

COVID-19 Rehabilitation Guide



Patient Workbook

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Introduction

What is Covid-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious virus that mainly affects the lungs.

Most people with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and will recover without requiring special treatment.

Breathlessness at rest and during activities is a normal symptom of Covid-19.

Why is rehabilitation important?

Rehabilitation is important following Covid-19, as it will improve your exercise tolerance, muscle strength and endurance, help manage your breathlessness and improve your fatigue levels. The rehabilitation program will focus on breathing, mobility and functional strength.

The exercises that you should complete are those you have been shown how to with the guidance of our rehabilitation instructor. If you have any questions about progressing your exercises, please discuss these prior to attempting to ensure you complete them correctly and safely.

How is this program run?

You will be referred to this program following an assessment by a physiotherapist. This means you will have spoken to a rehabilitation instructor who directed you to this work book. In this session any questions you have will be answered by our rehabilitation instructor.

The program has some education components to read through. Please target topics that you may be struggling with following suffering with COVID-19. You will also find an 8 week exercise program (page 23) that requires you to complete two sessions a week.

This does not mean that you only have to do these two sessions. If you want to do more activity on other days, or fit in extra small amounts, please do, just make a note in the table (page 25) of what additional activity you have carried out and how hard you found it. Although this program is primarily for you to do to yourself, if at any point you have any questions or require any support, please contact our rehabilitation instructor you spoke to at the start.

Once you have completed the 8 week program please phone and book an appointment with our rehabilitation instructor you spoke to. This is so that they can discuss your progress and how you found the program.

If you need to contact your health professional in between sessions their details are below

Name:.....

Phone:

Address:

Week 1 – How to deal with shortness of breath

What is breathlessness?

Breathlessness is an unpleasant sensation of uncomfortable, rapid or difficult breathing. People say they feel puffed, short of breath or winded. The medical term is dyspnoea. Your chest may feel tight and breathing may hurt.

Types of breathlessness

There are two types of breathlessness; breathlessness at rest and exertional breathlessness.

1. Breathlessness at rest – is not normal unless you are recovering from recent exertion e.g. being transferred out of bed/just made a cup of tea.
2. Exertional breathlessness – is acceptable to varying degrees for everyone (even athletes experience breathlessness). How breathless a person becomes is dependent on their cardiovascular fitness, their changeable physiological make up (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity).

Patients recovering from COVID-19 will experience more breathlessness on activity than pre-virus.

Signs and symptoms of exertional breathlessness

- Increased rate of breathing
- Faster, shallower breaths
- Accessory muscle use
- Unable to speak in full sentences
- The need to sit down/stop/take a break during an activity

Why do people experience breathlessness?

Physiological

1. A need to increase oxygen intake due to hypoxia (low levels of oxygen in the tissues) or hypoxemia (low levels of oxygen in the blood).
2. Hyperventilation – the act of increased respiratory rate with shallow breaths can blow off Carbon Dioxide.

Psychological

- Stress and anxiety particularly on exertion

Techniques for breathlessness management

Pursed lips breathing - This is useful during activities that make you breathless:

1. Stop the activity you are doing and sit in a comfortable position
2. Breathe in gently through your nose
3. Breathe out with your lips pursed as if you are whistling
4. Try to blow out for as long as is comfortable (do not force your lungs to empty)

Fan therapy/moving air- Using a small hand held fan can help you control episodes of breathlessness. A small 3-bladed battery operated fan is preferable.

1. When breathless, turn the fan on and hold it approximately 15cm away from your face
2. Aim the fan towards the centre of your face so that you feel the air around the top of your lip and the sides of your nose
3. You should begin to feel improvement in your symptoms within a couple of minutes

Positions of ease -

High side lying

1. Lie on your side
2. Use multiple pillows under your head and shoulders
3. Bend your knees a little



Supported forward sitting

1. Sitting upright, lean forward onto a table
2. Add as many pillows as required



Forward sitting

1. Sit leaning forward
2. Rest your forearms on your knees
3. Relax your chest and shoulders



Supported standing

1. Stand leaning forward and use a chair, bench or wall for support
2. Relax your chest and shoulders



Can breathlessness get better?

YES!

