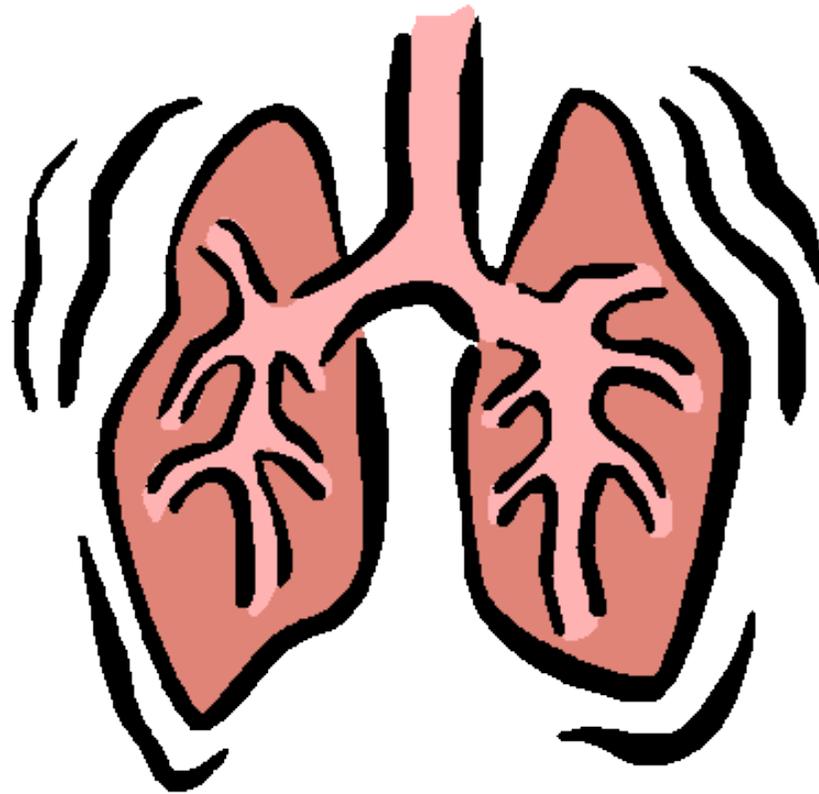


Post COVID-19 Rehab



How to use the diary

This diary is designed to help you record how you are getting on with your exercise programme and to see if your symptoms improve. As you continue to exercise over the next few weeks you will be able to see how things are improving.

The diary is divided into four main sections to help structure your exercise routine:

1. **Warm up** – to help prepare your body for exercise
2. **Endurance exercise** – this helps improve your ability to 'keep going'
3. **Strengthening exercise** – to help you get stronger
4. **Stretches** – to help keep you supple.

Your exercise routine should start with a warm up before moving on to the endurance and strengthening exercise. You should finish with a cool down using the stretches in section 4 and some marching on the spot.

You can record what you are doing on the sheets provided if you find that helpful.

We can provide more sheets if you run out.

How often should I exercise?

Government recommendations for healthy individuals are to exercise at a moderate level for 150 minutes each week. They suggest splitting this up into 30 min blocks, five times a week.

When recovering from illness this advice will need to be modified to your ability for example starting with 5-10 minutes and building up gradually.

How much should I do?

It is important to measure how breathless and tired you feel during and after exercise. You can do this with the breathlessness scale (p.3). You need to reach and maintain a moderate level of breathlessness (3 on the scale) when you exercise to see any improvement in your exercise tolerance.

Walking

Start with a level you can do consistently for a few days without increasing your symptoms and aim to build up to 20-30 minutes of walking. Once you can comfortably do 20 minutes, try to walk as if you are slightly late. Aim to increase your walking time gradually.

Strengthening exercises

If fatigue is one of your main symptoms start with a low number of repetitions. Aim to gradually build up to 30 repetitions of each exercise. (This may be easier to do in sets of 5) Once you can easily achieve this, you can add weights. You will have to reduce your repetitions accordingly. Slowly build back up to 30 repetitions.

