

## Critical Illness Rehabilitation Team

# Rehabilitation after critical illness

## Exercise Booklet

### Introduction

After a stay on critical care some patients can experience the following:

- weight loss and reduced muscle strength
- stiff joints
- loss of appetite
- fatigue
- changes in appearance, such as hair thinning/loss and changes to your voice
- poor quality sleep and abnormal sleeping patterns
- feelings of fear, sadness and anxiety
- poor concentration and memory problems

This will mean that the slightest activity takes tremendous effort and tires you out very quickly.

Rehabilitation is about helping your physical and emotional recovery. The aim of this booklet is to provide you with exercises, advice and support to aid your recovery and get you back to usual activities as soon as possible.

You may feel like you will never be able to do them all, so start with the



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bed exercises and progress as you are able. We will work with you and help you progress your activities accordingly.

The exercises should be challenging, but not exhausting. If you are feeling that an exercise is too hard:

- try reducing the number of times you do the exercise
- do it for a shorter length of time
- choose an alternative exercise

If you find the exercise too easy you can:

- increase the number of times you do the exercise
- increase the length of time you do the exercise for
- choose a harder exercise.

## Important Points

- Follow the instructions in the exercise plan.
- Do not do too much too soon. This may make you feel over-tired and affect your ability to do exercise the next day.
- If you have a bad day, try not to let this upset you. Everyone feels like that at times, but this does **not** mean you aren't improving.
- **Stop the exercise** immediately and inform your therapist if you feel dizziness, chest pain/tightness or much more breathless than usual.
- **Stop the exercise** immediately and inform your therapist if you feel joint or muscle pain during the exercise.
- Make sure you record your exercises in the exercise diary so you can see your progress.

It is important to do some of these exercises even on days when you do not feel like doing anything; for example, bed exercises rather than completing them in the chair. This is better than doing nothing at all.

## Functional tasks

As well as traditional exercises, functional activities can also help improve your strength and general wellbeing. Examples of functional tasks are:

- washing and dressing yourself

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- quizzes
- games
- reading the newspaper

## Routine

Getting yourself into a normal routine is vital in order to aid your recovery. Try setting out a routine with your ward therapist or nursing team. For example, get out of bed for breakfast, wash and dress in bathroom.

## Further Information

If you have any questions or need more information, you can contact the Critical Illness Rehabilitation Team via telephone on 02476 96 8222, or via email at [CIRT@uhcs.nhs.uk](mailto:CIRT@uhcs.nhs.uk).

## Exercises (in bed programme)

### Static Glutes

Keep your legs out in front of you. Contract your bottom muscles making sure you don't tense your leg or stomach muscles. **Hold for 5-10 seconds and repeat.**

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Static Quadriceps

Put your legs out straight in front of you. Pull your foot up towards you and push your knee down into the bed. **Hold for 5 seconds and repeat.** Remember to exercise both legs.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### Straight Leg Raise

Bend one knee up so your foot is on the bed. Straighten your other leg and lift off the bed a few inches. **Hold for 3 seconds** and slowly relax the leg back down. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Hip Abduction and Adduction

Put your legs out straight in front of you. Slide your leg out to the side and back to the middle. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### Inner Range Quads

Put a rolled up towel under your knee. Tighten your thigh muscles and lift your heel up from the bed until your knee is straight. **Hold for 5 seconds** then slowly lower your heel back down to the bed. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Hip and Knee Flexion

Bend your knee up in front of you keeping it in midline to your body. Bend it up as much as you can. Then slowly lower back down to the bed. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### Ankle Dorsiflexion and Plantarflexion

Pull your foot up towards you as much as you can, then point your foot away from you. Repeat on both sides.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Bridging

Bend your knees up so your feet are flat on the bed. Using your bottom and leg muscles, raise your buttocks up off the bed, pushing equally through both legs. Keep your pelvis level and **hold for 5 seconds**. Slowly lower back to the bed and repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



## Exercises for your arms (these can be completed in the bed or the chair)

### Shoulder Abduction

Lift your arm up sideways with thumb leading the way. You can try and do both arms together if it gets too easy. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### **Elbow Flexion**

Bend your elbow and then straighten your elbow. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Radial and Ulnar Deviation**

Hold fingers and wrist straight. Bend wrist first towards the little finger and then towards your thumb. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### **Pronation and Supination**

Palm turned down, place on leg. Turn your palm up and then down. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Finger Flexion and Extension**

Make a fist. Straighten fingers. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### **Thumb Opposition**

Touch each fingertip with your thumb. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Wringing/Grip**

Holding a towel, squeeze the towel, pull the towel apart and wring the towel out. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Exercises (in chair programme)

#### Toe Tapping

Move your toes up and touch your heels to the floor. Repeat on each side.



#### Shoulder Shrug

Lift your shoulders and relax. Repeat.



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### **Knee Extension**

Pull your toes up and straighten your knee. **Hold for 5-10 seconds**, and slowly lower and relax.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Shoulder Abduction**

Lift your arm up letting the thumb lead the way. Repeat on alternate arms.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



## Patient Information

### **Seated Marching**

Lift your leg off the seat keeping your knee bent. Return to the starting position. Repeat on alternate legs.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Seated Side Step**

Step one leg out to the side then return it back to the middle. Repeat on each leg.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### **Adductor Squeeze**

Place a towel in between your knees. Squeeze the towel with the insides of your thighs, **hold for 5-10 seconds and repeat.**

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Ball around Body**

Sit forward in the chair and pass the ball around your waist. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Exercises (in standing programme)

The following should be performed in standing. Have a chair behind you in case you need to rest.

#### Sit to Stand

Stand from the chair using both arms to help you get up. Repeat. To progress this exercise, just use one arm and then no arms.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



#### Squats

Keeping your back straight, bend your knees and push your legs straight again. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Standing Spot March

Standing tall behind a chair, resting hands on the back of the chair, march on the spot.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### Hip Extension

Standing tall behind chair, squeeze your bottom together and move the one leg behind you at a time. **Hold for five seconds and repeat.**

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### Hip Abduction

Standing tall behind chair, slowly move one leg out to the side. **Hold for five seconds and repeat.**

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### Heel Raises

Standing tall behind chair, slowly go up onto your toes and then lower. Repeat.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



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### **Ball around Body**

Stand with a chair in front, pass a ball/object around your waist. Repeat in each direction.

Repetitions .....

Sets .....



### **Walking**

Take regular walks throughout the day. Ask for assistance or use your walking aid if required.



## Patient Information

Images taken by the Medical Photography department at UHCW NHS Trust.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact Emma Stuart-Thomas on 024 7696 8222 or alternatively you can email us at [CIRT@uhcs.nhs.uk](mailto:CIRT@uhcs.nhs.uk).

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