

Physical Therapy for Strengthening Your Core After Abdominal Surgery

Perform these exercises before and up to 12 weeks after surgery:

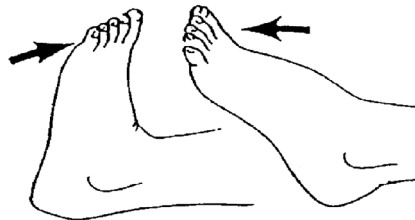
Gluteal/Buttock Set

1. Tightly squeeze the muscles in your bottom.
2. Hold for 10 seconds, and then relax.
3. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 sets each session, 2 to 3 times each day.



Ankle Pumps

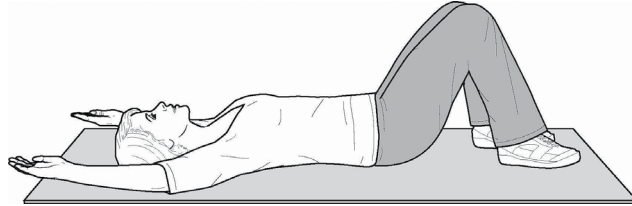
1. Move your foot up and down as if you were pushing down or letting up on a gas pedal in a car.
2. Repeat 10 times.
3. Do 2 sets each session, 2 to 3 times each day.



This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

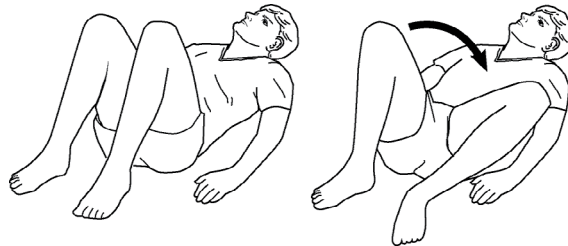
Upper Back and Shoulder Stretch

1. Bring your hands above your head and rest with your palms up.
2. Press your arms back into the bed or mat and hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
3. Relax and repeat 3-5 times, 2 to 3 times each day.



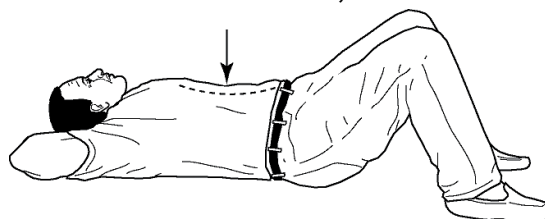
Clamshells

1. Lie on your back with head supported and your knees bent with feet flat on the floor or mat.
2. Slowly lower one leg down toward the mat.
3. Make sure to control your leg when you lower it down.
4. Bring your leg back to center.
5. Use your abdominal muscles to keep your hips and core from rocking while the leg is lowering and rising.
6. Repeat 10 times with each leg. Do 2 sets each session, 2 to 3 times each day.



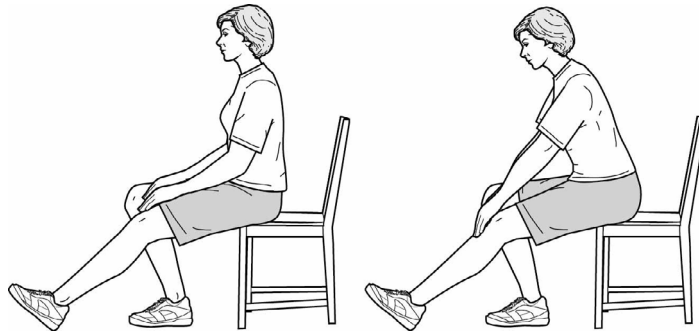
Pelvic Tilt

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the bed/floor.
2. Tighten the muscles of your lower abdomen by drawing your belly button in to flatten your lower back against the floor. It may be helpful to imagine that you are tilting your pelvis to bring your hips up toward your ribs.
3. Hold this position for a count of 10 while breathing normally. Relax and repeat the exercise 5-8 times, 2 to 3 times each day.



