

Prehabilitation and Rehabilitation for Gynaecological Surgery

Introduction

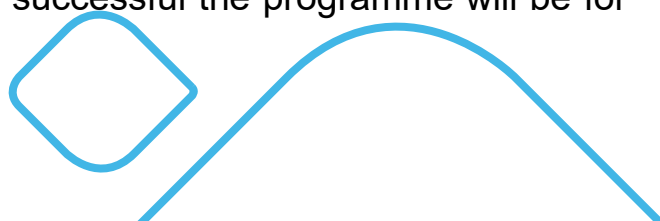
Enhanced Recovery Programme (ERP) is a modern approach to surgery that helps you recover as quickly and safely as possible. It includes best practices before, during, and after your operation to support faster healing, fewer complications, and an earlier return to normal life.

Recent research in 2019 and 2021 showed that good adherence to ERP resulted in a decrease of 1.6 days in length of hospital stay, 32% reduction in occurrence of complications, and 20% reduction in the number of readmissions.

ERP enhances your recovery by:

- Helping your bowels return to normal
- Helping you to get back on your feet and move around
- Helping to maintain muscle strength and cardio-respiratory fitness
- Helping to manage pain, swelling and reducing fatigue

ERP also reduces the risk of complications such as chest infections, urinary tract infections, blood clots formation in your legs – deep vein thrombosis (DVT), muscle wasting and constipation. We will encourage you to work towards achieving daily goals. The more involved you are, the more successful the programme will be for you.



Before Your Surgery (Prehabilitation)

To prepare your body and mind:

- Exercise: Aim for 20–30 minutes of moderate activity daily (e.g., brisk walking, swimming, cycling).
- Nutrition: Eat a balanced diet. Consider high-protein snacks and drinks if recommended.
- Smoking & Alcohol: Stop smoking and reduce alcohol intake at least 4 weeks before surgery. You could find information to help stop smoking here: (<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>)
- Breathing & Leg Exercises: Learn deep breathing and leg movements to prevent clots. Take slow, gentle deep breaths down into the bottom of your lungs – as if you are blowing up a balloon in your belly. Heel raises and squats slowly 10 repetitions and 2-3 times/day when you are staying inside.

For information on lifestyle changes that can make a difference in the time you have before treatment, please visit ‘SWAG Prehab’ cancer alliance website or use the QR code below:



<https://swagcanceralliance.nhs.uk/prehab-home/>

You can find our web pages on the Royal United Hospital NHS Trust website by searching ‘Cancer Rehab Team’ or at: www.ruh.nhs.uk/CancerRehab. You can also use the QR code below to link directly to the webpage:



<https://www.ruh.nhs.uk/CancerRehab>

On the Day of Surgery

- During the preoperative appointment, your doctor will inform you if you are not allowed eating/drinking before your surgery during the preoperative appointment.
- You may be allowed to drink carbohydrate-rich clear fluids up to 2 hours before surgery.
- Bring supportive shoes or slippers and loose clothing.
- You will be encouraged to start moving shortly after surgery and fill out your daily goals diary provided by the ward nursing staff.

After Surgery: Early Mobilisation

Movement helps reduce risks and aids healing. Your goals include:

Day 0 (Same Day as Surgery)

- Sit up in bed or on a chair.
- Perform breathing and leg exercises every hour while awake.
- Walk a short distance with support if possible.

Day 1 and Onwards

- Sit out of bed for all meals.
- Walk short distances several times a day (e.g., 5–10 minutes, 4–6 times daily).
- Continue deep breathing and leg exercises.
- Increase walking gradually as tolerated.

Physiotherapy Advice

- Begin gentle pelvic floor and abdominal exercises as advised.
- Avoid heavy lifting (over 1–2 kg //2.2-4.4 lbs) for 6 weeks.
- Avoid high-impact activities (such as jumping, high knees, running) until cleared by your care team.

Please use the QR code below to access a more detailed advice and pelvic floor exercise booklet for self-management following your gynaecological surgery:



http://thepogp.co.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/211984pogpffsurgery.pdf

Please use the QR code below to access an audio record with detailed explanation of exercises to improve your pelvic floor muscles:



http://thepogp.co.uk/patients/pelvic_health_advice/pelvic_floor_muscles.aspx

Returning to Normal Activities

Weeks 2–4

- Continue gentle walking and light household tasks.

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- Resume low-impact activities (e.g., light yoga, static cycling).

Weeks 4–6

- Increase walking distance and pace.
- Consider swimming or gentle exercise classes.

After 6 Weeks

- Resume normal activities and exercise routines gradually.
- Listen to your body; stop if you feel discomfort.

When to Contact the Team. Contact your hospital or GP if you experience:

- Increased pain, redness, or swelling around your wound
- Fever or chills
- Difficulty passing urine or bowel movements
- Shortness of breath or chest pain

Please contact the Cancer Rehab team on: *ruh-tr.cancerrehab@nhs.net* or Tel **01225821241 if you have any questions or concerns in completing these exercises.**

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

