

## Help with this leaflet:



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# Respiratory Medicine

## Patient Information

# Mobility and activity whilst in hospital

## Document history

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## Who is the leaflet for? What is its aim?

This leaflet is aimed at people admitted to hospital who are normally mobile at home. Its aim is to give advice which may prevent general muscle wasting and reduce your mobility.

## Activity on the ward

Although you may have been admitted to hospital feeling unwell it is important that you try to stay as strong and as mobile as possible. Staying in bed can feel safe but it can contribute to many problems, such as:

- pressure sores
- stiff joints
- muscle weakness
- fatigue
- low mood/depression

This is why people are very rarely prescribed 'bed rest'. You will be encouraged to sit in your chair for periods throughout the day, and walk to/from the bathroom as long as it is safe to do so. If you do not know whether it is safe for you to try these things then speak to the nurse or doctor looking after you.

In order to go home when your course of treatment has finished you will need to be able to manage all of the activities you were doing prior to admission. These might include:

- washing and dressing yourself
- walking with/without a walking aid
- going up and down a flight of stairs

These can be hard if you have not done anything for a few days. This is why it is best that you try to stay as independent as possible on the ward.

If you have been unable to do these things for yourself recently due to your illness it is best to build them up gradually. You may need extra equipment to help with tasks such as washing and dressing or walking. These can be provided by the occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

## Tips for keeping active

- Sit in your chair during the day rather than lying in bed.
- Try to do some simple exercises whilst in the bed or chair (see General exercises leaflet).
- Walk to and from the toilet rather than using a bedpan or commode.
- If able, take a walk around the ward two to three times a day.

## Benefits

By keeping active on the ward you may speed up your recovery and reduce the length of time you need to spend in hospital.

## Risks

- If you find that you become extremely short of breath whilst attempting a task call for help.
- If you are on oxygen do not take it off unless you have been told that it is safe to do so.
- If you usually use a walking aid make sure that you have one available. The physiotherapist can lend equipment whilst you are on the ward. Alternatively ask a family member to bring your normal aid in.
- If you have had trips, falls or losses of balance recently then speak to the nurse looking after you before you try to walk on your own.

## Further information

For further information speak to the nurse, doctor, occupational therapist or physiotherapist looking after you.