However, like with any physiological improvement it will take regular exercise training to get the results you wish to achieve. When training, it's important to remember training principles such as the overload principle and pacing. This will be discussed more in Week 6 (page17).

Week 2 – Deep breathing exercises

Deep breathing also goes by diaphragmatic breathing, abdominal breathing, belly breathing and paced respiration.

Why is deep breathing important?

Deep breathing can sometimes feel unnatural. One reason for this is that we tend to hold in our stomach muscles to achieve a flatter looking stomach. This interferes with deep breathing and gradually makes shallow chest breathing the norm.

Shallow breathing limits the diaphragm's range of movement. This can lead to you experiencing feelings of tension, anxiety and shortness of breath.

Deep breathing encourages full oxygen exchange. Deep breathing is also one of the best ways to relax. This is because when you breathe deeply it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. This makes deep breathing an effective tool to relax, reduce tension and relieve stress.

Breathing control

This technique has to be completed at rest when you are not feeling breathless to “train the diaphragm.” This technique can also be used as a relaxation technique.

1. Get into a comfortable position
2. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breath
3. Breathe in and out through your nose (or mouth if you are unable to do this)
4. Notice areas of tension in the body and try to release this with each breath out
5. Gradually try to make your breaths slower and deeper

Blow as you go

This is a useful breathing technique during activities that make you breathless. This technique can be combined with pursed lip breathing.

1. Breathe in before you make the effort
2. Breathe out whilst making the effort (e.g. as you lift the object)
3. Always breathe out on the hardest part of the action

Diaphragmatic breathing

Learning how to breathe from the diaphragm is beneficial for everyone.

Lie down on your back on a flat surface in a comfortable place with your knees bent

1. Place one hand flat on your chest and the other on your belly just below your rib cage
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting the air fill your rib cage and belly. Your hand should slightly rise on your belly and your hand on your chest should remain still
3. Slowly exhale and your hand should return to the original position

Please follow the link - www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBkGDleQwXo or search 'doctor demonstrates breathing technique for coronavirus patients' on the YouTube homepage for a deep breathing exercise. This will take 10-15 minutes.

Week 3 – Deconditioning

Whether you have been hospitalised or not from COVID-19 there is evidence emerging on the level of deconditioning you will experience after you've had it.

What is deconditioning?

Deconditioning is a negative side effect from becoming suddenly sedentary or having a reduction in activity due to illness. Deconditioning can include:

- Muscle loss
- Weakness
- Breathlessness
- Loss of mobility

How does this affect me?

Activities of daily living will become more challenging and strenuous for you to carry out. A reduced level of physical activity is associated with a reduction in cardiorespiratory fitness and muscular capacity. Muscle loss can be detected after just two days from the onset of inactivity.

What can I do?

Daily exercise is essential for counteracting the effects of deconditioning. Therefore, it is important for you to incorporate exercise to help combat the potential effects of deconditioning mentioned above.

Doing exercise little and often will encourage muscle activation and joint mobility so you can decrease your level of deconditioning. It is important to remember how much your body will be affected by COVID-19 and to exercise gradually.

Exercises that can help improve your level of deconditioning can be found at the end of this workbook (page 26) along with your 8-week program (page 23).

Week 4 – Pelvic Health

Problems with your bladder or bowel can affect anyone. If you are recovering from COVID-19 you may find it is difficult to get your bladder or bowel back to their normal function. You may be experiencing embarrassing leaks. Many men and women experience **new or worsening** symptoms of:

- Urinary leakage
- Rushing to the toilet
- Difficulty controlling wind
- Vaginal heaviness or discomfort (women only!)



These new or worsening symptoms are often a result of prolonged coughing and general deconditioning.

An existing problem can get much worse, and symptoms are very common, but not normal. There is a lot you can do to improve the situation. A good starting point is to encourage the pelvic floor muscles to start to do a better job. This can be done gently at first and then more can be asked of the muscles as they start to improve.

Your pelvic floor muscles

The pelvic floor muscles form a hammock underneath the pelvis to provide support and control for your bladder and bowel.

What does the pelvic floor do?

