

# Physiotherapy advice after your kidney transplant

**This leaflet provides simple advice and exercises to follow which can help to prevent potential complications and speed up your recovery following your transplant.**

**You will be seen by a member of the physiotherapy team to discuss attendance at our Renal rehabilitation class or other exercise options local to you.**

**If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

## Recommended rehabilitation plan

Below is a recommended plan for you to follow as closely as possible to aid a speedy recovery. If you feel you need any more help in achieving this, please speak to your nurse.

### **Day 0 (the day of your transplant)**

Breathing exercises, bed exercise,  
and sitting up in bed

### **Day 1**

Sit out in a chair for at least four hours, complete breathing exercises, aim to complete two short walks the length of your bay

### **Day 2**

Sit out of bed for at least eight hours in total,  
aim to take two longer walks the full length of the ward

### **Day 3**

Sit out of bed for most of the day, aim to  
increase the distance and frequency of your walks

Speak to your nurse if your pain stops you from completing the tasks above as they can adjust your pain relief medication to help with your recovery.

## Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises and moving around will help to re-expand your lungs, making it easier to breathe. They also help to clear phlegm from the airways and therefore reduce the risk of chest infections.

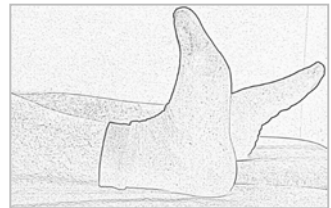
Take four slow deep breaths, holding for three to five seconds, and repeat this every hour during the day. You should continue with these breathing exercises until you are spending most of the day out of bed and are walking around.

It is normal to have more phlegm on your chest after surgery, and coughing can often be uncomfortable. When you cough, hold a rolled up towel or pillow against your wound to provide some support. Coughing will not do any damage to your wound.

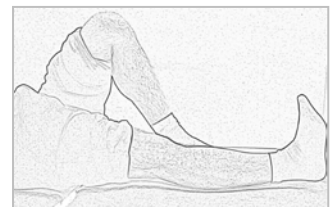
## Exercises in the bed

Aim to complete the following exercises three times a day. This will improve your circulation and maintain your movement and strength. It is also important that you try to sit upright in the bed as much as possible during the day to help prevent other complications.

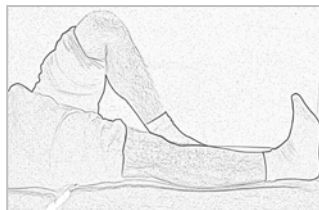
1. **Ankle pumps** – move your ankles up and down repeatedly for one minute.



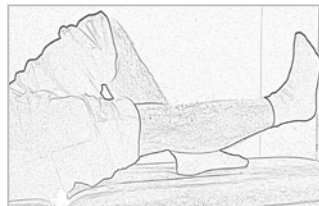
2. **Knee bends** – bend one knee at a time up towards your chest and then straighten out. Repeat this 15 times on each side.



3. **Straightening knee** – with a straight leg, push your knee down into the bed. Hold this for 5 seconds and repeat 15 times on each side.



4. **Leg raises** – lift one leg up straight in the air, keeping your knee straight. Hold it up off the bed for five seconds and repeat 15 times on each side.



## Walking and exercise

Once you are at home, it is important that you continue taking walks to improve your fitness.

Begin with the distance you have been walking in the hospital and aim to increase this distance gradually. During your walk you should feel that you are exercising, feeling your heart beat faster and feel slightly short of breath. See the next page for a perceived exertion scale.

Returning to other forms of exercise or any gym programme needs to be approved by your doctor. To minimise the risk of injury, you should slowly increase the intensity of exercise and take note of any unusual pulling or pain over your wound site – this is an indication to stop.

## **Supporting changes in activity levels and eating (SCALE) at Guy's Hospital**

SCALE is a service at Guy's Hospital aimed at all patients with renal disease with a BMI of 30 or more who would like support to change their diet and lifestyle. SCALE is a one-to-one, monthly session with a dietitian and a physiotherapist and is available to those patients whose care is provided by Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital.

If you would like more information or to be referred to this (or an alternative weight management) service please speak to a health care professional.

## **Renal rehabilitation at Guy's Hospital**

Renal Rehabilitation is a 12 week programme designed to help people with renal disease to start exercising regularly. This is a twice-weekly, hour long class involving a variety of exercises aimed at different ability levels. It is based at Guy's Hospital, in the basement gym and sessions run on Tuesdays (10.30am to 11.30am) and Fridays (1.30pm to 2.30pm).

If you would like more information or would like to attend renal rehabilitation, please ask your ward physiotherapist. Or call the number at the end of this leaflet, or email

**[renalrehab@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:renalrehab@gstt.nhs.uk)**

If you are unable to access Guy's Hospital and would like to partake in exercise in your community please see overleaf.

## BORG perceived exertion scale

The BORG perceived exertion scale gives you an idea of how hard your exercise feels. Exercise should feel somewhat hard (the grey shaded area of three to four).

0	Nothing at all
0.5	Very, very slight shortness of breath
1	Very mild shortness of breath
2	Mild shortness of breath
3	Moderate shortness of breath
4	Somewhat hard
5 – 6	Strong or hard breathing
7 – 8	Severe shortness of breath or very hard breathing
9	Extremely severe
10	Shortness of breath so severe that you need to stop

If it feels light (less than three), you should **INCREASE** the pace of your exercise.

If it feels hard (five or more), you need to **SLOW** the pace of your exercise.

## Exercise in your community

In the community there are a variety of ways to access exercise. Below are some recommendations.

**1. 'Exercise on Referral'** is a specific and formalised fitness programme which can be completed in the community. Qualified instructors will supervise you over a 12 week period to help you get back into fitness following your operation. Visit your GP to discuss this and they may be able to make a referral.

**2. NHS Choices** provides information on the benefits of being more physically active as well as guidelines and tips on how to include physical activity and exercise into your day. Visit **[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)** to find out more.

**3. Walking for Health** runs organised walks to help people across the country lead a more active lifestyle. Visit **[www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)** to find out more information and to find organised walks near you.

## Exercise diary

Use the exercise diary below to monitor your exercises independently post operatively. The white boxes show the days that you are expected to complete the exercises, ie complete breathing exercises for two days. If you are unsure, you can ask the ward physiotherapist for advice.

	Breathing Exercises	Bed Exercises	Walk 1	Walk 2	Walk 3	Walk 4
example	✓	✓				
Day 0						
Day 1						
Day 2						
Day 3						
Day 4						
Day 5						

## Contact us

If you need advice or have any questions about the information in this booklet, please contact the ward physiotherapist between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday on 020 7188 5106.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

### Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)

**e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

**e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

**t:** 020 7188 8815

**e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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A list of sources is available on request