



Patient & Family Guide  
2022

# Liver Transplant Physiotherapy Program

Aussi disponible en français : FF85-1839



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Liver Transplant Physiotherapy Program

- It is very important to stay active while you wait for your liver transplant.
- People who are in better physical condition before their surgery are more likely to get better faster and have fewer complications.
- When you are being considered for a transplant, the team will assess your level of **frailty**. Becoming frail may include:
  - › Loss of muscle strength
  - › Slow walking speed
  - › Poor balance
- Frailty can be improved by exercising regularly and eating well.

**People in good physical condition are almost 2 times as likely to survive 1 year after their liver transplant than people in poor physical condition.**

- Exercise can:
  - › help you get ready for a transplant.
  - › improve your strength.
  - › improve your endurance (ability to exercise longer).
  - › help to control blood pressure.
  - › help to reach a healthy body weight.
  - › improve your mental health.
  - › improve your quality of life by making you more able to do activities that you want and need to do.

Your exercise program should include strengthening (like lifting light weights or soup cans) and cardiovascular (cardio) exercise (like walking).

- Eating well can:
  - › help your body build muscle.
  - › improve your energy.

Your dietitian will suggest ways you can eat better.

## **Strengthening exercises**

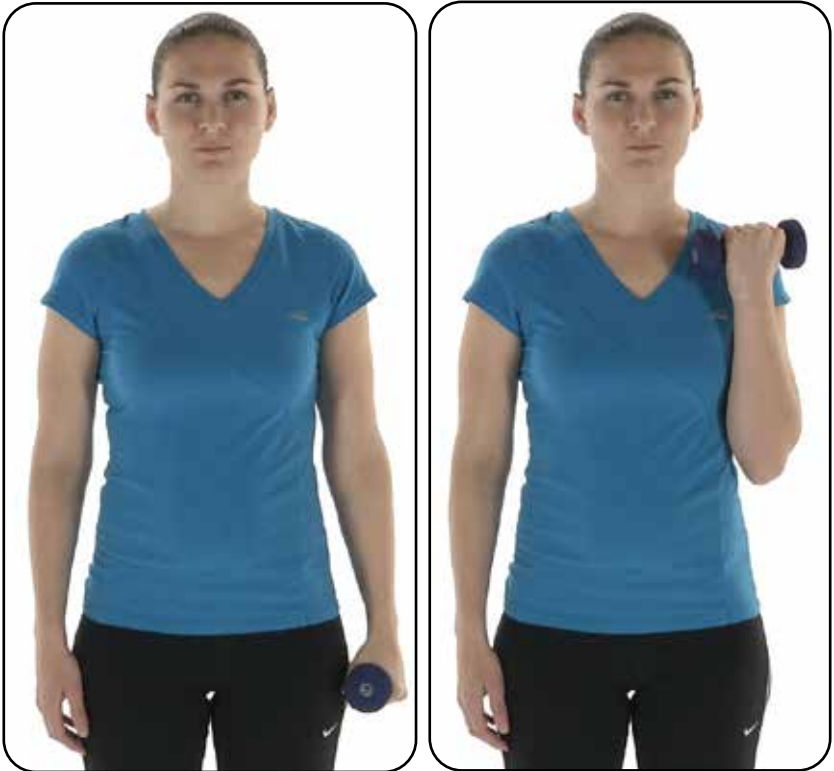
- Muscle loss is very common in people with liver disease. As you lose muscle mass, daily tasks can get harder.
- **Do these exercises at least 3 days a week.**
- When you can do an exercise easily 12 times, add another set of 12 (up to 3 sets).
- When it gets easy to lift a weight, add more weight and go back to doing the exercise 12 times.

## **Arm exercises**

You can do these exercises while sitting or standing. You can do one arm at a time, or both arms at the same time.

## Biceps curls

- Keep your elbow tucked into your side.
- Bend your arm up until your hand touches your shoulder, then slowly lower it.
- Repeat 12 times (you can do one arm at a time, or both arms at the same time).



## Shoulder press

- Push the weight up over your head, then slowly lower it.
- Repeat 12 times (you can do one arm at a time, or both arms at the same time).



## Shoulder abduction

- Lift your arm out to the side to shoulder height, then slowly lower it.
- Repeat 12 times (you can do one arm at a time, or both arms at the same time).



## Leg exercises

### Knee extension

- Slowly straighten your leg while keeping your other foot on the floor.
- Hold for 3 seconds, then slowly lower it.
- Repeat 12 times for each leg.





## Hip flexion

- Slowly raise your knee a few inches above your other knee while keeping your other foot flat on the floor.
- Hold for 3 seconds, then slowly lower it.
- Repeat 12 times for each leg.



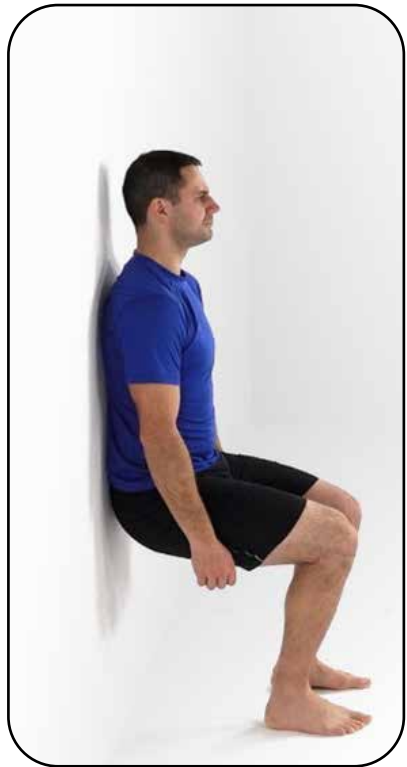
## Sit to stand

- Practice standing up and slowly sitting down. Use your arms, if needed.
- Repeat 10 times.
- As this gets easier, try progressing to wall squats (see page 10).



