

Therapies

# Movement and activity advice for people with coronavirus (covid-19)

Information for patients, relatives  
and carers

## Introduction

This information booklet provides guidance on how you might become more physically active again whilst you continue to recover from coronavirus (Covid-19). If you have any questions, please ask a member of the therapies team.

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## Movement and activity

During any period of illness, it is normal for your strength, mobility and exercise tolerance to reduce. When you feel able, you should start to return to activity in a gradual manner.

It is important you don't do too much, too soon as this may exacerbate your symptoms. Consider pacing yourself, as this will allow you to:

- successfully manage your energy levels
- breakdown everyday activities and exercises into smaller parts
- gradually, over a period of time, try to increase the amount you can do

An example of pacing yourself might include:

- prioritising your tasks for the week; if there are 15 tasks to complete you may want to stagger them so there are only three to four to complete in any day.

On the following pages we have provided a selection of exercises that will assist you to return to your previous activity levels. These increase in difficulty, ranging from bed to standing exercises. Level two is more difficult than level one. You should start these in hospital and continue with them when you are at home.

With each, aim to complete them gradually and often, starting with five repetitions every one – two hours. Over time, you can build on this number as you notice improvement.

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## Bed exercises – level one



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### **Ankle pumps**

Alternate between moving your toes up towards your shin and then pointing your toes down.



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### **Heel slides**

Bend your knee by sliding your heel towards your bottom and then straighten your leg.

When you have fully straightened your leg push down into the bed as hard as you can for five seconds. Then relax.



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### **Bottom contractions**

Squeeze your buttocks together firmly and hold for five seconds. Then relax.



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## Shoulder retraction

Squeeze your shoulder blades in towards each other. Then relax.

## Chair exercises – level one



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## Neck movements

Gently move your neck from side to side. Then complete an up and down movement. Go as far as you feel comfortable.



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## Seated row

Lift your arms forwards into the starting position. Slowly pull your elbows directly backwards, squeezing your shoulder blades together.



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## Marching on the spot

Keeping your knee bent, lift one leg off the seat as high as you can. Lower down and repeat on the other side.



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### **Knee extension**

Straighten your knee in front of you using your thigh muscles. Slowly lower and repeat with the other side.

## Chair exercises – level one



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### **Seated heel raises**

Lift your heels up into the air, placing the weight forward onto your toes. Slowly lower and relax

## Standing exercises – level one



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### **Wall slide**

Stand close to a wall. Slowly slide both arms up with your palms flat. Slowly lower and repeat.



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## Standing hip flexion

Stand and hold onto a chair if required. Lift one knee up as far as you feel comfortable. Slowly lower and repeat with the other side.



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## Standing hip abduction

Stand and hold onto a chair if required. Lift one leg out to the side as far as you feel comfortable. Make sure you keep your trunk straight. Slowly lower and repeat on the other side.



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## Mini squat

Stand and hold onto a chair if required. Slowly bend your knees until you feel comfortable. Straighten back up to the starting position.

## Bed exercises – level two



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## Bridge

Tighten your bottom muscles and lift your back up off the bed as far as you feel comfortable. Hold for one second and then relax back down.



## **Straight leg raise**

With your other leg bent, tighten the front thigh muscles and lift the straight leg off the bed. Lower down and relax.



## **Shoulder flexion**

Lift one or both arms above your head, keeping them close to your ear. Lower down and relax.

## **Chair exercises – level two**



## **Shoulder flexion with weight**

Holding a small weight (such as a water bottle) in your hand, lift one arm above your head. Lower and repeat with the other side



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## Chair dips

With your hands on the chair, push yourself up until your arms are straight. In a controlled manner, slowly bend your elbows until your bottom reaches the chair again.



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## Sit to stand

Using your arms to assist if required, stand up from the chair. Slowly return to sitting



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## Resisted knee extension

Ask your physiotherapist for some resistance band. With the band around your ankle, slowly straighten your knees using your thigh muscles. Slowly lower and repeat with the other side

## Standing exercises – level two



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## Alternating shoulder press

Stand holding a small weight (such as a water bottle) in each hand. Lift one arm above your head and slowly lower. Repeat with the other side.





## Single leg stand

Balance on one leg.

You can hold onto something with your arms initially if required.

Aim to start with small amounts i.e. two - three seconds and then build this time as you become more confident.



## Squat

Squat down by sitting back and bringing your arms forward. Push back up through the heels to the starting position.



## Lateral lunge

Squat down with one leg and at the same time slide the other leg with the towel sideways. Pull the leg back next to the other leg and straighten back to the starting position.

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## How do I make a comment or suggestion?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions or comments**, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

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