If you have a break in your exercise/activity routine because you are unwell or for another reason, please restart the exercises programme at a lower level and build this back up.

Remember:

- Wear comfortable and sensible clothes and shoes
- Don't exercise immediately after eating a meal
- Always warm up before exercising and cool-down afterwards
- Make sure you are well rested before starting - build in rest before and after exercise.
- You may notice an increase in your breathlessness when you stop exercising
- It is normal to get breathless when exercising; you should still be able to talk! (Level 3 on the breathlessness scale)
- Don't exercise if you feel unwell
- Drink enough fluid to keep you hydrated
- Use your breathing control – breathe out with the effort part of the exercise and use the breathlessness position in the advice leaflet.

Stop:

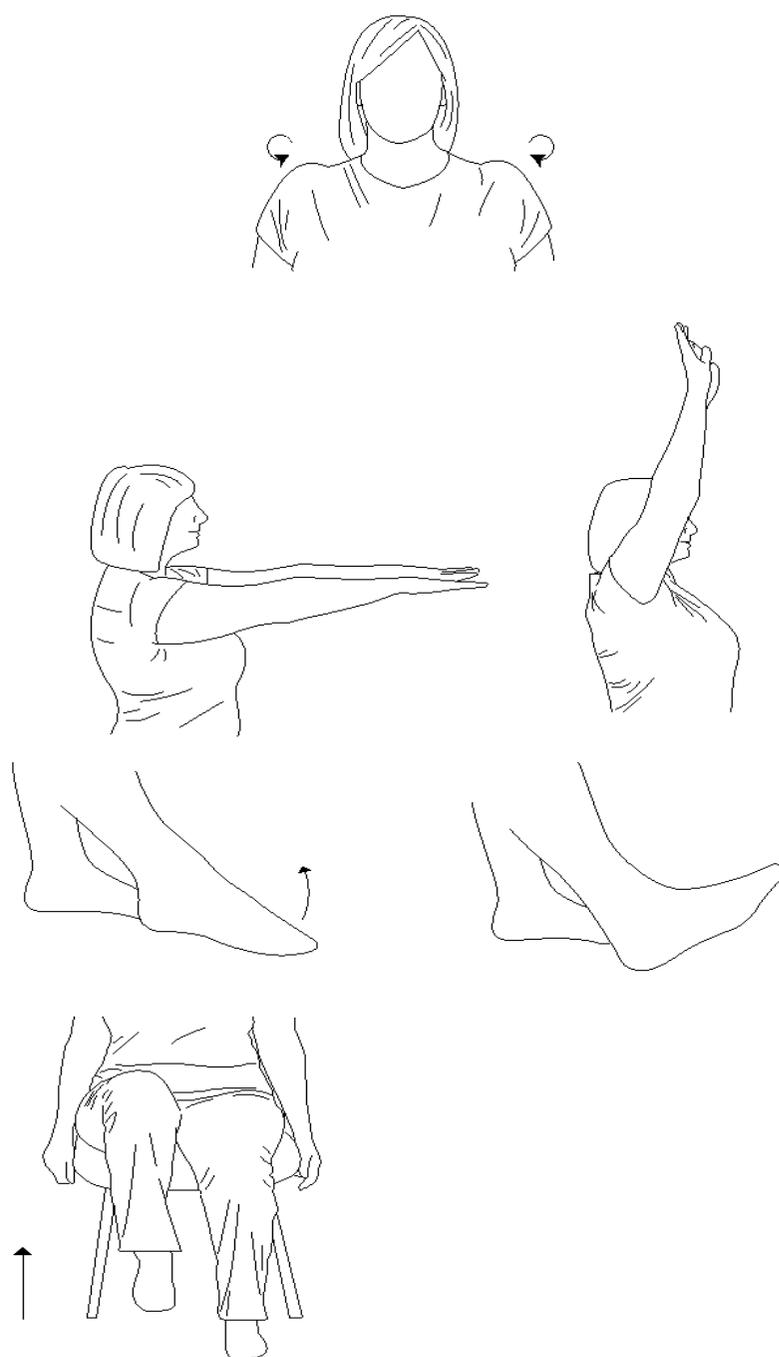
- **If you get chest pain or tightness**
- **If you feel dizzy or nauseous**
- **If you feel clammy or cold**
- **If you feel increasingly wheezy**
- **If your joint or muscles are painful**

