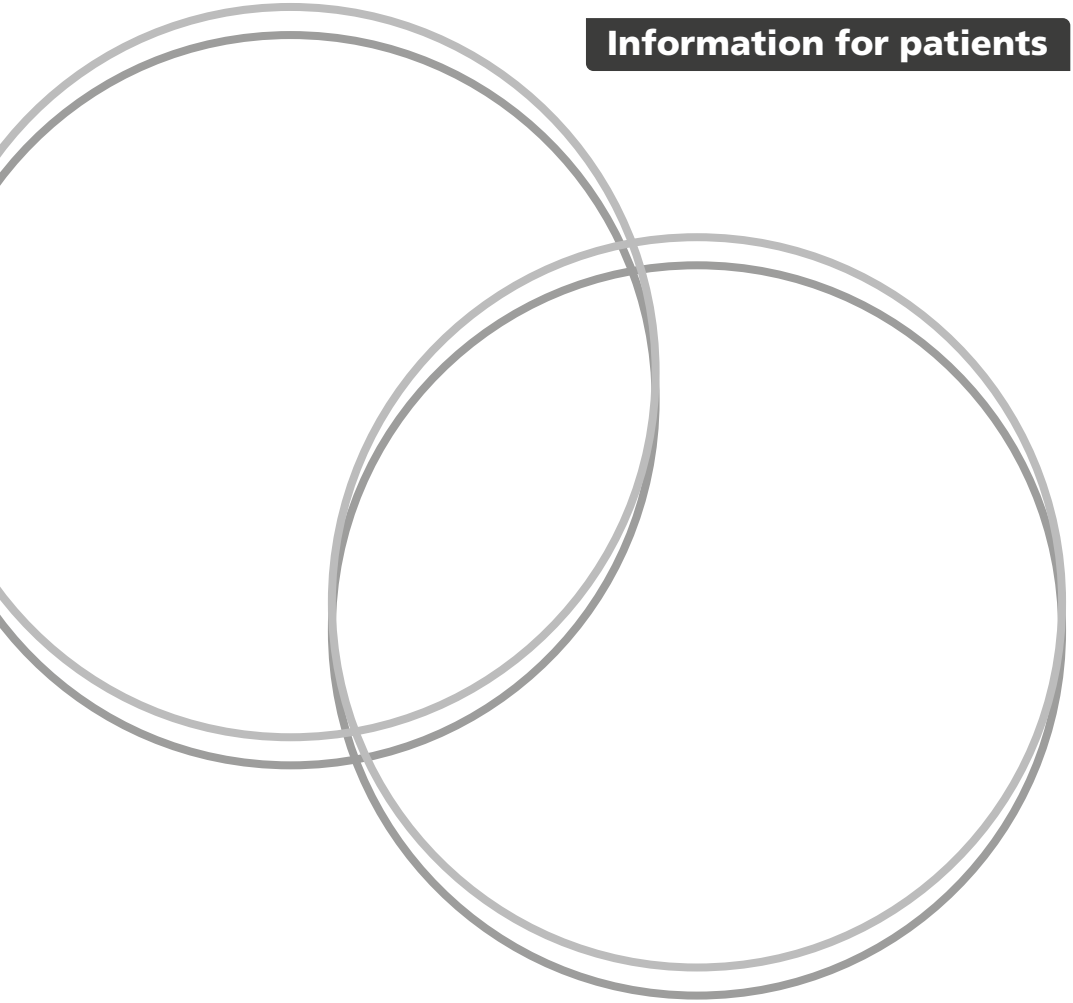
Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Exercise leaflet for people on steroid therapy

Information for patients



Taking steroids can affect your muscle strength.

Keeping active and doing strength exercises can help to keep your arms and legs strong and prevent problems with day-to-day activities while taking steroids, such as walking and climbing stairs.

The exercises in this leaflet help to target the muscles that are usually affected by taking steroids.

