

MAIL TODAY

YOUR MOVE

LAZINESS is an aspect of being human that unites almost all of us. Confirm this by looking around at all the people around you who are in a slumped position, whether sitting, standing or walking. In fact, most of us could happily spend most of our day lolling around on our beds or sofas, sipping cups of coffee or glasses of beer and watching TV. The very idea of going for a brisk walk or a workout at the gym after an exhausting day makes people tired!

But movement is actually the best way of relieving your tiredness, as most of our exhausted feelings are caused by muscular tension. It is also the ideal way to speed up healing, post surgery or while suffering from any ailment and many doctors advise their patients likewise. "The primary idea of exercising is to work the muscles and bring them back into action. While it might be painful, it is a sure shot way to recover faster. A lack of movement on the other hand leads to more stiffness of the body," says Dr Amit Kumar, physiotherapist, Sir Gangaram hospital. The goal of exercise is to improve strength, increase endurance, maintain or improve range of motion and avoid a number of post-operative complications that could arise.

FACILITATES RECOVERY

FEELING tired and lethargic after a surgery or illness is palpable. In addition to this feeling, swelling in the body is also common post surgery. Most patients notice that swelling is usually at its daily peak in the morning, after a night of being immobile and horizontal. "Patients should start going for short walks the day after the surgery depending on their condition. It helps with lymph drainage post operation," says Dr Ashish Vashista, senior consultant, minimal access surgery, Max Healthcare.

Patients are also encouraged to start moving 24 hours after most operations, because it reduces post operative complications. A lack of movement increases the chances of developing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), wherein blood clots develop in the veins of limbs. The clot blocks the flow of blood in the vein, which could travel to other parts of the body (mostly lungs) and can cause death. Lying in bed, which most people think is the best to do, may also lead to chest infections due to fluid collection in the lungs.

ALIGNS THE MUSCLES

MOVEMENT is the key to speedy recuperation after any surgery of the mid-section be it hernia, gall bladder, intestines, stomach or appendix.

By MEGHANIEEN DUTTA LINGAM

"Patients can start moving about six - eight hours after surgery and start walking the very next day. The movement aids in the alignment of muscles and helps the fibres come back into position. This helps them recover faster," explains Dr Vashista. Movement in the initial stages might hurt, but in reality it reduces the pain threshold.

For surgeries of the mid section the trend is to conduct a laparoscopic surgery which is minimally invasive and gives an impetus to the process of healing. Gone are the days when people used to lie in bed after an open surgery. Key hole laparoscopy - in which small holes the size of about five - ten mm are made instead of cutting muscle - has made the road to recovery much faster. "The chances of problems with incision such as infection or the incision coming apart are eliminated and cosmetically too this is better," says Dr Vashista.

When obese patients undergo bariatric surgery done through laparoscopy, they need to start moving after this to make recovery quicker. Movement decreases the risk of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and also enables organ functioning to bounce back to normal sooner. "The advantage of laparoscopy is that it allows patients to bounce back to daily life quickly," adds Dr Vashista.

BACK BASICS

WHEN it comes to back surgeries, doctors in different branches of medicine have differing opinions about exercise. The majority, however, agree that patients should begin an exercise regimen sooner than the traditionally thought four - six week rest phase. "I advise a week or two of rest before the patient can begin exercise. Till then some basic exercises can be done on the bed itself. Neurosurgeons, on the other hand, usually recommend movement much sooner than a week," says Dr P K Dave, HOD, orthopedics, Rockland hospital.

Recent research from the Netherlands suggests that an exercise programme starting four - six weeks after a lower back operation could lead to more rapid pain relief and a quicker recovery from disability without increasing the risk of additional surgery. The study appears in the October 2008 issue of *The Cochrane Library*, a publication of *The Cochrane Collaboration*, an international organisation that evaluates medical research.



