

+ Improve muscle strength

ERAS+ is a 12-week programme designed to support you to prepare for, and recover from, major surgery. It works in the 6 weeks before and the 6 weeks after your surgery.

Your physical fitness impacts your ability to recover from major surgery. We want to support you to improve and maintain your fitness leading up to your operation.

Being fitter not only reduces risks to complications during and after surgery, but also helps you recover quicker, and leave hospital sooner.

It is important for you to try and improve your fitness as well as maintaining your current daily activity level.

In addition to cardiovascular fitness a **greater proportion of muscle mass** will help your recovery.

+ What kinds of activity?

Resistance-based exercises are the key to increasing strength and muscle mass.

Muscle strengthening exercises are counted in repetitions (number of continuous movements) and sets (the number of times you complete the continuous movements).

You may rest between sets but when starting the aim is to complete all repetitions without pausing. If the exercise is simple, you might consider increasing sets or reps and/or using available weights.

If you are unable to complete the required number of reps, you should try allowing longer rest period between sets, removing any weights if applicable and reduce the number of reps until you can manage the first prescribed number.



Here are some examples of muscle strengthening exercises you can do:

- Lifting weights: small dumbbells, cans of food, water bottles
- Body weight exercises: squats, lunges, sit to stands, wall sits
- Completing your aerobic exercises with added resistance e.g. a full backpack or carrying bottles of water/poles in each hand
- Working with resistance bands
- Using a cycling/rowing machine with pre-set resistance
- Push-ups/sit-ups

Remember: the larger muscle groups, thighs/bottom/legs will show the quickest and largest response to resistance training. You may experience muscle ache the day following increasing the work these muscles do, but that is a normal response to exercise and should not discourage you from continuing.

REMEMBER:

Muscle-strengthening exercises are not cardiac activity, so you'll need to do them in addition to your cardiac activity exercises every week.



+ Warm up & cooling down

It's important to warm up and stretch before and after exercise to prevent injury. Examples of warming up exercises are:

- Marching on the spot for 3 minutes
- Alternate Heel digs 1 minute
- Alternate Knee lifts 30 seconds x3
- Slow walk / jog/ cycle /swim increasing speed up to 5-10 minutes

Simple stretches after exercise, following a gradual reduction in intensity over 10 minutes, will help you gradually relax and further slow your heart rate. The following stretches are examples of how you can gradually relax your muscles and improve flexibility after exercise:

- Hamstring stretches held for 10-15 seconds
- Calf stretches held for 10-15 seconds
- Inner thigh stretches held for 10-15 seconds

If you feel unwell or experience severe breathlessness or dizziness, please stop, refrain from any further activity, and consult your GP.

For more information, or to find out where you get active where you live, please visit: www.erasplus.co.uk