Get up, get dressed, keep moving

A guide for you, your relatives, carers and friends about deconditioning harm prevention

What is deconditioning?

Deconditioning happens with prolonged periods of inactivity and bed rest. Hospital deconditioning can reduce independence and increase the support needed to return home.

As little as 10 days in bed can age muscles by 10 years. Muscle mass can reduce by 1.5% to 2% per day.

Staying in bed you are at risk of:

- mobility being reduced, increasing your risk of falls
- developing constipation and/or pneumonia
- feeling weaker, this is connected to reducing muscle strength and bone density
- feeling demotivated because you are out of your normal routines and don't feel in control.

These factors and others associated with being in hospital combine and become known as deconditioning syndrome.

What can I do to prevent this?

Taking these simple, but very important, steps will help your recovery and prepare you for leaving hospital quickly.

Doing as many of these tasks as you can will increase your stamina, strength and balance, improve your walking and build your confidence.

Wash in the bathroom - if you are able. If not, wash by the bed. If you would like to have a shower, let staff know. **Brush your teeth** at least twice a day.

Pick out your own day clothes and dress yourself if you are able. Wear the shoes or slippers you would normally use at home. **We will help you** to arrange to have your own clothes brought in, if possible.

Get out of bed to sit and eat breakfast - this is important for your digestion, breathing, and bowels. **Try to eat something** every mealtime, even if you don't feel like it. If you are unable to manage by yourself, help will be given. Let staff know your likes and dislikes. **Drink plenty** throughout the day and evening, unless told not to by staff.

At lunchtime try and walk to the dining table if there is one, as this is good exercise. It is also an opportunity to chat to others. Otherwise sit in your chair to eat lunch. This will help your digestion, breathing and bowels. **Have a rest** on the bed after lunch if you like.

Visiting time on the ward - your family and friends can help you with your exercises if you have been given some. Ask them to bring in something to help keep you occupied while you are in hospital. **Visiting time out and about** - get out into the garden, the coffee shop or the day room with your family and visitors, walking if you are able. We can lend you a wheelchair if it is needed.

Walk to the toilet - if you are able. This is excellent strength, stamina and balance practice.

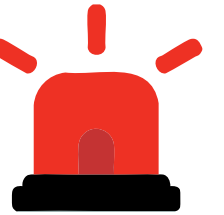
At teatime - if you went back to bed for a rest during the afternoon, get out into your chair to eat your tea.

Getting ready for bed - choose your night clothes and get yourself ready for bed. Walk to the bathroom and brush your teeth at the sink if able. The more walking practice the better.

Effective pain control and sleep is vitally important to help you get better and return home. If you are in pain, or not able to sleep, please let a member of staff know as soon as possible so we can do something to help.

Night time - if you need the toilet, staff will encourage you to get out of bed to use a commode or walk to the toilet. This will improve your confidence in being able to manage this yourself when you go home.

Remember



It is important to try and reduce any risks during your hospital stay, so please:

- Tell a member of staff if you feel unwell
- Wear supportive and well-fitting footwear
- Use your walking aid

Useful Information

NHS UK
Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64

- Website: nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults-aged-19-to-64

NHS UK
Physical activity guidelines for older adults

- Website:nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults

Age UK
Exercise advice for over 60

- Website: ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise

Chartered Society of Physiotherapists
Keeping active and healthy

- Website: csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-healthy

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