It supports the pelvic organs and abdominal contents. It helps to keep the bladder and bowel openings closed to prevent unwanted leakage. The muscles need to work gently all of the time and also be able to work harder during activities such as coughing. The pelvic floor has an important role in sex for both men and women.

How to do pelvic floor exercises

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned, it would be a good idea to practise pelvic floor exercises. Your pelvic floor muscles need to be strong but they also need to work in the right way at the right time. Therefore, a programme of basic pelvic floor exercises and then functional co-ordination exercises is recommended.

Long contractions Contract your pelvic floor muscles and maintain the hold whilst you continue to breathe in and out normally. Hold for a maximum for 10 seconds. Allow the muscles to fully relax before repeating up to a maximum of 10 times.

Short contractions Contract your pelvic floor quickly then immediately relax them. Allow them to fully relax before repeating this up to a maximum of 10 times.

- Aim to do these exercises three times a day but start with a small amount and build gradually as you feel able
- The exercises should not make you feel uncomfortable or cause you to leak
- Aim for quality rather than quantity
- Gradually build up your hold and repeat times as the exercises become easier
- You may find it easier to do your exercises lying or sitting to start with. Sitting leaning forwards can be helpful to start with. Do try the exercises in a standing position as soon as you feel able to do so - initially you could try leaning forwards onto a worktop/ table top or leaning back against a wall. When standing, turning your toes inwards or your heels inwards can help activate the front and back portion of your pelvic floor muscles respectively.



- It can take 2-3 weeks to improve the brain-muscle connections allowing better coordination of your pelvic floor muscles.
- It can take about 4 to 6 months to improve the strength of your pelvic floor muscles. You will need to always do some amount.

Good drinking and toilet habits

The average number of times most people empty their bladder in the day is between 4 and 8 times and once, or not at all, at night.

A daily fluid intake of 1.5 - 2 litres is recommended to maintain tissue health. You may need to drink more in hot weather, when very active or when unwell. Large volumes of fluids in a short period of time and fizzy drinks (including sparkling water) can cause rapid filling of your bladder. This can produce urinary urgency and frequency. Spread fluids evenly through the day, with your last drink being a couple of hours before your bed time.

Caffeine can act as a bladder irritant. Consider substituting caffeinated drinks with decaffeinated options such as water, fruit squashes or juices. Caffeine can be found in tea, coffee, chocolate, high energy drinks, Coca-Cola and cocoa. You are advised to cut down on caffeine gradually over 2-3 weeks to reduce withdrawal symptoms such as headaches.

Cutting down on fluids to try and control symptoms results in urine becoming more concentrated, which can irritate the bladder. You can also be more prone to urinary tract infection and constipation, both of which can exacerbate your symptoms. Check the colour of your urine. It should be light straw coloured with little smell.

Many people find that their symptoms can be worse if they are constipated as this can further irritate the bladder. Periods of inactivity and illness can also result in constipation. The following can be helpful for good bowel health:

- Aim for 15-30g of fibre a day
- Make sure you are drinking adequate fluids
- Try and do some daily activity or exercise such as walking
- Empty your bowel when you get the urge as this is when the stool will be at its softest and the body ready to push it out. Give your body time to empty and adopt a good position on the toilet.
- If you are feeling particularly stressed or anxious, try and factor in a daily time for relaxation or doing something enjoyable.



If you continue to experience symptoms or are very distressed by your symptoms now, our pelvic health physio team is available to support you to get better. You can refer yourself using a form on our website -

<https://eoemskservice.nhs.uk/physiotherapy-self-referral> or speak to one of the DynamicHealth team running your session.

Included in this workbook are more pelvic floor exercises that you can include in your program. These can be found on page 26.

Week 5 – Coping with fatigue

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is a common symptom of many different illnesses and is part of the normal bodily response to fighting the illness. Usually the feeling of fatigue goes once you have recovered.

Fatigue is the feeling of extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness. It can cause you to feel exhausted when carrying out your normal activities of daily living and is very different to everyday tiredness. Recovery after activity changes, so rest and sleep may feel unrefreshing.

Post-viral fatigue

Post-viral fatigue is the feeling of tiredness and weakness that remains following suffering from a viral infection. It is a fairly common condition following any type of viral infection and affects people of all ages.

