



# HEALTH FOR LIFE

## Exercises After Lymph Node Removal

After you have had lymph nodes removed, ask your doctor when you may begin exercises. Please do not exercise without the approval of your doctor. Usually it will be recommended that you begin exercises after drainage tubes have been removed.

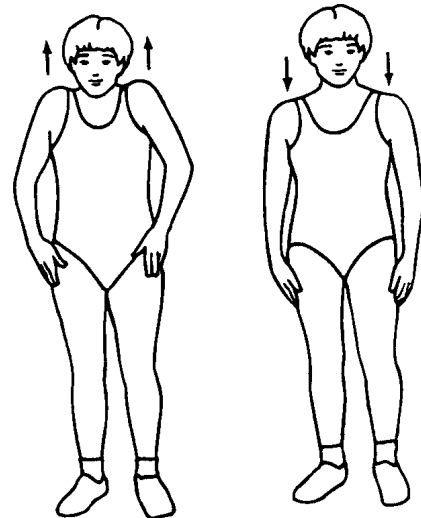
- ☞ Begin to use the involved arm for daily activities such as washing your face, combing your hair and dressing.
- ☞ While resting, keep the involved arm elevated so the arm is at or above the level of the heart.
- ☞ Squeeze a soft ball or foam rubber hand exerciser using the hand of the involved arm. This helps pump the lymph fluid out of your arm.

### Warm Up Exercises:

- Do 10 to 15 repetitions of each exercise.
- Use these exercises to warm up before progressing to the Range of Motion / Strengthening Exercises.

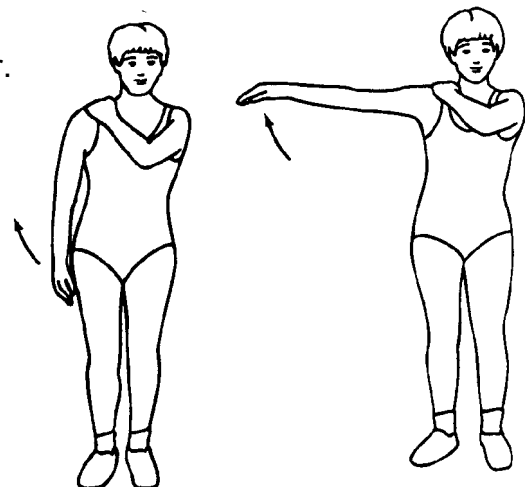
#### ☐ Shoulder Shrug

- Raise your shoulders to your ears.
- Hold for 5 seconds.



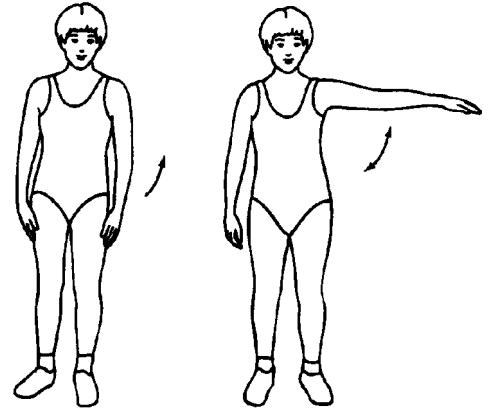
#### ☐ Front Raises

- Place the good arm on your opposite shoulder.
- Massage the shoulder joint.
- Raise the arm up and hold for 4 seconds.
- Feel the stretch.



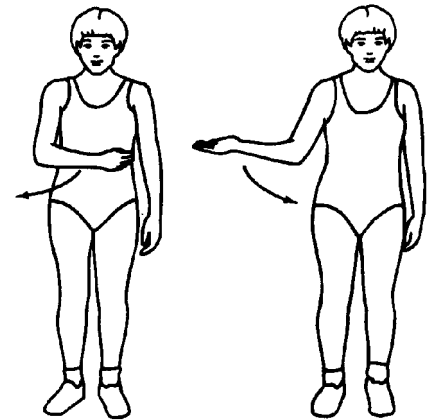
### ☐ Side Raises

- Raise your arm up from side.
- Hold and stretch for 4 seconds.