Breathlessness Scale

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 0 | No breathlessness | |
| 1 | Very slight breathlessness – Just noticeable | |
| 2 | Slight breathlessness – More noticeable but you are okay to keep going |  |
| 3 | Moderate breathlessness – You are breathless but can still hold a conversation |  |
| 4 | Breathlessness now affecting your ability to hold a conversation | |
| 5 | Strong or hard breathing - You are unable to say 5-6 word sentences |  |
| 6 | Severe breathlessness - You are only able to say 2-3 words at a time | |
| 7 | Very severe breathlessness – You can only say 1 word at a time |  |
| 8 | You cannot talk | |
| 9 | Almost the worst breathlessness you have ever had |  |
| 10 | The worst breathlessness you have ever had |  |

Section 1: Warm up

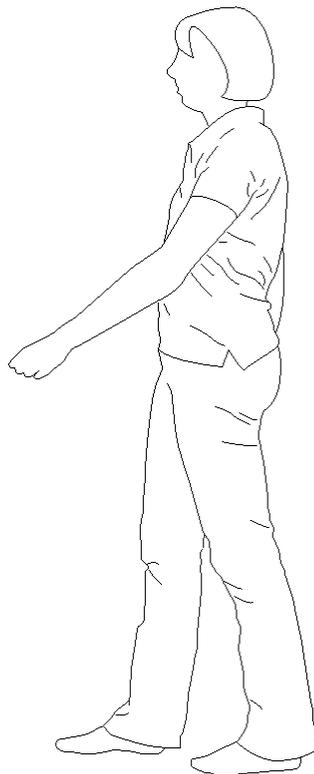
Always begin with a gentle warm up. This should consist of some gentle movements to prepare your body for exercise. Keep the movements small and then make them bigger as you feel comfortable to do so. Remember to keep breathing throughout. Gently rolling your shoulders, stretching your arms above your head and out in front, tapping your toes/heels out in front and marching on the spot can all be good ways to warm up.



Section 2: Endurance exercise

1. Walking

- Try to walk every day. If you have no space in your house, march on the spot
- Walking regularly is important and will help improve your stamina
- Try to walk as if you are slightly late
- Aim to increase your walking time gradually
- You might find it helpful to use the walking diaries or exercise record to keep track of your progress
- Remember that you may find walking is more difficult outside because of hills, weather
- etc. ***Please observe social distancing guidelines at all times***



Walking diary

| | Breathlessness score | Where did you walk? How long were you walking? Flat/incline? |
|-----------|----------------------|--|
| Monday | | |
| Tuesday | | |
| Wednesday | | |
| Thursday | | |
| Friday | | |
| Saturday | | |
| Sunday | | |

Walking diary

| | Breathlessness score | Where did you walk? How long were you walking? Flat/incline? |
|-----------|----------------------|--|
| Monday | | |
| Tuesday | | |
| Wednesday | | |
| Thursday | | |
| Friday | | |
| Saturday | | |
| Sunday | | |

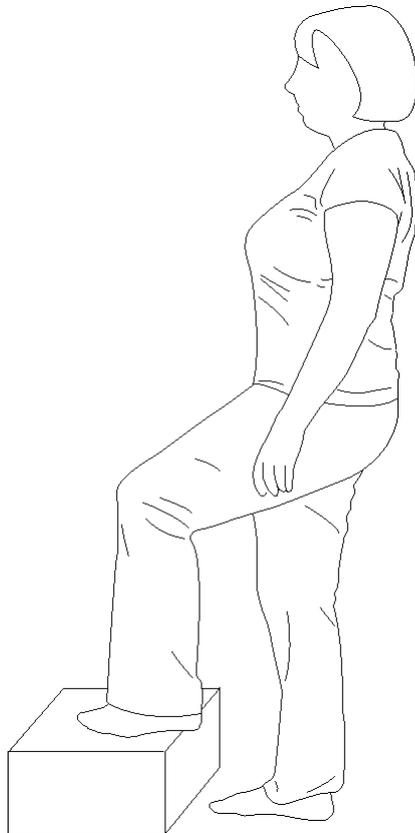
Section 3: Strengthening exercises

You can use everyday items as weights for the exercises e.g.