However, the effects of post-viral fatigue range between a few weeks to potentially months. The severity and length of time that someone experiences fatigue doesn't always reflect the severity of the initial infection or your previous fitness levels.

It is still unknown what causes post-viral fatigue. However, it is thought that the feelings of fatigue, loss of energy, muscular aches and pains, and generally feeling unwell are a result of your immune system having to fight off the viral infection.

Fatigue following COVID-19 is appearing to be more complicated than what happens after other viral illnesses. This is thought to be due to the fact that fatigue and lack of energy are considered to be a common symptom of Covid-19.

Symptoms of post-viral fatigue:

- Concentration or memory problems
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Unexplained muscle or joint pain

Relevance to recovery from COVID-19

Anyone who has suffered with COVID-19 will have experienced an acute lung condition such as viral infection or possible pneumonia.

An increase in bed rest at home or following a stay in hospital can lead to you becoming deconditioned. Evidence suggests that just a 72 hour stay in ICU can lead to muscle wastage.

Although COVID-19 is an infectious virus that predominantly affects the lungs, other organs such as the kidneys, may also have been effected during the illness.

If you'd like to find our more, please visit:

<https://meassociation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MEA-PVF-and-PVFS-Following-Coronavirus-Infection-30.04.20.pdf>

Week 6 – Unhelpful thoughts and mental health

Unhelpful Thoughts

Research shows that when carrying out a task it is our thought process that produces the emotions that drive how we tackle it.

The way you think about a situation will vary compared to another person. This can be due to the way you have experienced the situation in the past. For example, as someone that has suffered with COVID-19 you may be struggling with walking for any period of time. Therefore, if your friends invite you out for a walk you may worry that you'll annoy them as you have to keep stopping for breaks, meaning that you don't go.

You need to bear in mind that your thoughts don't always reflect what is really going on around you. They can just be thoughts that you are having.

Mental Health

You may have been provided with some information about the potential psychological impact following a critical illness. This is particularly provided to patients who have been hospitalised.

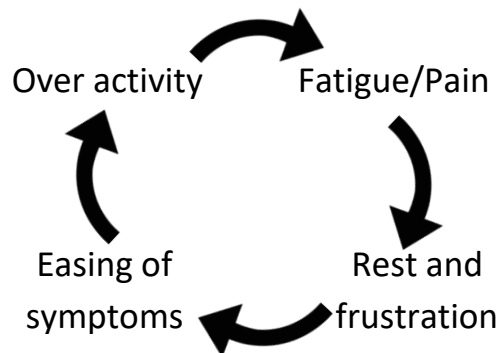
It is common to suffer from depression and anxiety following critical illness. The added component of isolation is also a contributing factor in developing mental health problems. Through the pandemic there has been a loss of routine and "normal" life which is challenging.

In the **Useful Resources** section (page ??) you can find some numbers and sites that you can access if you are struggling with your mental health during this time. It is important that if you are struggling at all to ask for help.

Week 7 – Pacing – Beginning normal activities of daily living

Many people who have had a stay in ICU or had to have bed rest due to illness, are often unable to carry out the same level of activity as they could prior to being unwell due to fatigue. The increase in fatigue can lead to an increase in inactivity, or doing all jobs in one day when you are having a good day. This can lead to an increase in your pain or general weakness with an increased need to rest for the next few days.

This can be represented in the diagram seen below:



What is pacing?

Pacing is a way of increasing your activity level without stirring up your fatigue too much.

This means breaking down your activities across the day including periods of rest. It will help you to manage your day better. Pacing is more challenging than it sounds because we don't tend to spread out our activities and rest evenly throughout the day. It also means that whatever activity you are doing, whether you enjoy it or not, is not done for too long or too little. The aim is to keep an even level of activity throughout the day and week.

It is important that even when you are having a good day to stick to your plan of how you break up your activities throughout the day. Also, you should not wait to be tired before you have a rest.

Guide to pacing

Here are some ideas on an effective way to pace. The example used is cleaning the house.

Prioritise: What are the most important things that need to be done? What has to be done straight away and what can wait?

Example: do living room first as friends are coming over later today

Plan: Try to plan activities so the ones you find the most difficult/tiring are spread out throughout the day and not done all at once. What order is best? Do you need help? Can you do them in a different way? Can you 'chunk' activities into those done in different positions?

