

## Exercises for Bed Rest

Before beginning these exercises, take this handout to your caregiver and ask her/him if this is appropriate for your situation. Also have your caregiver advise on repetitions and the proper weight of the dumbbells.

Whenever you exercise, observe these general guidelines:

- Drink a glass of water before and after your workout.
- Empty your bladder before exercising.
- Do not hold your breath. Inhale through your nose, then exhale through your mouth during the active part of the movement.
- All exercises should be performed smoothly, with no jerking. Your level of exertion should be low.
- Do not skip the stretching movements. Stretching promotes flexibility and helps prevent muscle soreness.

### Lower-Body Bedrest Workout

#### Ankle Pumps

Position: sitting or side-lying

Motion: Begin with legs straight. Flex foot to bring toes toward you as far as possible, then point toes away from you to make an arch. Switch to the other leg.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Ankle Circles

Position: sitting or side-lying

Motion: Rotate foot in circles, first clockwise and then counterclockwise. (Only foot should move, not entire leg.) Switch to other leg.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Buttocks Tightening

Position: sitting or side-lying

Motion: Tighten the muscles in your buttocks; hold 5 to 10 seconds; relax.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Pelvic Tilt

Position: semisitting (propped up with pillows)

Motion: Bend both knees up toward chest and place feet flat on bed. Tighten abdominal muscles while pressing lower back against the pillows to flatten the arch. Hold for 5-10 seconds; relax.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Inner Thigh Stretch

Position: semisitting

Motion: Begin by doing a pelvic tilt (described above). While holding the tilt, let knees fall open to feel a stretch along inner thighs; then bring knees back together.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Leg Rolls

Position: semisitting

Motion: Straighten legs on bed, keeping feet shoulder width apart. Roll knees inward toward each other, then outward away from each other.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Leg Slides

Position: semisitting

Motion: Bend right knee toward chest and place right foot flat on the bed. Straighten left leg, then slowly slide heel toward you, bringing heel as close to buttocks as possible. Hold for a count of 3; slowly slide leg back until straight. Repeat on opposite side.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Inner/ Outer Thigh Toner

Position: semisitting

Motion: Keeping legs straight, slide right leg out to the right side until you feel the stretch; then slide leg back to the center. Repeat with the left leg.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Thigh Tightening

Position: semisitting or side lying

Motion: With legs straight, consciously tighten quadriceps muscle on top of right thigh. Hold for a count of 5; relax. Repeat with left leg.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Leg Lifts

Position: semisitting

Motion: Bend right knee toward chest and place right foot flat on bed. Straighten left leg, then raise it off bed 4 inches. Hold for a count of 3; lower leg. After finishing a complete set of repetitions, switch to other leg.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Upper-Body Bedrest Workout

Position: sitting

Motion: Pull chin in toward chest; at the same time, lift back of the head up, elongating the neck. Done correctly, you should feel a stretch along the back of the neck and upper back.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Neck Side Bend

Position: sitting

Motion: Keeping shoulders down, gently tilt head sideways to the right, as if trying to place right ear on right shoulder. Repeat on the left side. (Do not tilt head backward)

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reverse Shoulder Circles

Position: sitting

Motion: Raise both shoulders toward ears, then ease them toward the rear while squeezing shoulder blades together. Hold for a count of 3; relax.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Front Arm Raises

Position: sitting

Motion: Begin with arms at sides, elbows straight. Slowly raise both arms out in front of you, then overhead, reaching as high as possible. Hold for a count of 3; slowly lower back to starting position. (If using hand held weights, you can alternate arms instead of doing it together.)

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

Hand- held weights: \_\_\_\_\_ pounds

### Side Arm Raises

Position: sitting

Motion: Begin with arms at sides, elbows straight. Slowly raise both arms out to the side, lifting until arms are at shoulder length. Hold for a count of 3; slowly lower back to starting position. (If using hand held weights, you can alternate arms instead of doing it together.)

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

Hand- held weights: \_\_\_\_\_ pounds

## Biceps Curl

Position: sitting

Motion: Begin with arms at sides, elbows very slightly bent and pressed against your sides. With palms facing up, slowly bend elbows and raise hands toward shoulders. Tighten upper-arm muscles and hold for a count of 5; slowly straighten arms while lowering to the starting position. (If using hand held weights, you can alternate arms instead of doing it together.)

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

Hand- held weights: \_\_\_\_\_ pounds

## Shoulder Stretch

Position: sitting

Motion: Gently clasp hands behind head. Move elbows forward, toward each other; then move elbows backward, so they point out to the side. Squeeze shoulder blades together; hold for a count of 5; relax.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

The moves described here have been specifically designed for pregnant women on bedrest. They have been developed by Elaine Anderson, P.T., M.P.H., a physical therapist and research associate in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Michigan.

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