- Tin of beans = 415g
- Bag of sugar = 1kg
- Milk cartons = 1 pint = 0.6kg; 2pints = 1.2 kg; 4pints = 2.4kg

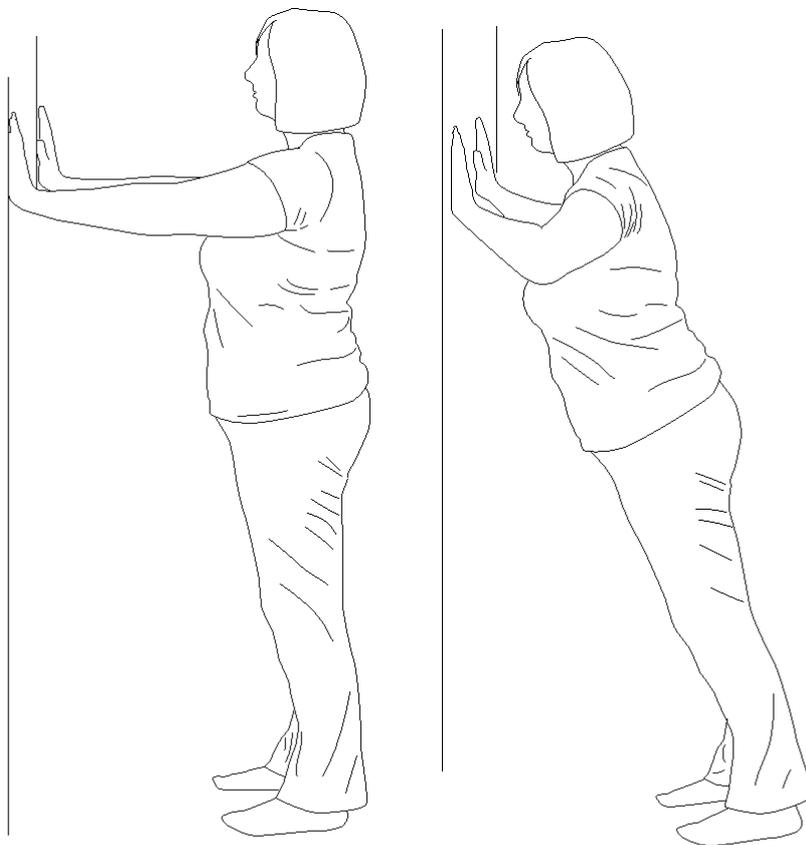
1. Step ups

- Use the bottom of your stairs or a small step holding onto a hand rail if required
- Step up with one leg
- Bring the other foot on to the step
- Step down with the first foot, then the other
- Change the lead leg so you exercise both legs equally
- Build up to 30 repetition