Example: try spreading the vacuum cleaning out over several days. Could you sweep the kitchen with a brush, as it's lighter than the vacuum cleaner?

Tolerance level: Think about your baseline level for each activity of your plan. This is discussed in the next part of education.

Example: try and find the middle ground between what you would do on a good and on a bad day.

Evaluate: Try to stick to your plan. After several days of carrying out this plan you should look back and decide if any changes need to be made.

Example: if you had no problems with only vacuuming one room you could try doing two each time to see if this was okay.

Week 8 – Pacing – Restarting activities and exercise

Baselines

When returning to activity it is important to know where you should start for each activity or exercise. This is called setting a baseline. Once you have this baseline you know where your comfortable starting point is.

How to set a baseline

The template below is an effective way for you to calculate your baseline for each activity and/or hobby you wish to return to.

Day 1: Think about how much you'll be able to do. Try out this amount. Write down how many times you did the exercise or for how long.

Day 2: Think back on how day 1 went. Change the amount if you need to. Increase or decrease depending on how day 1 made you feel. Write down how much you were able to do.

Day 3: Think back on days 1 and 2. How did you feel after both days? Adjust as necessary and write down what you achieved.

The template below shows an example of how to calculate your baseline. The activity is walking, so the amount achieved is in minutes.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Day 1} & & \text{Day 2} & & \text{Day 3} & & \text{Total} \\ \boxed{12} & + & \boxed{8} & + & \boxed{10} & = & \boxed{30} \\ & & \text{Total} & & & & \\ & & \boxed{30} & \div & \mathbf{3} & = & \text{Average} \\ & & & & & & \boxed{10} \end{array}$$

Although the average amount achieved is 10 minutes, that doesn't mean the activity start point should be for that amount. **Your starting point should be 70-80% of your average achieved** to prevent potential for over exertion and fatigue. So, in this example you would start with 7-8 minutes of walking.

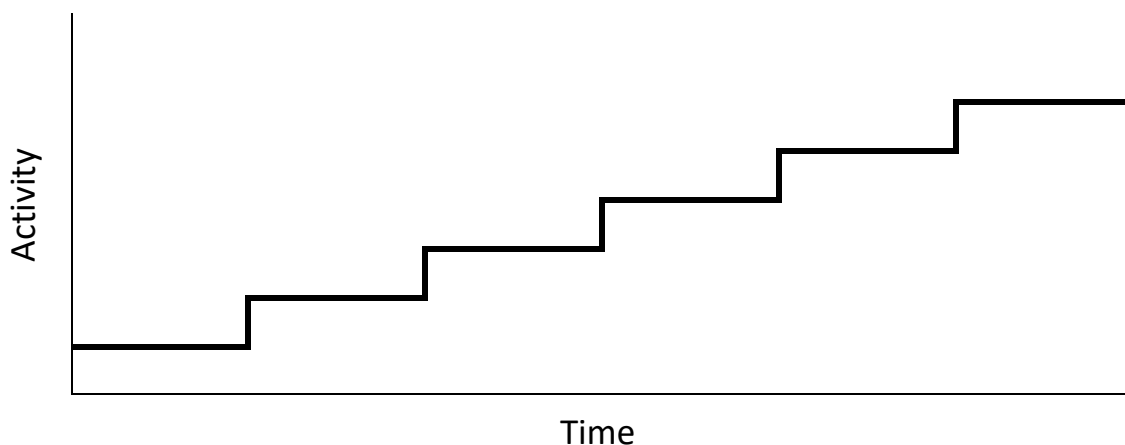
There is a copy of the template seen above on page 33.

How to progress from your baseline

It is important to progress slowly to ensure that you don't overdo the activity.

If you manage to carry out your baseline level of your chosen activity for 1-2 weeks, you can consider increasing the amount you are doing by a small amount. For example, using the example of walking you would increase the amount of time walking by 1-2 minutes. This is increasing your level of activity by 10-20%.

The diagram below represents this gradual progression of baseline.



This slow progression of activity levels allows for your body to adapt to the increase in activity.