Hamstring Stretch

1. Sit at the front edge of a chair.
2. Put your leg out straight and point your toes up.
3. Keep the knee of your other leg bent.
4. Sit up straight, lean over your extended leg and reach towards your toes.
5. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds.
6. Repeat with your other leg.
7. Do this exercise 1-2 times, 1 to 2 times each day.



Lumbar Spine Stretches

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the bed/floor.
2. Rotate your knees towards one side.
3. Hold position for 20-30 seconds. Repeat up to 2-3 times on each side, 1 to 2 times each day.



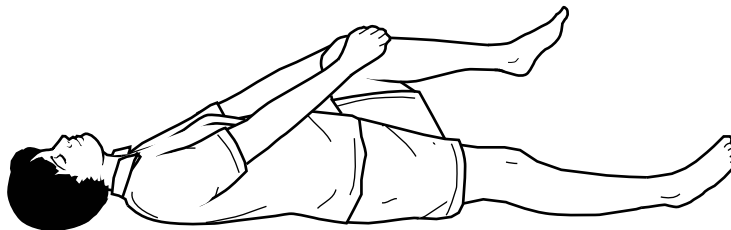
Side-lying Position

1. Lie on your side and face forward.
2. Have both arms straight in front and bend your knees.
3. Turn your head as you move your top arm across your body as far as you can.
4. Keep your arm in place and turn your head back to the starting position.
5. Look back again and turn your head farther if you can. Bring your head and arm back to the starting position.
6. Relax and repeat 10 times on each side, 2 to 3 times each day.



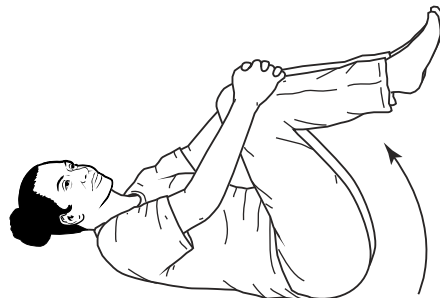
Single Leg Stretch

1. Pull one knee into your chest. Extend opposite leg. Hold for 15 seconds.
2. Repeat 2 times on each leg, 1 to 2 times each day.



Double Leg Stretch

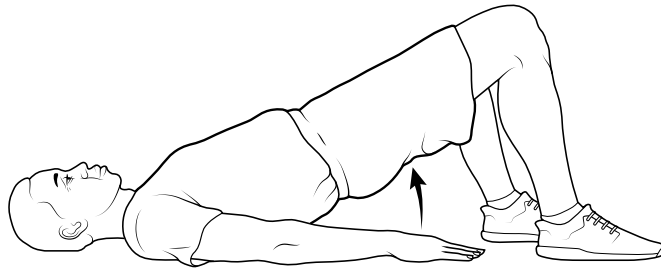
1. Pull both knees into your chest and hold for 15 seconds.
2. Repeat 2 times, 1 to 2 times each day.



Perform these exercises once surgical restrictions/precautions have been lifted: Usually at 12 weeks after surgery

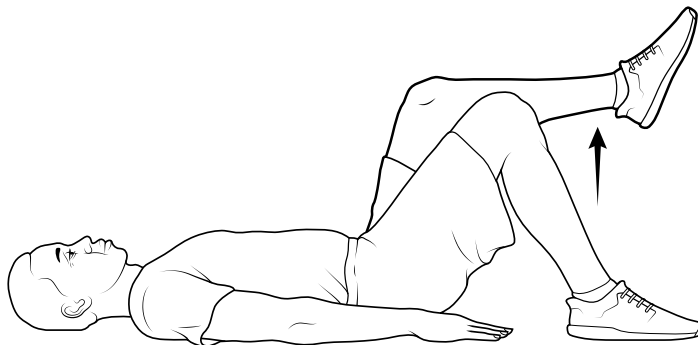
Bridge

1. Lay flat on your back with your knees bent and your feet on the floor or mat.
2. Pull your stomach in toward your spine.
3. Hold 5 seconds then lower your bottom back down onto the bed.
4. Repeat 10 times each day.



