 4. KNEE EXTENSIONS

“

**Sitting on a chair,**  
straighten one leg out in  
front of you, point your  
toe to the ceiling and hold  
for 5 seconds.

A

”

Slowly return  
your foot to the  
floor, repeat with  
the other leg.

REPEAT

• • • • •  
TIMES

B





## 5. SEATED MARCH



“

**Sit on a chair** with  
your back supported,  
keeping your knee bent,  
lift alternate legs.

REPEAT

.....  
TIMES

”

Progress to sitting  
without back  
support.

## 6. HIP TWIST



**Lying on the bed,**  
bend both knees up with  
feet flat on bed. Keeping  
knees together, let both  
knees fall out to one side  
in a controlled manner.



**”**  
Pause for 5 seconds,  
then take your legs  
to the opposite  
side.



**REPEAT**

.....  
TIMES



## 7. BRIDGING

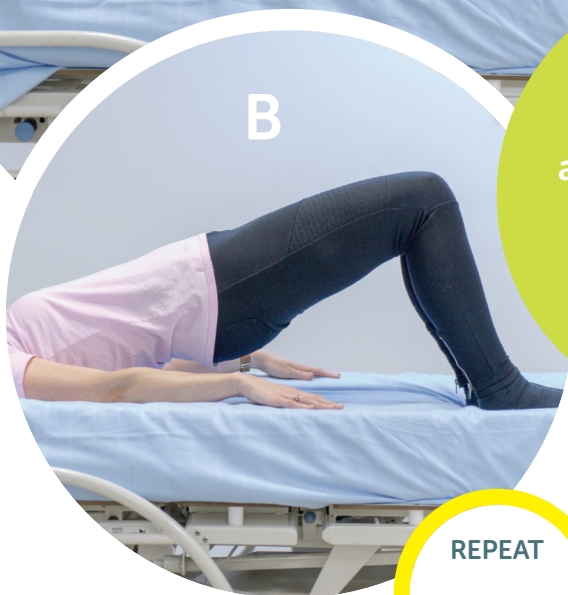


Lying on the bed,  
bend both knees  
up with feet flat  
on the bed

A



B



Lift your pelvis  
and hips up off the  
bed and hold this  
position for 5  
seconds.

REPEAT

• • • • •  
TIMES

# MID STAGE

Before you progress to mid stage exercises try the early stage exercises with small weights.

## 8. HEEL RAISES

“

**Stand** whilst holding onto the back of a sturdy chair for support. Push up onto your toes, raising your heels from the floor.

”

Progress to standing without holding on to chair.

A

HOLD FOR

.....  
SECONDS

B

REPEAT

.....  
TIMES



## 9. SIT TO STAND

“

**Sitting upright on a chair**  
with arm rests, lean  
forwards slightly.

A

”

**Stand up using**  
the chair arms  
to push up.

B

REPEAT

• • • • •  
TIMES



**”**  
Sit down again  
in a controlled  
manner.



## 10. SIDE LEG LIFTS

“

**Stand up straight**  
holding onto the back  
of a sturdy chair for  
support.

”

Lift one leg, out  
to the side and bring  
it back keeping  
your body straight  
throughout the  
exercise.

A



REPEAT

.....  
TIMES

ON EACH SIDE

B





A

## 11. HIP EXTENSION



B

“

**Stand up straight,**  
holding onto the back of a  
sturdy chair for support.

”

Take one leg back,  
ensuring you do not  
arch your back, hold,  
then return. Repeat  
with the other  
leg.

