



**Moving Medicine**

**Home exercise  
programme:  
In bed**

Name:.....

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Recovering from a significant illness, such as a coronavirus, may leave you feeling somewhat weaker than usual and everyday tasks may feel very challenging and tiring. Increasing your physical activity gradually as your symptoms allow is a safe and important thing to do when recovering from coronavirus although it may take some time to build back up to your previous activity levels.

This booklet details a number of exercises that can be done on the bed. There are exercises to work on flexibility and strength as well as guidance on how to progress the exercises. They are designed to help you start to get moving a little more as you start to recover or if it's been some while since you've exercised.

It may be that physical activity has not been part of your daily routine, but now might be the time to look again at the role activity plays in your life. It's never too late to increase the amount you do and feel the benefits, not only to your general health, but also to improved sleep, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress and helping you participate in activities that are important to you.

Remember – it's really important to build up gradually. Listen to your body. Some of the exercises might make you breathe a little heavier and feel a little warmer, but a good rule of thumb is that you should still be able to hold a conversation whilst exercising.

Of course we're all different and so everyone will progress to differing levels and at different rates. There are several useful resources that you can use to progress your own activity programme which can be found here: [resource link from brochure](#)

Choose the level which suits you best – and above all choose something you enjoy as you're much more likely to stick to your new routine that way!



**Why not ask your friends or relatives to help keep you motivated!**

You will see a number of symbols throughout the booklet:



Step by step instructions explaining how to perform the exercise



The reason the exercise is important for you



Top tips

### **How much should I do?**

Ideally you should try to practise these exercises every day. You may prefer to practise in smaller activity chunks – for example arm exercises in one session and leg exercises in the next and so on.

### **How do I know when to stop exercising?**

It is normal for anyone who is not used to being physically active to experience some muscle soreness after doing a new activity and this discomfort will reduce as you become more accustomed to the activity. Worsening symptoms may be due to increasing activity too quickly – try reducing activity levels a little and then gradually increasing them again more slowly.

Dizziness, sickness or excessive tiredness are signals to stop exercising and wait for symptoms to settle. Warning signs to stop exercising and seek urgent medical attention include sudden onset of rapid palpitations, reduction in exercise capacity, dizziness, severe breathlessness or chest pain.



**The most important thing is to start small and build up gradually.**

During the first 2-3 months of increasing physical activity it is sensible to be physically active with other people.

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## Ankle strength in lying

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Lying on your back, point your feet away from you, then back up towards you. Your knees should remain straight.

Do 2 sets of 10

### Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of sets of 10
- ✓ Do the same exercise when you are sitting in your chair



? To strengthen your ankle muscles to help balance when standing and walking. These exercises are also important for maintaining good circulation in your legs whilst you are in bed.

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## Thigh strength using a roll

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Place a rolled up towel/pillow under the one knee. Pull your toes up towards you and lift your heel by tightening your thigh muscles, keeping your knee down onto the towel. Your heel should lift slightly so the knee is straight.

Do 10 with each leg

### Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of repetitions until you can do 3 sets of 10 comfortably.
- ✓ Add an ankle weight, and then build up repetitions again



? To strengthen the muscles on the front of your leg – these are important for keeping your legs strong when walking and climbing stairs.

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## Hip and knee bends

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Lie on your back. Start with your legs out straight. Bring your knee up towards your chest as far as is comfortable.

Do 10 with each leg

### Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of sets until you can do 3 sets of 10 comfortably



? To increase flexibility and strength of the hip and knee which helps with many things such as getting dressed.

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## Hip muscle strength

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Position yourself lying on your back. Start with your leg next to your other leg. Move your leg out to the side then bring it back in again. Keep your foot pointing up towards the ceiling.

Do 10 with each leg

### Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of repetitions
- ✓ Add a small weight around your ankle
- ✓ Try this when lying on your side, lifting your leg upwards



? To strengthen the muscles on the outside and inside of your hip. These are really important when you need to move your legs sideways, for example when getting in and out of bed.

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## Bridging

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Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet resting on the bed. Squeeze your tummy muscles in, then lift your bottom off the bed. Hold for 5 seconds, then gently lower. Repeat 10 times

### Somewhat hard?

- ✓ Ask someone to support your feet
- ✓ Don't try to lift too high
- ✓ Try putting your hands on the bed by your side

### Need more?

- ✓ Place your hands across your chest
- ✓ Build up the number of repetitions again



- ? To strengthen the muscles at the back of your hip – these are the big muscles that you use to move around the bed or stand up from a chair. It also helps relieve the pressure on your bottom.

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## Front of shoulder strength

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Lie on your back with your arm by your side. Lift your arm so that it's straight up in the air, keeping your elbow straight. Gently lower back to the bed. Ensure that the movement is slow and controlled.

Do 10 with each arm

### Too tricky?

- ✓ Clasp both hands together
- ✓ Keep your elbows slightly bent

### Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of repetitions to 3 sets of 10
- ✓ Hold a small hand weight



? To strengthen your shoulder muscles to help you with many everyday tasks like washing and drinking a cup of tea

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## Pillow press

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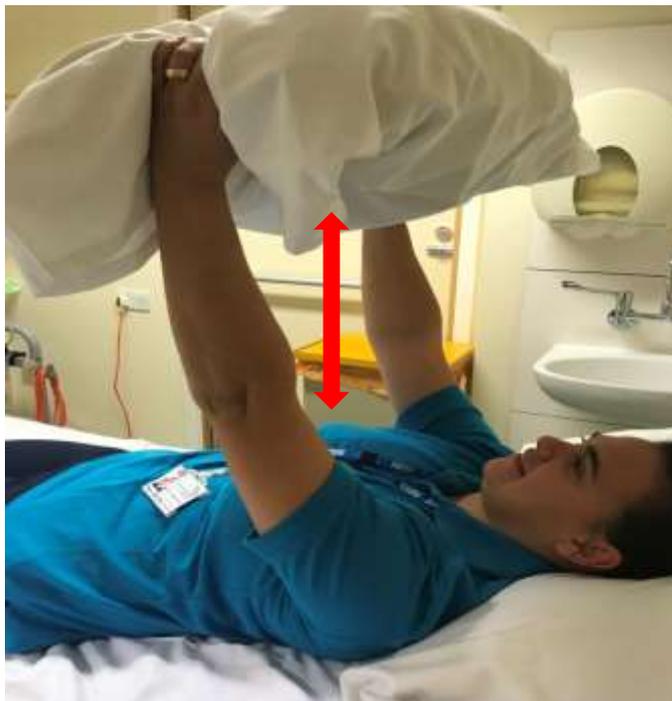


Lie on your back holding a pillow on your chest. Push the pillow up into the air until your elbows are straight, but not locked.

Repeat 10 times

### Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of repetitions
- ✓ Swap the pillow for a small weight



? To strengthen the muscles at the front of your shoulder and chest to help you with many everyday tasks such as moving around the bed.

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