



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

What can I do to recover quickly after surgery?

Get out of bed, get up, get moving!

Information for patients

Unless your doctors have told you not to get up, it is very important that you get out of bed. Staying in bed for a long period has negative effects on your health.

1. Your lungs don't work very well lying down.

You don't breathe as deeply, and it is more difficult for your lungs to clear away the phlegm they naturally produce every day, which can lead to a chest infection. So....



- Get up and move around!
Sit out in your bedside chair.
- Take regular **deep** breaths. Breathe in as far as you can, hold your breath for a couple of seconds, then breathe out. Try to do three of these **deep** breaths every hour in between normal breathing.
- If you need to cough but it is painful due to the site of your surgery, carefully hold a rolled up towel or cushion firmly against the painful area. This will help make coughing easier and more comfortable.



2. Your blood pressure will get used to you lying down.

As a result, when you do get out of bed, you may feel temporarily dizzy or light headed. So....

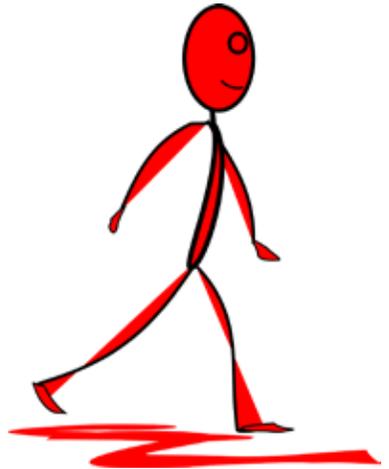
- Get up and move around! Sit out in the chair.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Wiggle your toes and alternately lift your toes and heels off the ground.



3. Your muscles will start to waste away and you will lose strength, making normal daily tasks more difficult.

Around 3% of muscle mass is lost for every 7 days of bed rest, and the older you are, the quicker you lose it. So....

- Get up and move around! Sit out in the chair.
- Get washed and dressed as you would normally.
- Walk to the toilet rather than using the commode.



4. **Blood clots can form in your legs.**

This is dangerous as the blood clot could break away and travel to your lungs or heart and cause an obstruction. So...



- Get up and move around!
- Sit out in the chair.
- Point your toes away from you and then bring them up towards you repeatedly.
- Keep the Flowtrons on unless they are taken off by a member of your care team

5. **Your digestive system doesn't work as effectively lying down.**

The normal movement of your digestive system works better upright. This is particularly important if you have had abdominal surgery. So...



- Get up and move around! Sit out in the chair.
- Eat and drink as directed by your doctors.

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