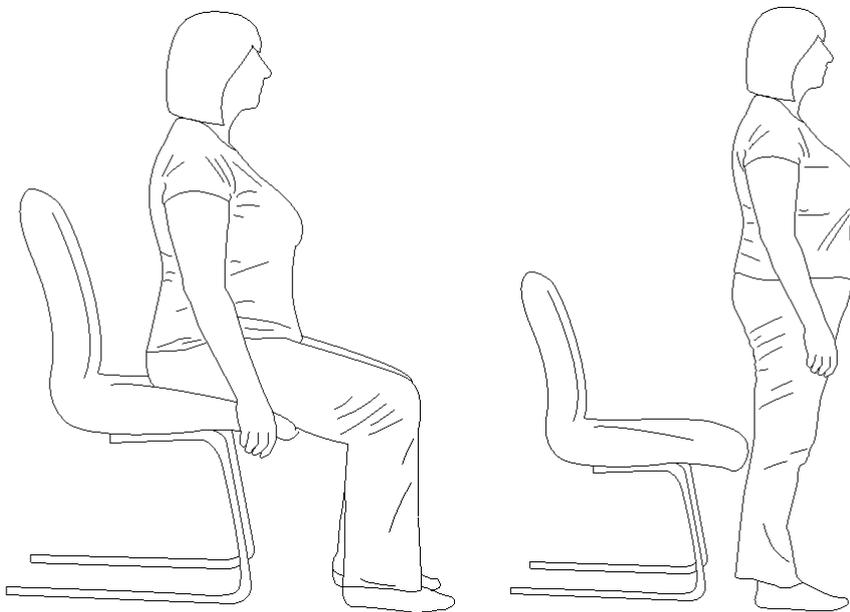
2. Wall push-ups

- Stand about an arm's length from the wall
- Place your palms on the wall about shoulder height
- Bend your elbows to bring your body towards the wall. Make sure your back stays straight as you move
- Breathe out slowly as you push yourself away from the wall again
- Repeat. Build up to 30 repetitions.



3. Sit and stand

- Sit on a chair, near the front
- Lean forward and stand up slowly using your usual walking aid if needed to gain standing balance
- Slowly sit down
- Repeat. Build up to 30 repetitions
- You can make this easier by using your arms to help you stand
- You can make this harder by placing your arms across your chest.



4. Overhead lift

- Stand in front of your kitchen bench or table with a weight placed in front of you
- Slowly lift the weight above your head, as far as you are able (breathing out as you lift). Start with no weights and lift your arms above your head (fig.2)
- Slowly bring the weight back to the bench/table
- You can start this exercise by lifting the weight to your chest and back down (fig.1)
- Repeat 30 times.

Fig.1

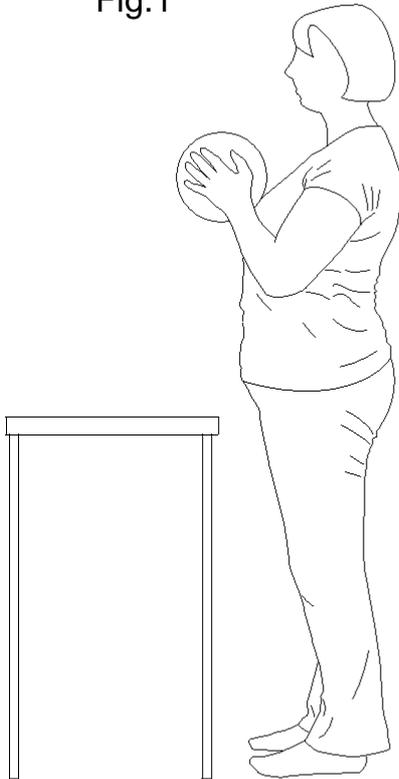
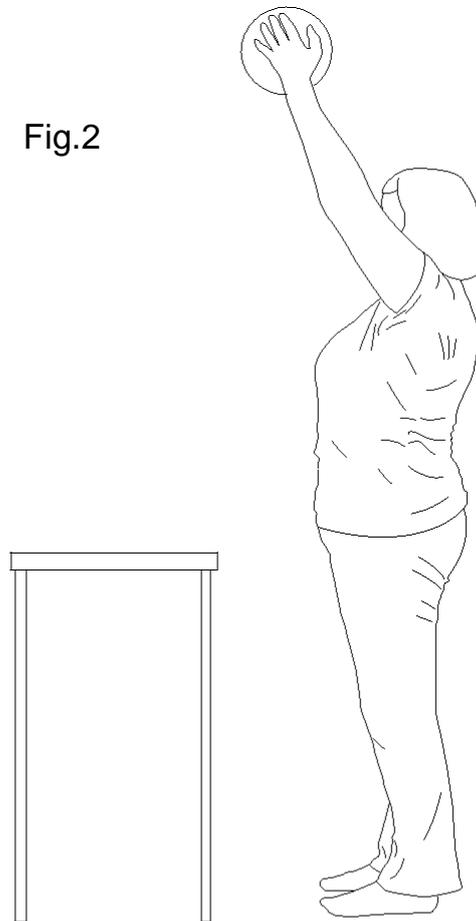


