

Liver Transplant Physiotherapy Program

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

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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

Prepared by: Physiotherapy
Illustration by: Physiotec, 2022
<https://physiotec.ca/ca/en/>

Designed and Managed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services

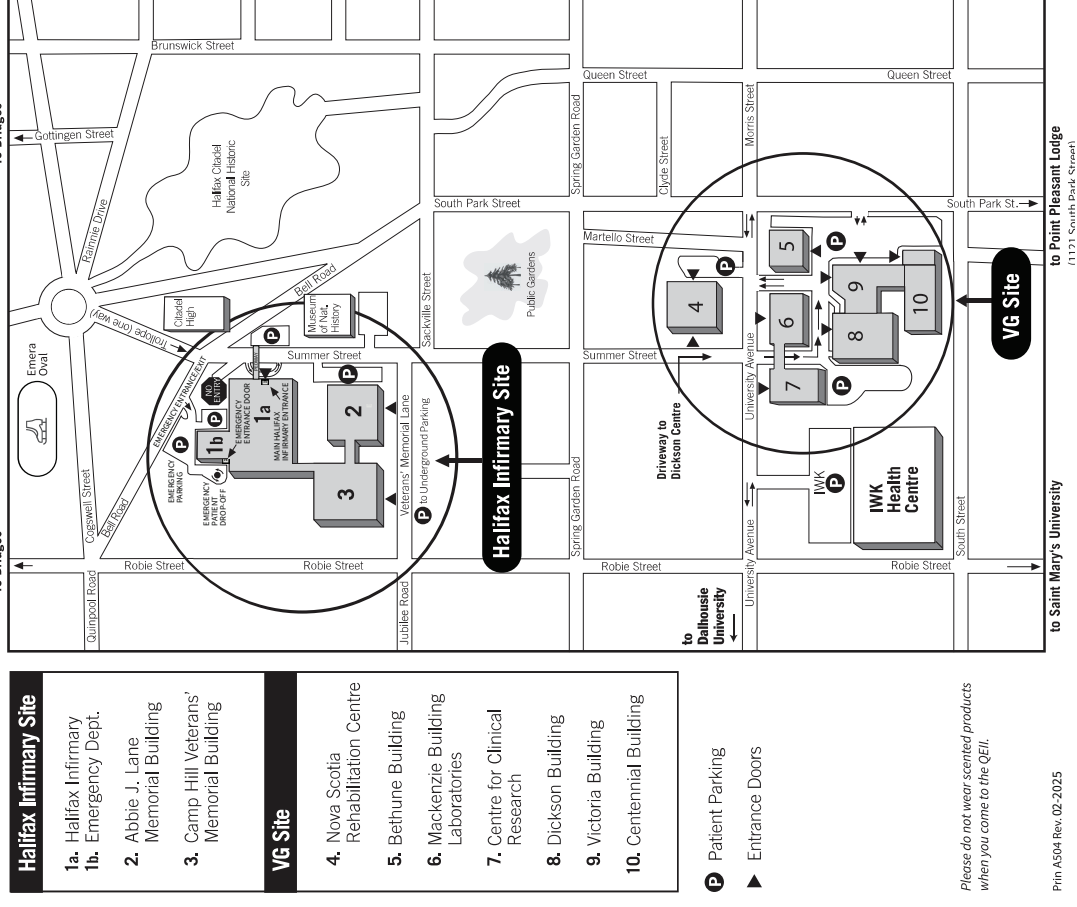
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Liver Transplant Physiotherapy Program

- 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.
- Your physiotherapist will check your level of frailty. This is to make sure you will be healthy during and after your transplant.
- **Frailty** is an age-related condition that can make it harder for you to get better from illness. Getting frail may mean that you have:
 - › Less muscle strength
 - › Slow walking speed
 - › Poor balance
 - › More admissions to the hospital
- Your physiotherapist will support you while you wait for your transplant. They may also refer you to community programs or services to help you achieve your goals.
- It is important to exercise while you wait for your transplant. **It is safe for you to exercise if you have liver disease.**

QEII Health Sciences Centre

is made up of 10 buildings located on two sites



- **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 can (like self-care, housework, errands). Self-care includes bathing, grooming, dressing, and going to the bathroom.
- **Save your energy.** It is important to balance rest and activity to keep from feeling too tired after exercising. Plan your day so that you are able to do your most important tasks first.
- If you find it is getting hard to walk, you may want to think about using a walking aid (like a walker or a cane). Please talk with your physiotherapist about 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.

- Exercise can:
 - › help you get ready for a transplant.
 - › improve your strength.
 - › improve your endurance (ability to exercise longer).
 - › help control your blood pressure.
 - › help you reach a healthy body weight.
 - › improve your mental health.
 - › help you be more able to do activities that you want and need to do.
- Your exercise program should include strengthening exercises (like lifting light weights or soup cans) and cardiovascular (cardio) exercise (like walking).

Exercise safety precautions

- **Do not** hold your breath while you exercise. This will lower your risk of bleeding from varices (veins that are bigger than normal).
- If you have a hernia, keep your core strong while you exercise. Ask your physiotherapist for ways to improve your core strength.

