

**STRATFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL**  
**PRE-OPERATIVE EDUCATION HANDOUT**

In the first few days following surgery it is essential for you to perform a few simple exercises and activities. These are covered in this handout and will assist in making you more comfortable and help prevent any post-operative complications.

**BREATHING EXERCISES:**

**WHY:** To keep your lungs expanding fully and to help mucous from your lungs to your throat where it can be coughed up. This mucous can make breathing difficult if not removed.

**HOW:** Breathe in deeply through your nose. Think about taking air down around your waist. Hold for a count of three, then exhale through an open mouth.

**WHEN:** Take ten deep breaths, every waking hour for a few days after surgery.

**COUGHING:**

**WHY:** This is the only effective way to clear the mucous you may have in your lungs following surgery. Hawking and clearing your throat will not help.

**HOW:** Lying on your back or side or sitting, bend both knees up, support your incision firmly with a folded blanket or pillow, breathe in and cough deeply.

**LEG EXERCISES:**

**WHY:** Following surgery the circulation to your legs tends to slow down, which can lead to swollen ankles and stiff, painful legs when getting back on your feet.

**HOW:** Lying on your back with legs straight, pump your feet up and down. Then make large circles, in both directions with your feet.  
Lying on your back with your legs straight, push the back of your right knee down onto the bed, hold for the count of three then release. Repeat with the left knee.

Squeeze your buttocks together, hold for three, then relax.

**WHEN:** To be carried out for at least five minutes every waking hour until you are up and about out of bed.

**MOVING IN BED:**

**WHY:** Important both for breathing and circulation that you be as mobile as possible, while confined to bed, after surgery.

**HOW:** It is easier to roll over and move your bottom from side to side with your knees bent up and one hand supporting your incision. The bed rails may also be used to help your turn.

**WHEN:** Change positions at least every two hours the first few days.