If you do increase your activity level and find that you are particularly fatigued after and don't recover as quickly as you did prior to the increase, consider the following things:

- Go back to the previous level of activity that you were comfortable with and stay at this level for a little while longer
- Increase the amount of activity by not such big a step e.g. 1 minute longer instead of 2
- Stay at the increased level a little while longer to see if your symptoms of fatigue settle. This may be an option if you feel that the increase in fatigue is unrelated to the increase in activity.

Overload principle

The overload principle is one of the biggest rules used in fitness and training. Simply the overload principle states that you have to increase the intensity, duration, type, or time of an activity or hobby steadily to see adaptations and improvements. These improvements can be in endurance, strength, or muscle size.

Although this is a training principle it can still be applied to your recovery following COVID-19. With suffering from COVID-19 your body will have deconditioned due to the lack of activity from being ill. Initially you may see some quick improvements in the amount of activity you are able to carry out.

However, as you get fitter and your health continues to improve, you will need to increase the intensity of your activity to continue to see improvements. If you continue to carry out the activity at the same level with no increase in intensity, after a few weeks your body will have adjusted to this activity and there will be no more or minimal improvements.

8 week program

The following structure and session plan is for the next 8 weeks. The program is structured so that you complete two exercise sessions each week, with each week targeting something slightly different.

Even with completing two planned sessions a week, we advise that you incorporate some level of activity each day. This could be anything you like, from some mobility work to gentle strengthening. There is a table on page 25 where you can track any additional exercises you complete.

Class Structure

Week 1 - Back to exercise

Session 1

Session 2

Week 2 - Core & posture

Session 1

Session 2

Week 3 - Slow & Steady

Session 1

Session 2

Week 4 - Pace

Session 1

Session 2

Week 5 - Breath of confidence"

Session 1

Session 2

Week 6 - Balance

Session 1

Session 2

Week 7 - Strength

Session 1

Session 2

Week 8 - Function

Session 1

Session 2

Each exercise is to be completed for **30 seconds with 30 seconds rest**. The amount of rest is to be reduced as exercise gets easier.

During your appointment with the rehabilitation instructor you would have been advised on what level of program you should complete. They can also be found on our website.

If at any point you find the level of the exercises too easy or hard, you can continue at the level of the previous week or take components from the other level programs to suit you. Just make a note of this change for your record and inform our rehabilitation instructor on your final session.

Date	Exercise								How Hard?

Pelvic Floor Exercises

These exercises can be incorporated into your program to do throughout the day. There doesn't need to be a set time that you complete the exercises.

Starting point for all exercises:

- Low effort/gentle contraction of your pelvic floor muscles
- Continuous breathing
- Maintaining the pelvic floor muscle engagement and breathing as you perform the exercises



Seated Ball Squeeze

Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Place a small football sized ball between your knees. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'.

Gently squeeze the ball between your knees. Hold for 5 seconds and then completely relax all muscles.

Repeat 10 times.

Seated Ball Squeeze with heel lift

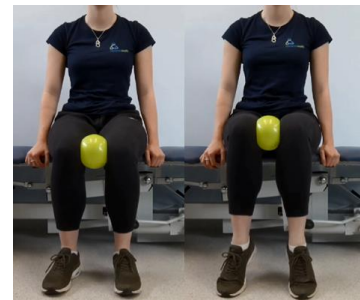
Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Place a small football sized ball between your knees. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'.

Gently squeeze the ball between your knees.

Lift both heels off the floor, going onto tip toes.

Lower your heels and completely relax all muscles.

Repeat 10 times.



Seated Ball Squeeze with Reciprocal Heel Lift

Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Place a small football sized ball between your knees. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'.

Gently squeeze the ball between your knees.

Lift your left heel off the floor, and then lift the right heel so both heels are lifted.

Lower the left heel, then the right and then completely relax all muscles.

Repeat up to 5 times leading with your left heel, then up to 5 times leading with your right heel.



Psoas Heel Lifts

Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'. Lift your left heel then lower it. Let everything relax. Repeat with right heel. Repeat up to 10 times.