Strengthening exercises

- Muscle loss is very common in people with liver disease. As you lose muscle, daily tasks can get harder.
- **Do these exercises at least 3 days a week.**
- Do each exercise 12 times in a row. This is called a **set**. When it gets too easy to do an exercise 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 1 set until it is easier to lift the new amount of weight. Then add more sets.

Cardio exercises

- Cardio exercises are important to make your heart, lungs, and muscles stronger. They include activities like walking and stationary biking.

How often should I do cardio exercise?

- You should try to do cardio exercise **at least 5 days a week**, once a day, for 30 minutes at a time.
 - › 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 have trouble breathing while exercising.** If you cannot comfortably talk while walking, slow down or stop to rest.

Remember:

- **Warm up and cool down when you exercise.** This means to start and end your exercise with slower, more gentle activity. This lets your body get ready to exercise and recover from exercise. For example:
 - › If you walk for 30 minutes, the first 5 minutes and the last 5 minutes should be at a slower pace.

Glute bridge

- Lie on the floor on your back with your knees bent.
- Gently flatten your back against the floor. Imagine you are trying to pull your 2 pelvic bones together. Try to hold this position while you do the exercise. This will keep your core strong.
- Then, squeeze your glutes (bum) 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.



Arm exercises

You can do these exercises while sitting or standing. You can do 1 arm at a time, or both arms at the same time.

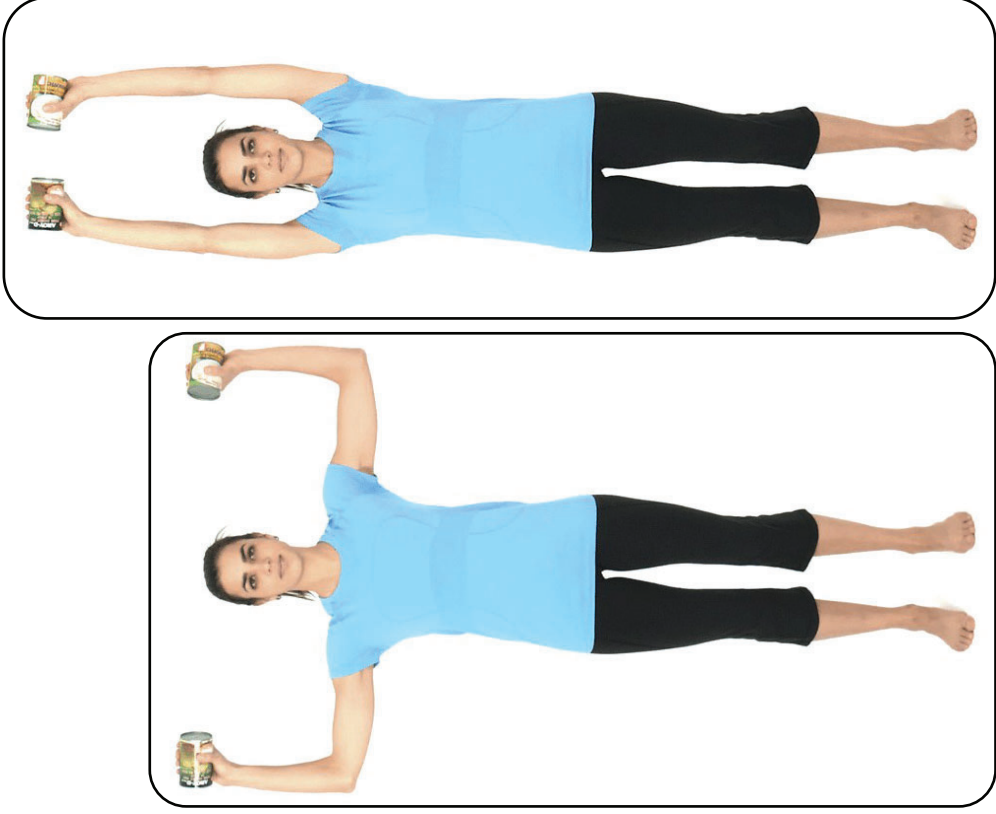
Biceps curls

- 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 1 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 1 arm at a time, or both arms at the same time.



Sit to stand

- Sit on a chair with both of your feet on the floor.
- Stand up. Then, slowly sit down. Use your arms, if needed.
- Repeat 12 times.



Hip flexion

- Sit on a chair with both of your feet on the floor.
- 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.



Shoulder abduction

- Lift your arm out to the side to shoulder height, then slowly lower it.
- Repeat 12 times. You can do 1 arm at a time, or both arms at the same time.



Triceps extension

- Extend your elbow and raise your arm behind you.
- Repeat 12 times. You can do 1 arm at a time, or both arms at the same time.



Leg exercises

Knee extension

- Sit on a chair with both of your feet on the floor.
- Slowly straighten your leg while keeping your other foot on the floor.
- Hold for 3 seconds, then slowly lower your leg.
- Repeat 12 times for each leg.

