



NHS

**Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust**

Prehab: Introduction and goal setting

Information for patients
preparing for an operation or
procedure

Welcome!

You're taking a powerful step in preparing for your surgery or treatment by joining our prehabilitation (prehab) service.

The prehab service is here to help you proactively manage your physical and mental health based on what matters most to you while you prepare for your upcoming treatment.

This is the first step toward a smoother recovery, and we're with you every step of the way.

Ups and downs are normal!

It is completely normal to face ups and downs along the way – setbacks are a part of any journey, especially one as important as this. Some days may feel harder than others, but every step forward, no matter how small, is still progress.

Just keep going, be patient, one step at a time.

“Major surgery is like running a marathon – and both require training.” (British Medical Journal, 2017)

What is prehabilitation?

Prehabilitation or 'prehab' is about getting your body and mind in the best possible shape – whether or not you go on to need treatment. Even if treatment isn't required, taking part can help reduce health risks and improve your overall wellbeing for the future.

With our support, there are several areas you may wish to focus on:

- Boosting your physical fitness, in preparation for any treatment or procedure that may be recommended. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases and supports a longer, healthier life.
- Making dietary changes that could help with recovery and overall health.
- Considering your mindset and emotional wellbeing.
- Reducing or stopping alcohol consumption, if you drink more than is healthy for you.
- Stopping smoking, if you smoke.

Even small steps can lead to meaningful improvements. We look forward to supporting you on your health journey.

To find out more about the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust's Prehab Team, please visit: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/services-and-departments/prehabilitation

Motivation and goal setting

It can be helpful to think about how you will get the most from this prehab booklet. Please take some time to think about and answer the following question:

What are your 2-3 main reasons for engaging in prehab?

Understanding your goal

- What could you do to enhance your treatment outcome?
- What changes could you make to your lifestyle?
- If you decided that you wanted to be healthier, what is under your control, and you can do about it?

SMART goal setting:

Motivation is like fuel. Without motivation, we are like cars without fuel, unable to move forward. Having a goal is like setting a destination in your Sat Nav. However, when the destination you put in is vague and not realistic, it is very unlikely that you will reach your destination. Therefore, it is important to have a SMART goal.



S – Specific: Be specific about what you will do rather than the result you want to achieve. For example, instead of “losing 10 kg in a month”, you can set a goal using specific action words, like “go for a walk for 10 minutes every morning”. When you read the goal, it should give you a clear guidance of what you do.

M – Measurable: Use specific, measurable targets so you can know when you reach your goal or how far you are from it. For instance, you can set a goal like this: “I will follow the stretching exercise for 20 minutes” (this one uses the time to measure).

A – Achievable: The goal can push you out of your comfort zone a bit but still be realistic and possible for you to achieve. It will be better to take a small step first and gradually increase the intensity. Even as little as 1 minute’s exercise would be still a good start.

R – Relevant: Your goal should be meaningful for you and aligned with your value and wellbeing. If you don’t think it is important for you, you will lack motivation to make any changes.

T – Time-bound: The goal should have a deadline or a timeline for you to review your own progress.

Question: How to make a SMART goal?

Can you turn a vague goal such as “I will be more active” into a SMART goal?

1. **I will be more active.** *For example, “Increase my step count to 10k/day by walking for 30 minutes every day and using a step tracker App over the next 2 months.”*

2. **I will cut down drinking.** *For example, “I will cut down my drinking to 14 units per week by only having 2 units per day and having an alcohol-free day every week by the end of April”*

Contact information

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Prehab Team

Tel: 07796 632731 or Email: Prehab@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Prehab Team, October 2025
Next review due: October 2027