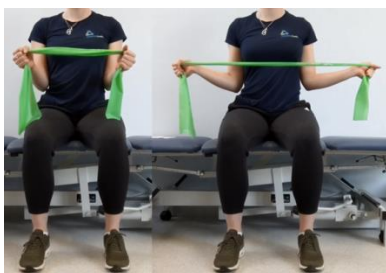


Psoas Foot Lifts

Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'. Lift your left foot off the floor. Lower back to starting position. Let everything relax. Repeat with the right leg. Repeat up to 10 times on each leg.

Psoas Circles

Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'. Lift your left foot upwards, bending at the hip. Imagine a pencil on the end of your knee and use this pencil to draw 2-3 slow well controlled circles. Lower your leg and let everything relax. Repeat with the right leg. Repeat up to 5 times on each side.



Resistance Pulls

Sit with a comfortable posture on a firm surface with feet flat on the floor. Hold a length of resistance band in front of you between both hands with your elbows bent to a right angle. Contract your pelvic floor/breathing as per 'starting point'. Tension the band by pulling your hands away from each other. Return to starting position. Let everything relax. Repeat up to 10 times.

Weight Transfer

Stand with your right foot in front and your weight on your left leg. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Transfer your weight onto the right foot. Check/re-contrast your pelvic floor muscles if necessary.

Bring the weight back onto your left leg. Let everything relax.

Repeat up to 5 times. Swap foot position and repeat, working right to left.



Weight Transfer with knee bend and pulse

Stand with your right foot in front and your weight on your left leg. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Transfer your weight onto the right foot.

Bend both knees.

Perform 3 quick strong pelvic floor contractions.

Bring your weight back to your left leg.

Let everything relax.

Repeat up to 5 times.

Swap foot position and repeat, working right to left.

Weight transfer with knee bend

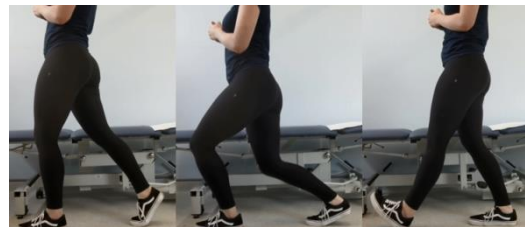
Stand with your right foot in front and your weight on your left leg. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Transfer your weight onto the right foot.

Bend both knees.

Check muscle contraction then return to the start position. Let everything relax.

Repeat up to 5 times. Swap foot position and repeat, working right to left.



Quarter to/Quarter past

Standing with your feet slightly apart. Imagine a clock face on the floor. Your left foot is on 9 o'clock, right foot 3 o'clock. 12 o'clock is in front of you and 6 o'clock is behind you.

Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Move your weight towards 3 o'clock.

Check your muscles are still contracted and bring your weight back to the centre start point.

Let everything relax.

Do the same but moving towards 9 o'clock.

Repeat up to 5 times both sides.

Clock Face Stations

Standing with your feet slightly apart. Imagine a clock face on the floor. Your left foot is 9 o'clock, right foot 3 o'clock. 12 o'clock is in front of you and 6 o'clock is behind you.

Perform a pelvic floor contraction.

Relax.

Move your hips to 4 o'clock and perform a pelvic floor contraction.

Relax.

Work at each position of the clock from 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock and back again.



Clock Face sweep-hula hoops

Standing with your feet slightly apart. Imagine a clock face on the floor. Your left foot is 9 o'clock, right foot 3 o'clock. 12 o'clock is in front of you and 6 o'clock is behind you.

Perform a pelvic floor contraction and maintain it whilst moving your pelvis to 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock.

Stop and let everything relax.

Contract your muscles again and continue working from 7 o'clock to 9 o'clock.

Let everything relax.

Now work back from 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock and back to 3 o'clock.

Repeat this up to 5 times.



Bilateral Heel Raise

Stand with your feet slightly apart with your weight evenly distributed between both feet. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Rise up onto your toes.

Lower back down.

Let everything relax.

Repeat up to 10 times.



Reciprocal Heel Raises

Stand with your feet slightly apart with your weight evenly distributed between both feet. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Lift the heel of one foot.

Lower it back down whilst at the same time lifting the opposite heel (walking type action but not taking foot completely off the floor).

Repeat this up to 5 times before letting everything relax.

Repeat up to 10 times.