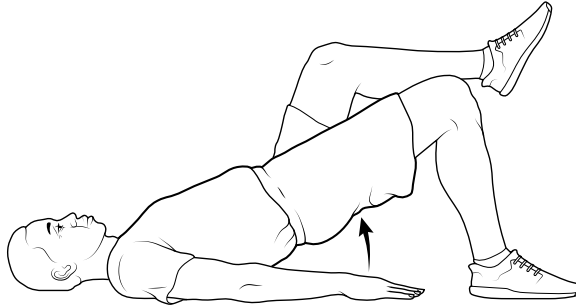
Neutral Back with Marching

1. Lie flat on your back with your knees bent.
2. Pull your stomach in towards your spine.
3. Slowly lift your legs, one at a time, towards your chest.
4. Repeat 10 times with each leg, 3 times each week.



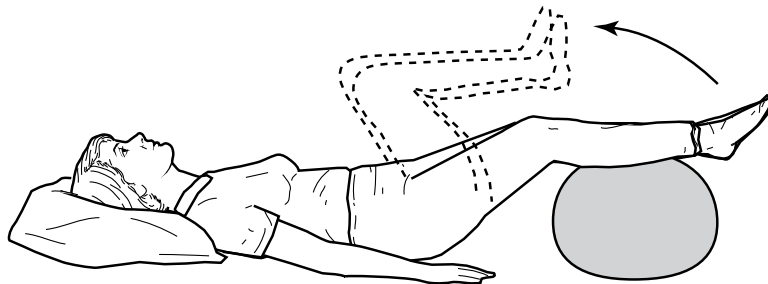
Bridging with Marching

1. Lie flat on your back with your knees bent.
2. Pull your stomach in towards your spine.
3. Keep your stomach muscles tight and your shoulders on the floor. Lift your hips off the floor.
4. Slowly lift one leg up towards your chest.
5. Lower your leg down to the floor.
6. Repeat 10 times with each leg, 3 times each week.



Curls with Therapy Ball

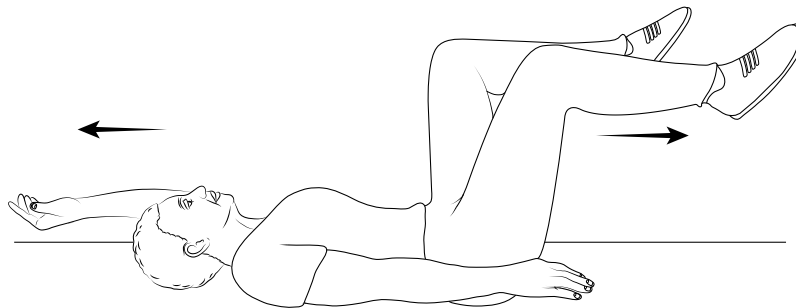
1. Lie flat on your back with your leg straight and heels resting on the therapy ball.
2. Slowly bend your knees towards your chest, keeping your feet on the ball and allowing the ball to roll.
3. Return to the starting position.
4. Perform 2 sets of 10, 3 times each week.



Advanced Exercises: The Following exercises should be performed while lying flat on your back with your knees bent and your legs in tabletop position.

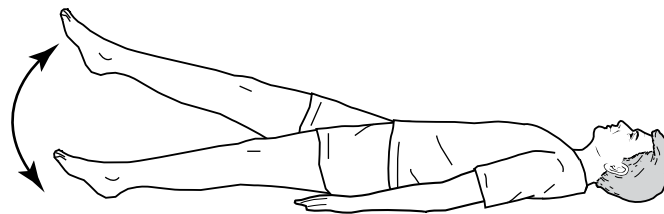
Dead Bug

1. Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and your legs in tabletop position. Keep your back flat in a “pelvic tilt” position.
2. Slowly raise one arm over your head while bending the opposite side leg towards your chest.
3. Slowly return to the starting position. Raise the opposite arm/leg up.
4. Perform 10 times. 3 times each week.