Fig.2



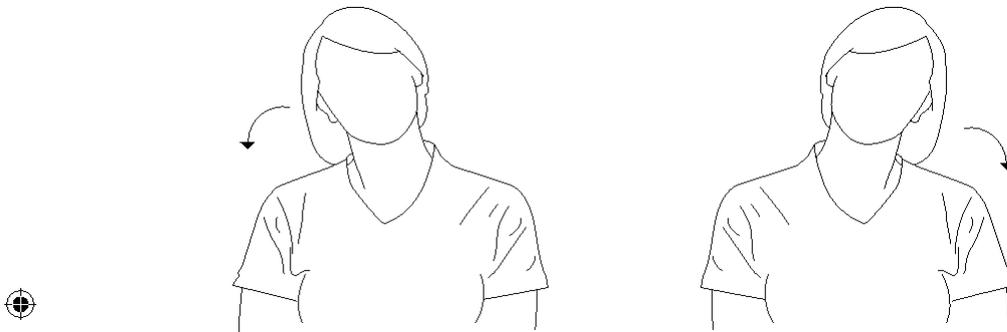
Section 4: Stretches

You should only stretch when your muscles are warm (after exercising is ideal). Stretches should not cause pain!

1. Neck stretches

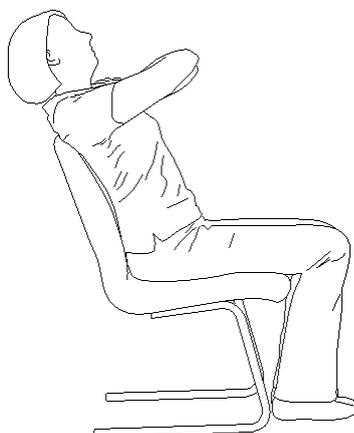
Keeping your shoulders relaxed and level, tilt your head towards one shoulder until you feel a comfortable stretch on the other side.

Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.



2. Chest stretch

Sit on a chair with your hands across your chest or behind your head. Gently lean back over the chair as far as is comfortable. Try not to arch your lower back. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 5 times.



3. Upper back side stretches

Sit on a chair with your hands hanging down by your sides. Bend to the side as far as is comfortable as if you were trying to touch the floor with your hand. Return to the starting position. Repeat 5 times to each side.



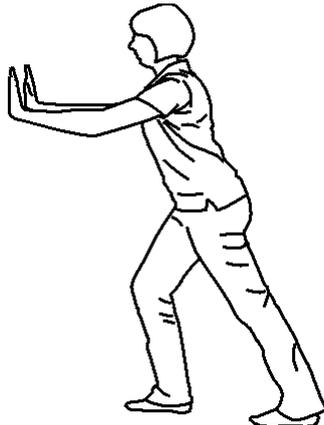
4. Upper back rotations

Sit on a chair with your arms across your chest. Slowly turn your upper body to the side letting your eyes follow the movement. Keep your hips facing forwards. Don't hold your breath! Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times to each side.



5. Calf stretch

Stand facing a wall or supportive object with one leg out behind. Keep this leg straight and the leg in front bent. Make sure both feet are pointing forwards. Taking support from the wall/chair, gently lean forwards and down until you feel a comfortable stretch in the calf of the straight leg. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.



6. Seated hamstrings stretch

Sitting near the front of a chair put one leg straight out in front with your heel on the ground. Bend your upper body forwards from your hips, keeping your back straight, until you feel a comfortable stretch at the back of your knee and thigh. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.



*“Success is the sum of small efforts,
repeated day in and day out.” -Robert Collier*



*“To climb steep hills requires a slow pace
at first” - Shakespeare*

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