## Wall squats

- Stand with your back against a wall with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Slide your back down the wall until your knees are at 90 degrees.
- Then slide back up to the starting position.
- Repeat 12 times.



## Glute bridge

- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Squeeze your glutes to lift your hips off the ground until your legs and back form a straight line.
- Hold for 3 seconds. Then slowly lower yourself to the starting position.
- Repeat 12 times.



## Cardio exercises

- Cardio exercises are important to make your heart, lungs, and muscles stronger. They include activities like walking and stationary biking.
- You should do cardio exercise **at least 5 days a week** for 30 minutes at a time, if possible. If 30 minutes is easy, add 5 minutes each time.
- If you are only able to exercise for a short time (less than 30 minutes), try to do 2 or 3 shorter sessions a day that add up to 30 minutes.
- **You should not get short of breath while exercising.** If you cannot comfortably talk while walking, slow down or stop to rest.
- **Remember to warm up and cool down.** For example, if you walk for 30 minutes, the first 5 minutes and the last 5 minutes should be at a slower pace. This lets your body get ready to exercise and recover from exercise.
- **Moving throughout the day is also very important.** Exercise alone will not improve your strength if you are resting for most of the day. It is important to take part in daily activities as you are able (like self-care, housework, errands). Examples of self-care include bathing, grooming, dressing, and going to the bathroom.

- **Save your energy.** It is important to balance rest and activity to avoid feeling too tired after you exercise. Plan your day so that you are able to do the most important tasks first.
- If you find it is getting hard to walk, you may want to think about getting a walking aid (like a walker or cane). Your physiotherapist can help you with this.
- Be sure to find an activity that you enjoy — you will be more likely to stick to it!

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

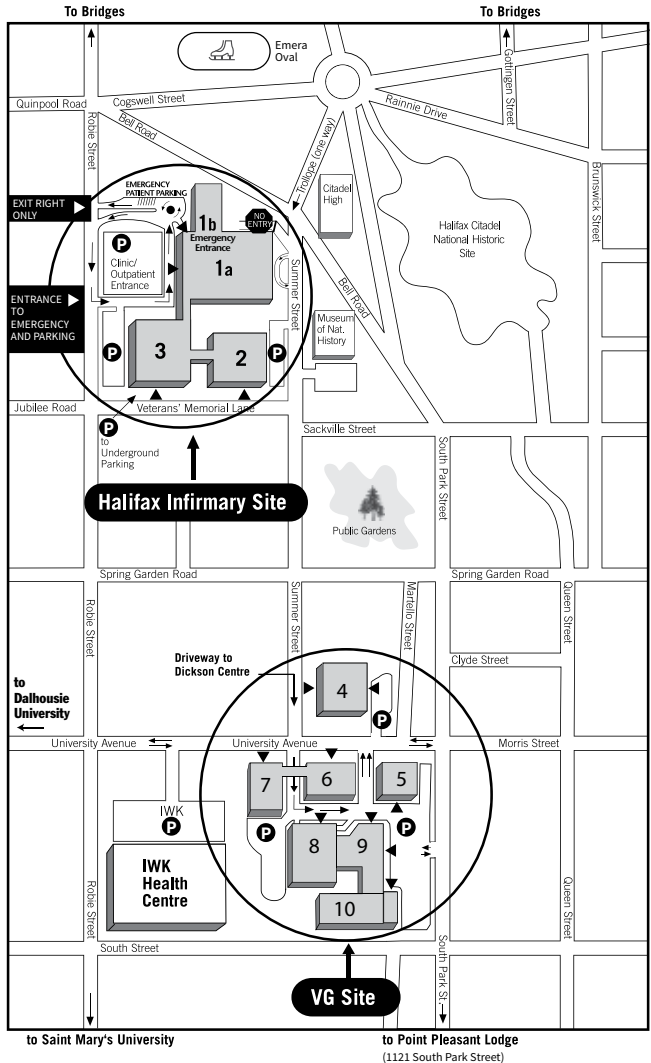
# QEII Health Sciences Centre

is made up of 10 buildings located on two sites

- | Halifax Infirmary Site   |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1a. Halifax Infirmary</li> <li>1b. Emergency Dept.</li> <li>2. Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building</li> <li>3. Camp Hill Veterans' Memorial Building</li> </ol>   |
| VG Site  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre</li> <li>5. Bethune Building</li> <li>6. Mackenzie Building Laboratories</li> <li>7. Centre for Clinical Research</li> <li>8. Dickson Building</li> <li>9. Victoria Building</li> <li>10. Centennial Building</li> </ol> |

- P** Patient Parking
- ▶** Entrance Doors

*Please do not wear scented products when you come to the QEII.*



## Contact:

If you have any questions or concerns about your exercise program, please call the Physiotherapy Department:

- › Dickson building, 4th floor (4E)
- › Phone: 902-473-2151

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<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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