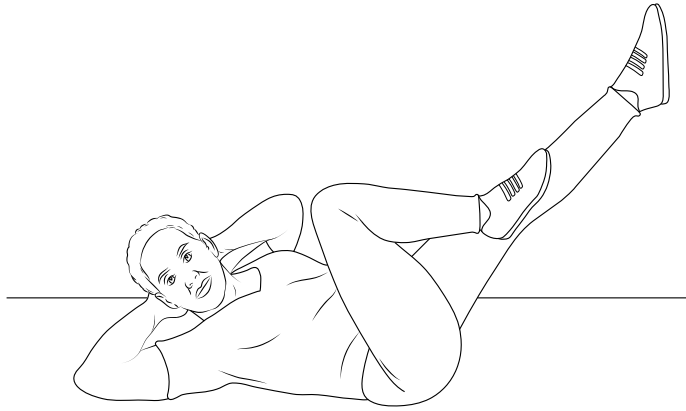
Scissor Kicks

1. Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and your legs in tabletop position.
2. Keep your stomach in towards your spine.
3. Start with one leg extended up towards the ceiling and your hands by or around the thigh. Opposite leg should be reached out.
4. Switch position of your hands and legs.
5. Repeat 10 times with each leg, 2 to 3 times each week.



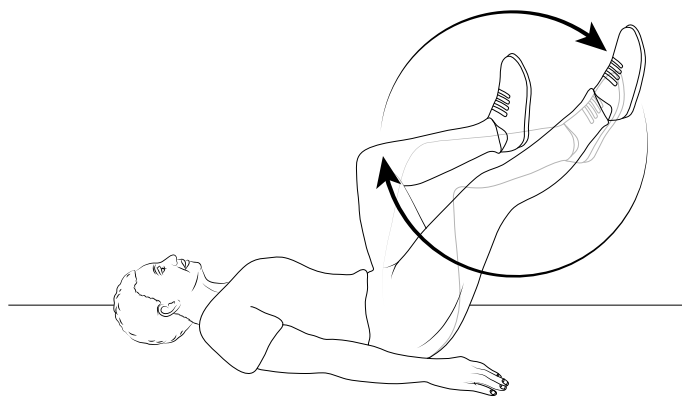
Criss-Cross

1. Lift one shoulder towards opposite thigh. Pull the thigh towards the opposite shoulder at the same time.
2. Repeat with the opposite shoulder/leg.
3. Repeat 10 times each side.
4. Perform 2 to 3 times each week.



Bicycle

1. Lie flat on your back with your knees bent.
2. Pull your stomach in towards your spine.
3. Lift your legs in front of you and move your legs as if you are pedaling on a bike.
4. Do 10 circles in each direction.
5. Perform 3 times each week.



The following exercises should be performed while lying on your side.

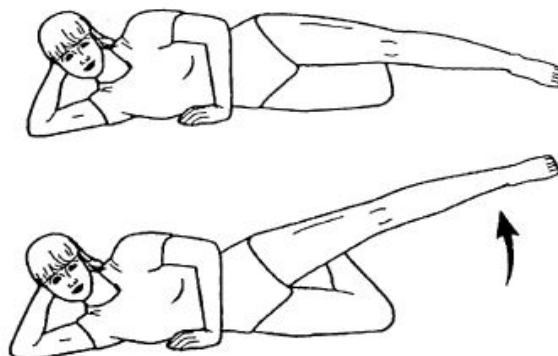
Leg Lifts

1. Lie on your back with one leg straight, and the other leg bent with your foot flat on the floor or bed. Lift the top leg straight up, keeping the foot straight. You will be exercising the leg that is straight first.
2. Tighten the muscles on the front of your thigh and raise the straight leg up about 12 inches.
3. Slowly lower the leg back to the starting position.
4. Repeat 10 times on each side.
5. Do 2 sets, 2 to 3 times each week.



Side-lying Leg Lift (abduction)

1. Lie on your side
2. Bend your bottom leg for support. Keep your top leg straight.
3. Raise your top leg up straight up about 12 inches. Focus on keeping your leg in line with the rest of your body and not bent at the hip
4. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 sets each session, 2 to 3 times each day.



Clamshells with/without Band

1. Lie on your side with your hips and knees bent.
2. Slowly raise your top leg up toward the ceiling while keeping the leg bent and feet together.
3. Lower your top leg back down to the starting position.
4. Repeat 10 times on each side. Do 2 sets, 2 to 3 times each week.