Remember:

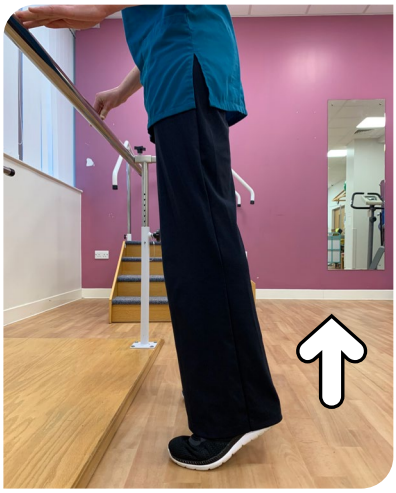
- You do not need to do all the exercises in this leaflet in one go.
- There may be some exercises that you are unable to do based on your current condition and fitness. It is ok to pick and choose the exercises that suit you best.
- You should not experience pain whilst doing these exercises. Please stop the exercises and talk to your team if this happens.
- We would advise to try and do some exercise daily but do not worry if you are unable to achieve this.
- Some people find it helpful to incorporate the exercises into daily everyday tasks to make it easier to do them, for example, when cleaning their teeth or waiting for the kettle to boil.
- Doing small amounts of exercise on a regular basis can be beneficial if you have fatigue.

Exercises

We recommend doing each of these exercises **20 times (reps) once a day**.

It is ok if you need to start with less reps and build up to doing more. Having a rest in between reps or dividing them up throughout the day is also ok.

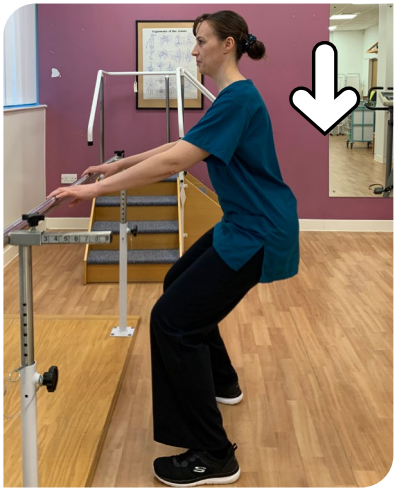
1. Heel raise



In standing, hold on to something sturdy. Raise up on to your toes and lower back down again.

To make this exercise more difficult you can hold light weights while doing the exercise.

2. Mini squats



In standing, legs hip width apart, toes facing forward. Hold on to something sturdy and gently bend your knees and push your bottom back as if you are going to sit down. Keep your back straight throughout the exercise. Hold for 3 seconds then return to standing upright.

To make this exercise more difficult you can hold light weights while doing the exercise.

3. Standing up and sitting down again



Start in a seated position. Cross your arms and stand fully upright. Then slowly sit back down again keeping your arms crossed. If you are unable to stand up from a chair with your arms crossed, we would recommend sitting in a chair with arms and pushing up from the arms of the chair instead.

To make this exercise more difficult you can hold light weights while doing the exercise.

4. Bridge



Lying down on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on bed or floor. Squeeze your bottom muscles and slowly lift your bottom off the bed or floor. Hold for 3 seconds. Slowly lower back down again.

5. Straight leg raise



Sitting on floor or bed with your legs straight out in front of you. Pull your toes up towards you, keep your knee straight and lift your leg. Hold for 3 seconds and lower back down again.

6. Wall press up



Stand in front of a wall and place your hands on the wall with your fingertips pointing upwards. Keep your back straight and bend your elbows to move your body towards the wall and then straighten your elbows back to the start position.

Try to keep your chin tucked in throughout the exercise.

When not to exercise:

This is not an exhaustive list so please be guided by your body and do not start to exercise if you are feeling unwell.

If you have chest, neck, arm or jaw pain or worsening breathlessness – call 999 straight away

Should you experience any of the following, stop exercising and seek advice from your GP or your transplant team: **07500 765461** (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm – excluding bank holidays).

For out of hours please call our patient hotline number on **01865 572192**.

- Bad headache
- A fever
- Problems with your blood pressure
- New diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting in past 48hrs
- Developed any new or recent pain which has not resolved
- Have experienced recent or frequent dizziness or light
- Blood counts lower than normal for you or awaiting imminent transfusion
- Uncontrolled blood sugars
- Loss of coordination

If your blood counts are low or if you receive regular transfusions, please speak to your transplant team for advice before you start exercising (07500 765461).

If you have had any previous or recent problems with your heart, please ensure you warm up your muscles prior to starting these exercises. This can be achieved by gently marching your legs and arms on the spot for a few minutes in sitting or standing.

Contact details

This leaflet has been created for patients who have had a Stem Cell Transplant.

If you have any questions about anything covered in this leaflet, exercise queries or concerns about exercising or for any questions about your treatment, please text or call the Bone Marrow Transplant team on **07500 765461**.

If you have received CAR-T cell therapy please text or call **07920 183239**.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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