Contrary to popular belief that continual rest is required to recover from an ailment or after a surgery, the reality is that getting back on the move actually augments the healing process

GO SLOW ON THE NECK

Regardless of the cause for neck surgery, the patient should participate in gentle exercise after the surgery to help speed up recovery. "The key word here is gentle. Strenuous exercise is more harmful than no exercise at all. But some motion is essential to keep muscles from freezing up," says Dr Amit Kumar. One should never jump into an exercise regimen without consultation and should never exercise until it hurts. It's best to start small by walking around several times a day. "Then increase the exercise as your body can bear it up to the kind of gentle, flexing exercise that will keep your nerves functioning properly and muscles in good health," says Kumar.

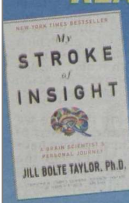
Remember that the body is

healing, and while some movement is essential for it to heal properly, too much of it may keep it from healing at all. If you are one of those people who balks at the thought of exercise, take heart! Most of your after-surgery movement will be nothing more than gentle. So use those muscles so they don't eventually turn unusable.

A WOMAN'S DOMAIN

PREGNANCY is a time a woman is advised to be very careful. So the idea of moving around too much actually frightens women, who are constantly being told to "take it easy" by their mothers-in-law! Unless there are any complications, however, women are advised exercises from the beginning of pregnancy. This includes body and breathing exercises.

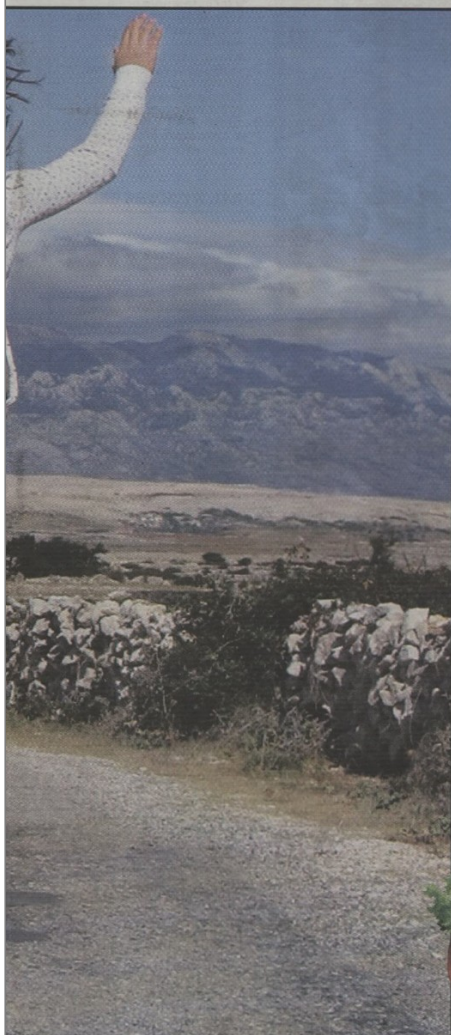
READ THIS



This bestselling book by Harvard trained neuroscientist Dr Jill Bolte Taylor is an account of how she suffered a massive stroke. It's impact on her life and her process of recovery. Central to her plan for recovery was a diligent exercise regimen that included lifting weights and walking with them tied to her feet to restore balance in her body. Solving puzzles and doing mathematical calculations also helped her to recover her brain functions.

MAIL TODAY

TO RECOVERY



Weight lifting reduces swelling

Weight lifting can do wonders to avert lymphatic issues that arise in women after they have undergone breast surgery, according to a research study. The traditional belief was that a woman should avoid lifting heavy weights to prevent lymph oedema, a painful ugly swelling of an arm or leg that occurs near the site where lymph nodes have been removed or damaged by radiation. But a recent study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported that weight lifting actually prevents lymphoedema. Women who were put on a weight lifting regimen noticed that swelling in their arms and legs reduced and that their symptoms improved. Other exercises that such patients are advised include simple arm exercises carried out while breathing deeply but normally; lifting the arm on the side that has been operated upon; simulating the act of eating and hair brushing; squeezing and releasing a ball while the arm is elevated and bending and straightening the elbow. These help reduce swelling in the arm, improve circulation within the arm and tone up the muscles too.



