Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Stem Cell Transplant Arm and Shoulder Exercise Program

This information will teach you how to do an arm and shoulder exercise program. This program will help you before and after your stem cell transplant, and during your recovery.

These exercises use the arm muscle groups that you use for everyday activities. It will help prevent you from feeling stiff and decrease the effects of bed rest and not being able to move. Your physical and occupational therapists will help guide you through the program.

You will use an elastic band (Thera-band®) for most of these exercises.

Exercise tips

- Dress comfortably. You should wear clothing that won't limit your movements. You can wear a hospital gown, pajamas, or athletic clothing.
- Don't hold your breath while doing any of these exercises. Count out loud during the exercises to keep your breaths evenly paced.
- Stop any exercise that causes you pain or discomfort and tell your physical or occupational therapist. You can continue to do the other exercises.

Exercises

Forward punches

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. With your elbows bent, hold the elastic band at chest level with both hands.
3. Press your right hand forward (punch) while your left-hand stays at your chest (see Figure 1).
4. Slowly return to the starting position.
5. Repeat 10 times with your right arm.
6. Repeat the exercise with your left arm.



Figure 1. Forward punches

Bicep curls

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Place one end of the elastic band under your right foot (see Figure 2).
3. Hold the other end of the band with your right hand (palm facing up), and your elbow slightly bent.
4. Pull the elastic band up to your shoulder by bending your elbow (see Figure 3).
5. Slowly return to the starting position.
6. Repeat 10 times with your right arm.

7. Place one end of the elastic band under your left foot and repeat the exercise with your left arm.



Figure 2. Put elastic band under foot



Figure 3. Pull band up

Triceps extension

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Hold the elastic band at chin level with both hands (see Figure 4).
3. Press your right arm down to your right thigh to straighten your arm (see Figure 5).
4. Slowly return to the starting position.

5. Repeat 10 times with your right arm.
6. Repeat the exercise with your left arm.



Figure 4. Hold band at chin level



Figure 5. Straighten arm

Shoulder flexion

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Hold the elastic band with both hands, and keep your arms straight down by your sides (see Figure 6).
3. Keeping your right arm straight, pull your right hand up over your head. Keep your left arm still (see Figure 7).

4. Slowly return to the starting position.
5. Repeat 10 times with your right arm.
6. Repeat the exercise with your left arm.



Figure 6. Hold band with arms at sides



Figure 7. Pull band over head

Scapular retractions

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight, shoulders back, and head facing forward.
2. Raise your arms to shoulder height. Keep your elbows bent with your hands in front of your chest.
3. Squeeze your shoulder blades together (see Figure 8).
4. Keep your arms raised and slowly bring them back to the starting position.
5. Repeat 10 times.



Figure 8. Squeeze shoulders together

Rows

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Wrap the elastic band around something stable, such as a bed rail.
3. Hold the elastic band in both hands (see Figure 9).
4. Keep your elbows close to your body and pull the elastic band toward you, squeezing your shoulder blades together (see Figure 10).
5. Slowly return to the starting position.
6. Repeat 10 times.



Figure 9. Place band around stable object



Figure 10. Pull band toward you

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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