

Exercises for Pregnant Women on Bedrest

Purpose

Some of the risks pregnant women on bedrest face are loss of muscle tone and strength, decreased circulation and increased swelling in arms and legs. In addition, pain and stiffness can set in, especially in the neck and lower back. Doing several simple exercises on a regular basis can help prevent the above problems. The following program is designed for women on bed rest at home or in the hospital.

Directions

Complete each exercise 2 to 3 times a day for up to 10 repetitions as tolerated. The exercises may be done 2 to 3 times a day. Hold each position for 3 seconds. Lie on your side or back to do the exercises as indicated. You may keep a small pillow between your knees for comfort.

General rules

1. Begin slowly and increase repetitions gradually.
2. Be consistent and follow your therapist's and physician's directions.
3. Do not hold your breath. Try to count out loud!
4. Do not bear down during any part of the exercises.
5. Avoid abdominal exercises.
6. Rest as needed.

Important: If you experience contractions, headache, shortness of breath, chest discomfort, bleeding **or** any other unusual symptoms while exercising, **stop** the exercise and contact your nurse or health care provider immediately.

Skylight Access codes

Aurora Sinai Medical Center = 1147

Aurora West Allis Medical Center = 1119

Neck exercises

1. Tilt head sideways, right ear toward right shoulder. Hold 3 seconds. Repeat to the left. Avoid raising shoulders.
2. Turn your head to the right, bringing your chin toward your right shoulder. Hold 3 seconds. Repeat to the left shoulder.
3. Make a circle with your head. First to the right, then to the left.



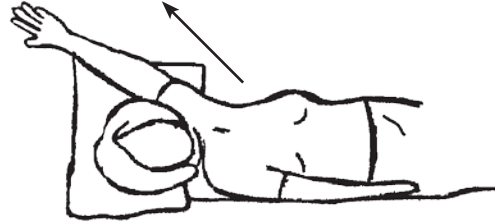
Shoulder and arm exercises

1. Shrug both shoulders up toward ears. Hold 3 seconds. Lower slowly.
2. Move shoulders in circles. First clockwise, then counter clockwise.
3. Place both hands behind your head. Press your elbows back onto the pillow or bed. Hold 3 seconds, then relax.

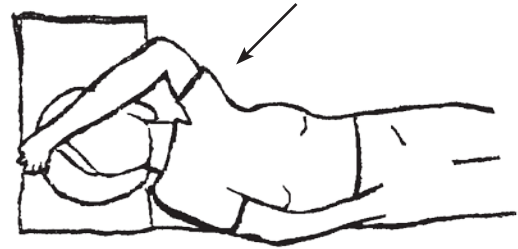
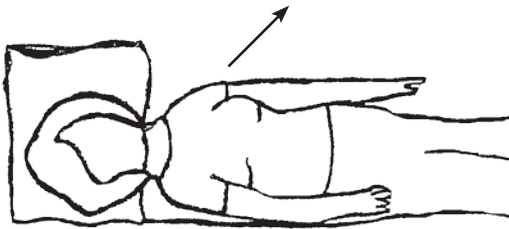


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4. While lying on your back, reach your left hand down toward your right hip. Turn your palm up and raise your arm overhead, and to the left. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side with right hand toward left hip.



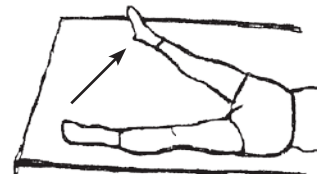
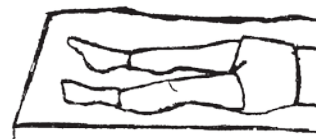
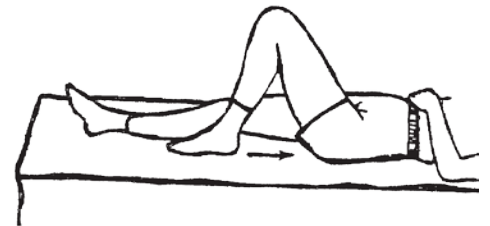
5. While lying on your back, start with your left arm down at your left side, with your palm down and your hand open. Make a fist and reach up, across your body past your right shoulder. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side – right hand past left shoulder.



Hip and leg exercises

While lying on back:

1. Slide heel toward buttock, keeping heel on bed. Slide heel back down.
2. Place a pillow under your knees. Ask for assistance to do this as needed. Lift right foot, straightening knee completely. Lower slowly. Repeat on the other side.
3. Start with both knees straight and together. Slide left leg out to the side. (Leg must remain on bed.) Slide it back to the middle. Repeat on the right leg.



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4. Ankle Pumps: Point your toes down (away from body). Then point towards you.

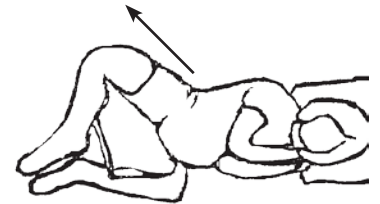


While lying on side:

5. Keep knees slightly bent. Push top thigh back, straightening hip completely. Bring knee back toward chest. Repeat when lying on other side.



6. Keep knees slightly bent. Raise knee up toward ceiling while feet stay together. Lower slowly. Repeat when lying on other side.



Relaxation and deep breathing techniques

In addition to exercise, here are a few suggestions to help reduce stiffness and the stress of bed rest.

- Listen to audio tapes of quiet music or nature sounds
- Do visualization activities: picture yourself someplace or doing something that is soothing or restful; positive thoughts often bring positive results
- Receive light massage for feet, hands or shoulders by a family member or friend; avoid other areas of the body
- Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, experiences and self-reflections
- Meditate
- Organize photos in an album
- Read inspirational books
- Complete needlework or craft projects
- Watch videos and television or work on a laptop computer
- Contact the hospital library for book or other publication loans
- Contact hospital Volunteer Services for other activity ideas
- Practice deep breathing:
 - Keep your shoulders relaxed, and take a deep breath in through your nose, while fully expanding chest and belly
 - Imagine lungs completely filling up with air
 - Then exhale through mouth, while pulling your belly button in towards your spine