HOLD FOR

.....  
SECONDS

REPEAT

.....  
TIMES

ON EACH SIDE

## 12. UPRIGHT ROW

“

**Stand up**, holding an exercise band or small weights at hip level.

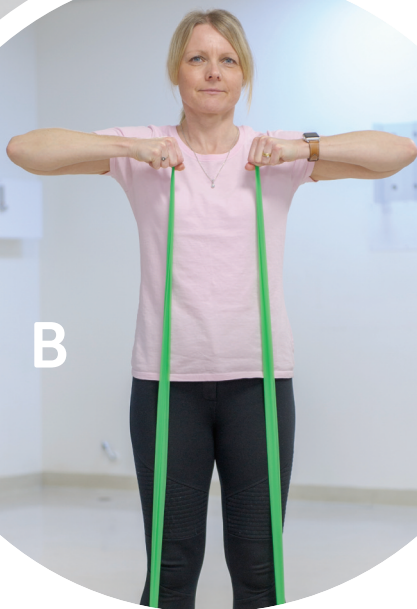
”

Pull the band or weights up to your chest, keeping your elbows level with your shoulders.

A



B







”  
Lower  
in a controlled  
manner.

REPEAT  
.....  
TIMES

# 13. WALL PUSH UPS

“

**Stand facing a wall**  
with your arms straight out  
in front of you at shoulder  
height and your hands  
on the wall.

A



B



”

Slowly bend your  
elbows to bring your  
face and forearms  
towards the wall.  
Slowly push back to  
starting position.

C



REPEAT

.....  
TIMES



A

## 14. SQUATS



B

“

**Stand**, holding onto the back of a sturdy chair for support. Have your feet shoulder width apart.

”

Slowly bend your knees keeping your back straight and heels on the floor.

Stand up.

REPEAT

• • • • •  
TIMES

## 15. STEP UPS

“

Using the **bottom step of your stairs** and holding the bannister for support.

”

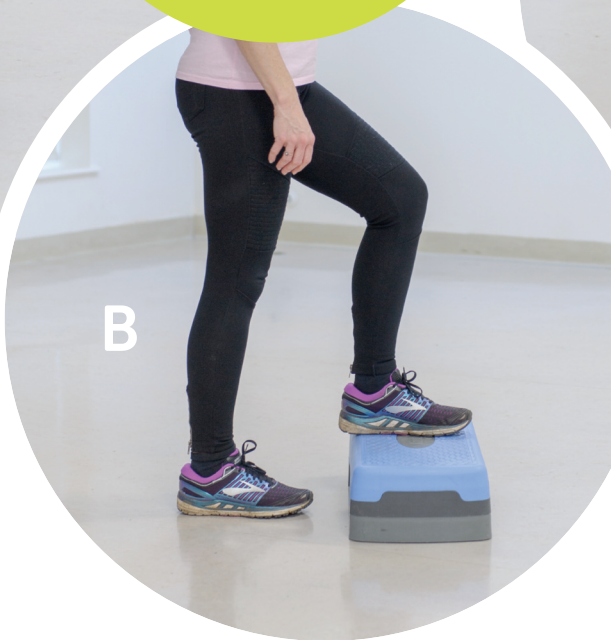
Step up with one leg.

Bring the other leg to join it on top of the step.

A



B





D

”

Step down with  
the first leg.

Bring the other  
leg to join it.

C

REPEAT

.....  
TIMES

CHANGING  
LEAD LEG AFTER

.....  
REPETITIONS

## GENERAL ADVICE

You can improve your general fitness simply by being more active in your day to day life.

For example:

- Walk instead of driving - Walking is an excellent way to enhance your general fitness. Try to increase the frequency and distance you walk and the time you spend walking.
- Use the stairs rather than the lift.
- Gardening and housework – ensuring you pace yourself.

NOTES:

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## MY DAILY EXERCISE AND ACTIVITY DIARY

The diary is provided to encourage and monitor your progress.

Week Commencing:      /      /      -      -      -

[illegible]



## MY DAILY EXERCISE AND ACTIVITY DIARY

Week Commencing:      /      /      -      -      -

[illegible]



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## West Yorkshire

Critical Care & Major Trauma  
Operational Delivery Networks

The West Yorkshire Adult Critical Care and Major Trauma Operational Delivery Networks are regionally based. It is a collaborative partnership enabling clinical services to work together to promote the highest quality services for the region.

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