

## Exercises After Axillary Lymph Node Dissection Without Drains in Place

### General Guidelines

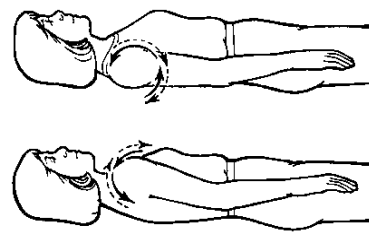
Begin these exercises right away after your surgery if you have no drains or as soon as your drains are removed. These exercises are designed to improve the range of motion (flexibility) and strength of your shoulder and arm.

You will feel some tightness in your chest and armpit after surgery. This is normal, and the tightness will lessen as you continue the exercise program. Also, you may have burning, tingling or soreness on the back of the arm and chest wall. This occurs because the surgery irritated nerves. Although the sensations may increase a few weeks after surgery, continue to do the exercises unless you notice unusual swelling or tenderness.

Do the exercises so that you feel a slow stretch. Do not bounce or jerk your arm when doing any of the exercises. Continue doing these exercises until you have achieved full range of motion in the shoulder. This should occur about two months after surgery.

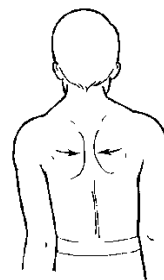
If you continue to have limited motion or a hard time doing normal tasks like dressing, bathing, grooming, etc., ask your doctor for specific instructions or for a referral to a physical or occupational therapist.

1. Lie on your back with your shoulders relaxed.
2. Slowly rotate your shoulders backward.
3. Repeat, while rotating your shoulders forward.
4. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



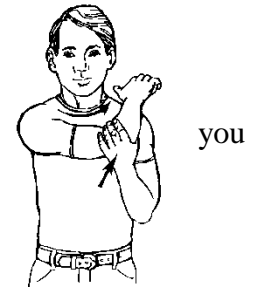
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1. Lie on your back with your arms at your sides.
2. Pinch your shoulder blades together as shown.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Do five repetitions, three times per day



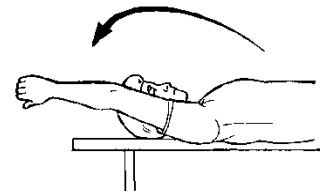
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1. Lie on your back and grasp your affected elbow with your other hand as shown.
2. Pull the elbow and arm across your chest so that feel a stretch.
3. Hold for five seconds.
4. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



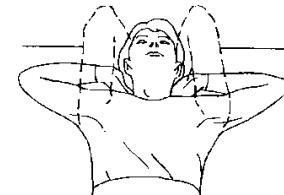
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1. Lie on your back as shown.
2. Raise your affected arm up overhead as far as you can. Lead with your thumb and keep your elbow straight.
3. Hold for five seconds and slowly lower your arm.
4. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



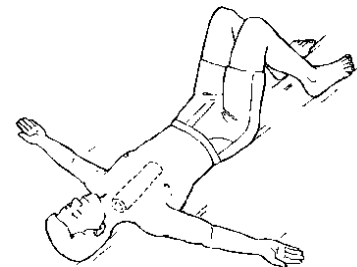
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1. Lie on your back with your hands behind your neck and your elbows pointing toward the ceiling.
2. Move your elbows apart and down to touch the bed.
3. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



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1. Roll up a small towel so that it makes a firm roll 2-3 inches thick.
2. Lie on your back with the towel aligned between your shoulder blades as shown.
3. Stay in this position for five minutes.
4. Do three times per day.



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1. Standing, reach behind your back with your affected arm.
2. Grasp your affected arm with your other hand.
3. Try to pull your arm upward as shown so that you feel a gentle stretch in your shoulder.
4. Hold for five seconds.
5. Do five repetitions, three times per day.



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1. Stand in a corner about 1-2 feet from the wall with your hands on the wall as shown.
2. Lean into the corner so that you feel a stretch in your affected shoulder and the front of your chest.
3. Vary the stretch by moving your arms higher or lower, or by standing farther away from the wall.
4. Hold for 30 seconds.
5. Do five repetitions, three times per day



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