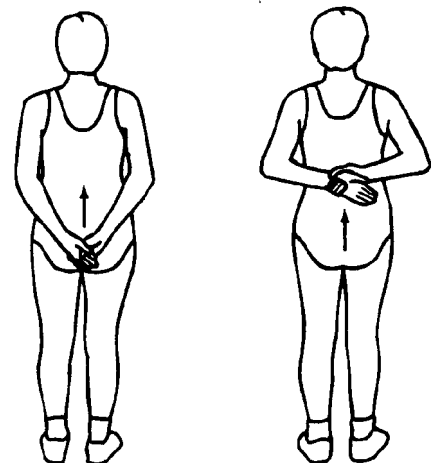
### ☐ Turning Arm Out

- Bend your arm at the elbow, keeping it at your side.
- Move your arm away from the body, turning your palm upward.



### ☐ Back Reach (Stretches muscle in chest)

- Use your good hand to grab the wrist behind your back.
- Bend at the elbow.
- Pull your arm up gently.
- Hold for 4 seconds.



## Range of Motion / Stretching Exercises:

**Do only the exercises marked by your therapist**

Do each exercise \_\_\_\_\_ repetitions, \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.

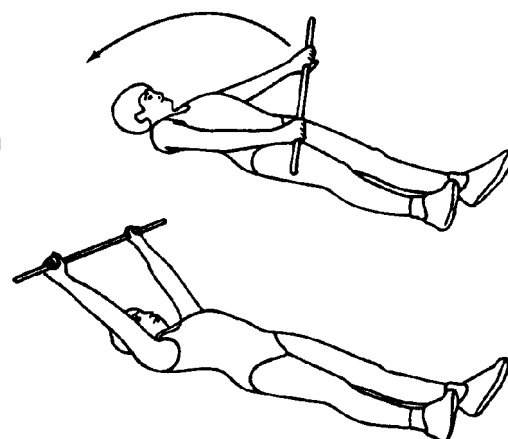
☞ Do these exercises slowly and gently.

☞ Hold position for 5 counts, relax and breathe.

☞ **First 4 exercises are done lying on a bed or mat.**

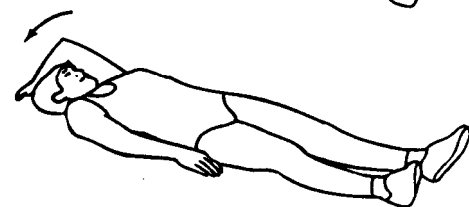
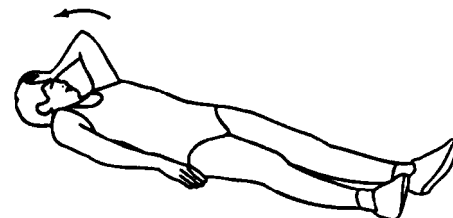
### ☐ Stick Raises

- Hold the stick (broom handle, cane, umbrella) in both hands.
- Raise your arms over your head.
- Let gravity do the work.



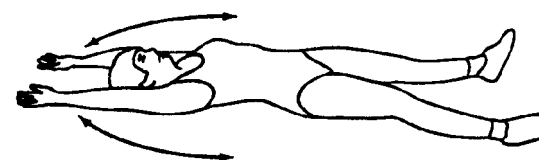
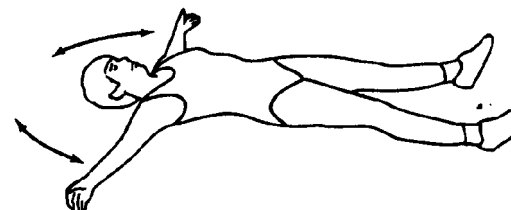
### ☐ Forehead Slide

- Place the heel of your hand on your forehead.
- Slide your hand over your head keeping contact with your hair. Hold 5 seconds.
- Goal is to get the bend of the elbow to your forehead. You may need to gently push the elbow with the over hand.