EXOTIC VEGETABLE SKEWER (Amount per serving)



Calories: 134
Fat: 10g
Protein: 4g
Carbohydrates: 8g
Cholesterol: 1mg
Sodium: 180mg

COFFEE CHICKEN ESCALOPE (Amount per serving)



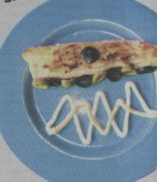
Calories: 260
Fat: 18g
Protein: 19g
Carbohydrates: 4g
Cholesterol: 72 mg
Sodium: 177mg

HEALTHY BITES

These delicious and healthy mini-meals can be ordered any time and provide a great substitute for pizza or french fries. So make a choice and pick up the phone. We promise you divine satisfaction! Head to Grilled Dine-A-Bite: R-278, Unit 4, Pamposh Enclave, GK-1 or call 9311323252

CHICKEN STUFFED WITH OLIVES (Amount per serving)

Calories: 236
Fat: 10g
Protein: 30g
Carbohydrates: 5g
Cholesterol: 228 mg
Sodium: 397 mg



MUSHROOMS STUFFED WITH CORN AND CHEESE (Amount per serving)



Calories: 93
Fat: 6g
Protein: 5g
Carbohydrates: 7g
Cholesterol: 20mg
Sodium: 192mg

EMPEROR'S FAVOURITE SALAD (Amount per serving)



Calories: 53
Fat: 4g
Protein: 1g
Carbohydrates: 4g
Cholesterol: 14 mg
Sodium: 68 mg

"Leading a life as normal as possible, being active and exercising actually eases the process of labour for women," says prenatal fitness expert, Shruti Saxena. It increases oxygen intake and heart capacity and enhances the chances of natural delivery, she adds. Even after the delivery, especially in the case of Caesareans (C sections), women are advised to get back to action as soon as possible. They are directed to do deep breathing exercises from the next day, which improves circulation in the body and reaches more oxygen to the surgery site. Abdominal exercises are advised after the stitches are removed and post-natal exercises after six weeks. "These promote the working out of muscles and improve digestion too," says Dr Asha Sharma, HOD, obstetrics

and gynaecology. In the case of a forceps delivery, since the vaginal muscles become sensitive and tender, patients are not advised any movement except some slow walking around in the room for about two days. Following that she can move around a larger space in the house and can move out of the house after two weeks. Women who have had hysterectomies tend to be very wary of any kind of movement. But after the stitches are removed patients are advised to start regular walking. Exercise after hysterectomy is crucial as it boosts the immune system and accelerates recovery. Mild abdominal exercises and slow walking can begin after two days. Light daily exercise after surgery will make muscles burn calories, provide oxygen to the

brain and nervous system and reduce body fat. "More intense workouts like brisk walking, running on the treadmill, swimming, tennis and stretching can be done after three to six months, depending on one's condition. These are the most beneficial exercises post hysterectomy to alleviate the pain one feels with fibroids and endometriosis," says Dr Sharma. Since exercise stimulates the release of pain-relieving endorphins and also helps fight mild depression, it will reduce mood swings and help one feel good, younger and happier! After a hysterectomy start an exercise program slowly after two days and increase your physical activity as you build up your stamina. Start with 10 minutes in the beginning and then move on to a schedule of 30 min-

utes of exercise at least five days a week. Patients are advised not to lift any weight until 6 weeks post surgery. **THOSE ACHES & PAINS** PEOPLE with arthritis and rheumatism are also particularly wary of movement. "Getting out of bed and taking a walk is perhaps the best way to tackle those stubborn joint pains such patients face. It is the best option for pain control," says Dr Suneel Kumar, HOD, Orthopedics, B L K Memorial hospital. Exercise reduces muscle tension all over the body, increases blood circulation and increases the amount of oxygen to the joints which help reduce pain. "Once the pain is tackled, one can revert to a normal life," says Dr Suneel. This apart, not being

involved in any kind of movement can lead to 'disuse atrophy of muscles' — where they shrink due to a lack of usage. Sports injuries like the tennis elbow, injuries of the shoulder, knee and calf muscles are very common. "First few days of rest is mandatory to allow the tissues to heal. This is followed by physiotherapy and exercise to hurry up the healing process," says Dr Amit Kumar. *meghanien.tingam @mailtoday.in*

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