



The Oesophageal Patients Association

Caring for the cancer patient and their family

SHOULDER AND POSTURAL EXERCISES/ ADVICE FOLLOWING THORACIC SURGERY

Shoulder

1. Do not keep the shoulder still following surgery
2. It is normal to experience shoulder stiffness and limitation of movement
3. Start gentle movements immediately within your pain limits
4. Lift arm both forwards and to the side
5. Try to touch your fingers to the back of your head/neck
6. Touch fingers to the top of your shoulder and circle your elbow
7. These exercises should be repeated regularly throughout the day
8. The pain and stiffness will gradually ease
9. Keeping the joint still may lead to a frozen shoulder

Posture

1. You may find it painful to sit/stand up straight following surgery, this normal
2. Do not be tempted to sit 'curled up', try to straighten out
3. Try to raise the arm of the operated side over your head, this will stretch out the side
4. In standing gently reach the opposite hand down the outer thigh, this will also stretch out the side
5. Maintaining a poor posture may lead to permanent shortening in the wound as it heals
6. Associated problems may include back and neck ache
7. Gentle exercising will keep the joints and muscles at their correct length thus preventing these problems
8. The exercised may well feel uncomfortable, do after painkillers