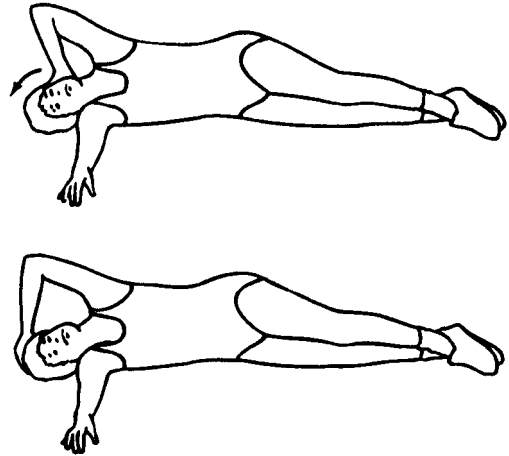
### ☐ Snow Angel

- Raise your arms over your head and reach as high as you can.
- Do not let this exercise hurt.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Lower your arms slowly.



☐ **Sideways Slide**

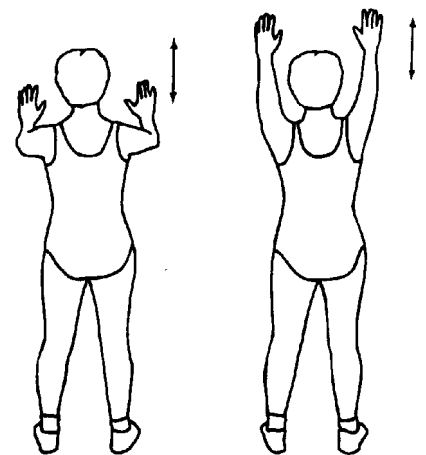
- Lie on your unaffected side.
- Place your other hand on your ear, with the elbow up toward ceiling.
- Slide your hand over your head toward back.
- Hold for 5 seconds.



**Next four exercises are done standing up.**

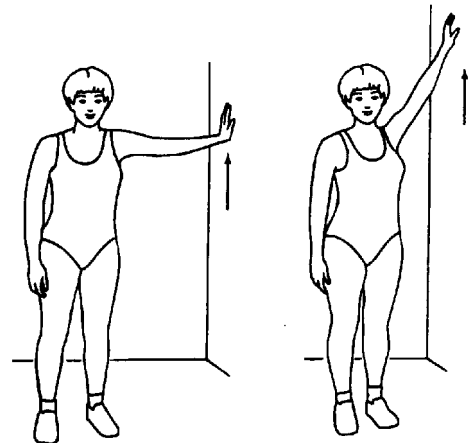
☐ **Wall Crawls**

- Stand in front of a wall and with both hands walk your fingers up the wall until you feel a pull.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Slide your hands down the wall.



☐ **Side Wall Crawls**

- Stand sideways to a wall. Make sure you keep your shoulders square with the wall.
- Walk your fingers up the wall until you feel a pull.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Slide your hand down the wall.
- Step closer to the wall to increase the stretch.



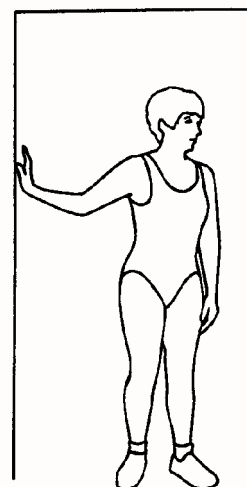
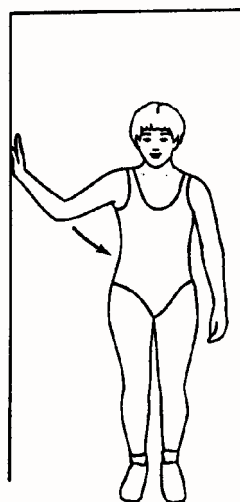
❑ **Corner Stretch**

- Stand in a corner, with your hands and forearms on the wall.
- Lean your entire body in as a unit.
- Hold for 5 seconds.



❑ **Door Stretch**

- Put your hand inside the frame of a door.
- Turn your body away from your arm.
- Hold for 5 seconds.



**Follow-up:**

**Physical Therapist:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

© Copyright, (3/2001)  
Division of Nursing - James Cancer Hospital  
The Ohio State University Medical Center

► Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs, call (614) 293-3191. For more written information, call (614) 293-3707.