

ADVICE FOR THE POST-SURGICAL BREAST PATIENT

1. Avoid carrying heavy bags with the arm at risk.
2. Wear rubber gloves for housework and long sleeves and protective gloves when gardening.
3. Take care with knives, hotplates, ovens, hot water, animals etc. Any injury to the arm should be carefully washed and disinfected, then seen by a doctor.
4. Never offer the affected arm for injection, for the taking of blood or blood pressure, nor for acupuncture. Wear a thimble when sewing.
5. Avoid excessive sun on the arm and protect against insect bites and stings.
6. Do not cut or push back cuticles. Use cream or oil to keep them soft and trim.
7. Use cream or electric razor only for removing hair from the armpit.
8. It is a good idea to obtain antibiotics from your GP before travelling abroad, in case of need.
9. Use your arm as normally as possible, incorporating regular, **gentle** exercise as part of your daily routine. Yoga and swimming can be especially helpful.
10. Seek medical attention at any sign of infection of the arm, e.g. swelling, stiffness, pain with localised redness, heat and/or tenderness.

Combined breathing and exercise programme

Repeat this regime twice daily, ie morning/night. Results have shown this to be helpful in improving and maintaining your lymphatic drainage.

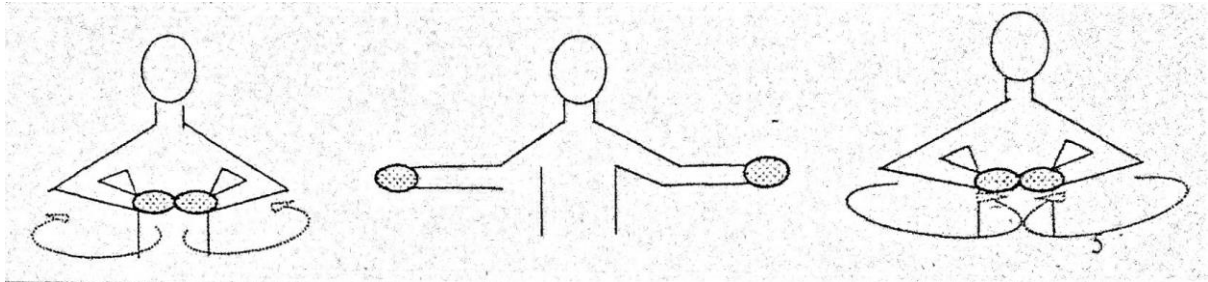


Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the combined exercise and breathing programme

- a) starting position with fingers pointed at breast bone begins by taking a full breath in while moving the arms slowly and gently outwards.
- b) when the arms reach full outwards stretch, the breath is held. All the arm muscles are then tightened
- c) the arm muscles are relaxed and the arms move back to the starting position while the breath is exhaled
 - repeat exercise x5 rest, slowly and steadily
 - Can be performed seated
 - Stop if you feel light headed

ref Moseley A, Piller N and Carati C - 2005