Single leg balance

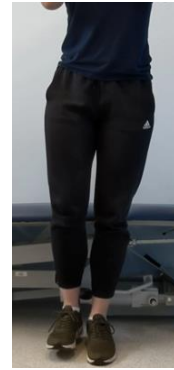
Stand with your feet slightly apart with your weight evenly distributed between both feet. Contract your pelvic floor and breathe as per 'starting point'.

Use some firm support to hold onto.

Take all your weight onto one leg lifting the opposite one a small way off the floor.

Maintain the balance for up to 10 seconds.

Place your foot back on the floor and let everything relax.



Squats

Stand with your feet slightly apart with your weight evenly distributed between both feet. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'. Perform a small bend of your hips and knees.

Return to the starting position and let everything relax.

Repeat 10 up to times.

The depth of the bend can increase as it becomes easier to maintain pelvic floor and breathing control throughout the movement.

Bridging

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor or bed. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Squeeze your buttock muscles and lift your bottom off the floor.

Pause and lower your bottom back down.

Let everything relax.

Repeat up to 10 times.



Leg Lift

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor or bed. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Lift one knee upwards so your thigh becomes vertical.

Return to the starting position and repeat with the other leg.

Repeat up to 5 times.

Hip Twists

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor or bed. Contract your pelvic floor muscles and breathing as per 'starting point'.

Slowly drop one knee out to the side.

Do not let your pelvis move.

Bring your leg back to the starting position.

Let everything relax.

Repeat on the opposite leg.

Repeat up to 5 times on each leg.



Recovery Stories

Coronavirus Survivor Describes Her Experience | Good Morning Britain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3FW7fj-Kcc>

Recovering from coronavirus: Three harrowing stories of surviving Covid-19

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52124554>

Coronavirus: Inside the UK COVID-19 recovery centre where patients learn to walk and breath again

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBe2939-pZk>

5 people who recovered from the coronavirus share what they wish they'd known before getting sick

<https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-recovered-spain-patients-advice-2020-5?r=US&IR=T>

Useful Resources

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy

To refer yourself for pelvic health physiotherapy, please complete a self-referral form found on our website at:

<https://eoemskservice.nhs.uk/physiotherapy-self-referral>

NHS Mental Health

CPFT Adult and Specialist Mental Health Services

<https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/services/adult-and-specialist-services.htm>

<https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/help/mental-health-leaflets.htm>

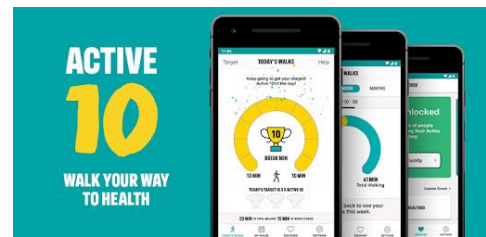
Other useful mental health services

<https://www.keep-your-head.com/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/where-to-start/>

Active 10

Active 10 is a free and easy to use walking app that tracks your walking and shows you how you can increase your intensity to benefit your health. The app is designed to support you every step of the way to increase your daily level of physical activity, with simple and achievable milestones and rewards along the way.



Baseline template

Day 1		+	Day 2		+	Day 3		=	Total
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
			Total		÷	3		=	Average
			<input type="text"/>						<input type="text"/>

Recovering from a chronic cough or COVID-19?

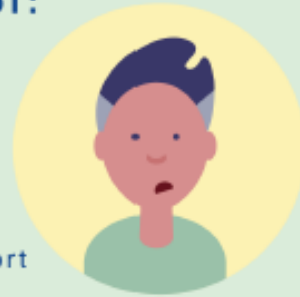
Difficulty getting your bladder or
bowel back to normal?

Are you experiencing embarrassing leaks?

You may have experienced new
or worsening symptoms of:



- urinary leakage
- rushing to the toilet
- difficulty controlling wind
- vaginal heaviness or discomfort



Problems with your bladder or bowel can affect anyone.

Start with gentle pelvic floor muscle exercise.

Build up slowly, especially if
you are feeling very weak and tired

Find out more on the POGP website
pogp.csp.org.uk



Remember, you can seek advice from your local
pelvic health specialist physiotherapist