



Healing After Surgery

Walking

Walking is one of the best natural ways to manage pain and promote healing. Most people are encouraged to walk in the days after surgery. Do be sure to follow any instructions about weight bearing that your care team may have provided. Short, frequent walks can help restore your strength and physical stamina. They can help you get ready to safely return to your independent everyday activities. It's an excellent aerobic exercise. And, very importantly, walking is a great way to relieve pain after surgery.



PLAN AHEAD

If you were not physically active before surgery or you haven't been active after your surgery, start a slow, progressive walking program. Progressive here refers to slowly increasing your walk time.

When you return home after surgery, break up daily walks into shorter walks. Your goal is to walk 30 minutes a day. Increase your walking speed and time as you are able.

You may want to create a daily walking schedule. The table below is an example of a physical activity calendar. Consider setting a reminder on your cell phone, tablet or computer. Or use an activity tracker, such as a FitBit™ or Apple Watch™.

Example of a progressive walking schedule							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Early Morning							
Mid-Morning	5 minutes	6 minutes	7 minutes	7 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes	10 minutes
Noon				7 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes	10 minutes
Early Afternoon	5 minutes	6 minutes	7 minutes				
Late Afternoon				6 minutes	6 minutes	6 minutes	
Evening	5 minutes	5 minutes	6 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes
Total walk time	15 minutes	17 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes	27 minutes	29 minutes	30 minutes

Based on recommendations from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

As you continue to recover, consider continuing with a regular walking program.

The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week. This can be accomplished over a series of days, example: walking 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week would equate to a total of 150 minutes of aerobic exercise over the course of a week.

CAUTION

If you feel unsteady or you worry about falling, tell a member of your care team. And when you walk, consider one or both of these suggestions:

- Have someone walk with you.
- Ask your health care provider or physical therapist whether a gait device (cane or walker) would be indicated.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions after you read this, you can call a pain management support team member at: 1-833-919-1432, Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm (CST). Leave a voicemail if after hours or on the weekend, and you will receive a call back on the next business day. Patient group calls are also available at various times throughout the week. Instructions for joining these will be provided through your portal and posted on the <http://healingaftersurgery.mayo.edu/> website.