birmingham bowel clinic

Enquiries: 0845 241 7762
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Colostomy and Exercise

This patient information sheet will cover the following areas:

Understand benefits of exercise
Which exercises?
How to exercise safely
Precautions

Why is exercise important?

- Improves Circulation > Assists in the healing process
- Controls weight > Better contact of stoma with skin
- Improves strength
- Reduce risk of developing back pain
- Improve cardiovascular fitness > Reduce fatigue and breathlessness
- Prevent/reduce risk of parastomal hernia > Occurs when abdominals are weak

Medical Research

- up to a 35% lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke
- up to a 50% lower risk of type 2 diabetes
- a 30% lower risk of early death
- up to an 83% lower risk of osteoarthritis
- up to a 68% lower risk of hip fracture
- a 30% lower risk of falls (among older adults)
- up to a 30% lower risk of depression
- up to a 30% lower risk of dementia

Exercise should be fun

- You should be able to return to whatever exercise you enjoyed prior to your operation
- Exceptions: boxing, judo, rugby, wrestling, weight lifting
- Exercise will reduce stress
- Involvement in sport can help acceptance of your stoma

Abdominal Exercises

- Surgery weakens abdominals
- Stoma is a weak spot in abdominals > Hernia formation
- Advised post-operative exercises include Pilates, Tai-chi and Yoga

Pelvic Floor

- Engage: Draw up your muscles around your bottom and vagina/between scrotum and anus
- Hold up to 10 seconds

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- Repeat up to 10 times
- Remember to breathe
- Maintain good posture

Pelvic Floor example:

Pelvic Tilts

- Lie on back as in the picture.
- Engage pelvic floor.
- Slowly flatten back and peel lower spine off matt/bed
- Hold up to 10 seconds
- Lower slowly
- Repeat up to 10 times

Pelvic tilt example

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Knee Rolls

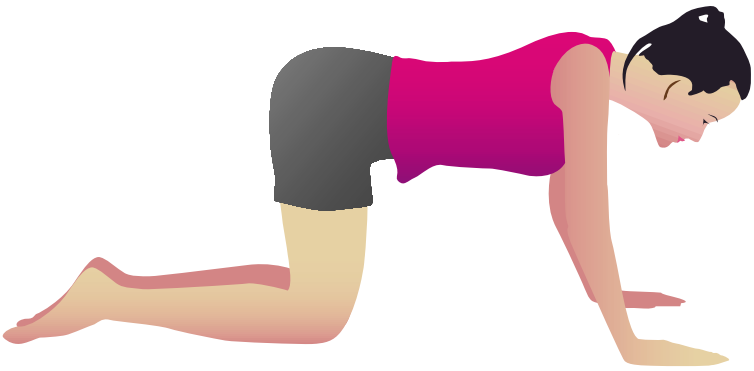
- Lie on back as in the pelvic tilt picture
- Engage pelvic floor
- Slowly roll knees to the side and use your abdominals to return to the centre
- Repeat 5-10 times each side

Knee roll exercise example

Kneeling

- Kneel on all fours with back straight
- Breathe in slowly
- When breathe out, draw up the pelvic floor and lift your tummy up towards your spine
- Breathe in and release
- Hold 5-10 seconds
- Repeat 5-10 times

Kneeling demonstration:



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Side Bending

- Stand tall with arms by your side
- When you breathe out, draw up your pelvic floor
- Gently lean to one side, sliding hand down your leg
- Return slowly to standing tall
- Repeat to the other side
- Repeat 5-10 times each side

Side Bending demonstration:

Walking

- Walking is good for cardiovascular fitness
- Helps keep weight down
- Helps to strengthen abdominals
- Aim to build up to a 30 minute walk per day

Swimming

- Don't go swimming too soon after a meal.
- Smaller size pouches and stoma caps are available.

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- Cover the pouch filter with one of the sticky patches that come with your supplies to prevent the filter getting wet and possibly becoming blocked later on.
- Women: swimwear in a patterned fabric or a design which is slightly gathered or ruched across the abdomen is effective in disguising any bulges.
- Men: may prefer to wear swimshorts with a mesh lining which may help to support the pouch and have high waisted shorts

Pouches that are suitable for swimming:

Active Sports

- Wearing a support garment for strenuous activity or a stoma shield for contact sports
- Wear a cotton stoma cover: absorbs sweat
- High waisted shorts
- Keep well hydrated to avoid dehydration
- Colostomy output may increase and become thinner

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Stoma Support garment:

Precautions

- Don't do exercises that cause you a lot of pain
- Better to exercise little and often in early days
- Don't exercise just after you eat
- Don't exercise if unwell
- Good posture whilst lifting and slowly increase load
- Don't over-do it: at most exercise every 2 days
- Gentle exercise is better than no exercise at all

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