

Exercise After Burn Injury

Melissa is having lunch with her friend, Tonya, whom she met at her burn support group.

Since my burn injury, I'm often out of breath and my joints are stiff.



Fatigue after burn injury is common.



Tonya tells Melissa that being active and exercising can help improve breathing, flexibility, and range of motions.

...Have you tried exercising?



She tells Melissa about types of important exercises and activities...

Aerobic activities can increase your endurance and can make your heart, lungs, and muscles more fit.

...Even going for a walk counts!



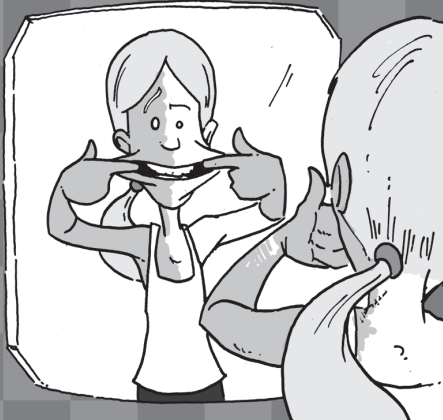
Strengthening activities can make your muscles stronger. Muscle strengthening activities include lifting weights, using elastic bands, or moving against your own body weight.

Recreational activities such as playing sports, gardening, and dancing can help you build endurance and strength.



Stretching is also important. Stretching can increase flexibility and relieve tightness. There are many different exercises to stretch different parts of the body. Examples of stretching exercises include...

Face



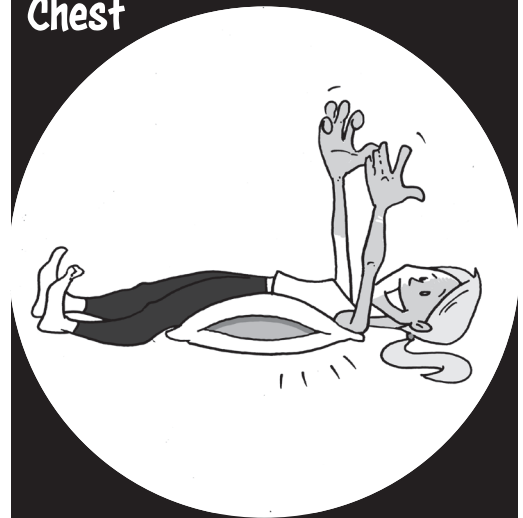
Look into a mirror and make facial expressions like smiling. Using your fingers to widen your mouth and stretch the skin around the eyes can help, too.

Neck



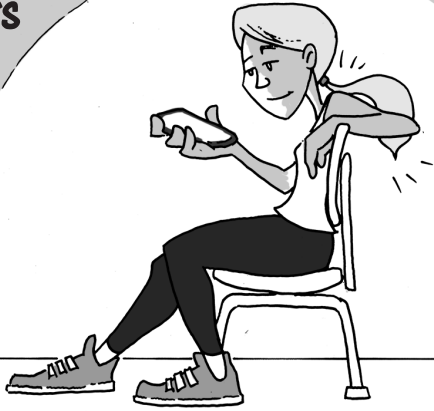
Stretch in the opposite direction of tightness.

Chest



Lie on a cushion placed in the middle of your back and stretch both arms out to the side or over your head.

Shoulders

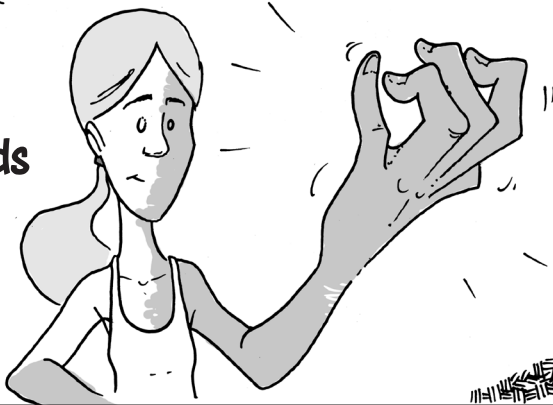


Prop your arm on the back of the couch or chair when sitting.

Elbows



Hands



Stretch each finger at the knuckle to help get the hand into a fist. Use body weight against a fixed object or the assistance of the other hand.

Knees



Sit with your legs propped up. Increase the amount of stretch by pressing on your thighs or knees with your hands.

Ankles

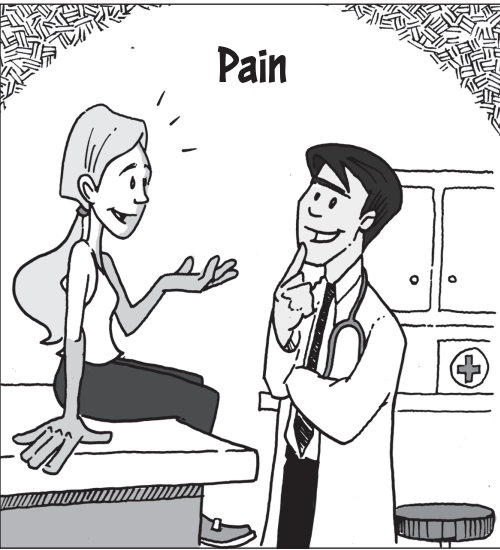


Standing helps you stretch your ankles to get your feet flatter on the ground.

Toes



Toes tend to curl up. First, massage the scar. Then use your hand to stretch the toes.



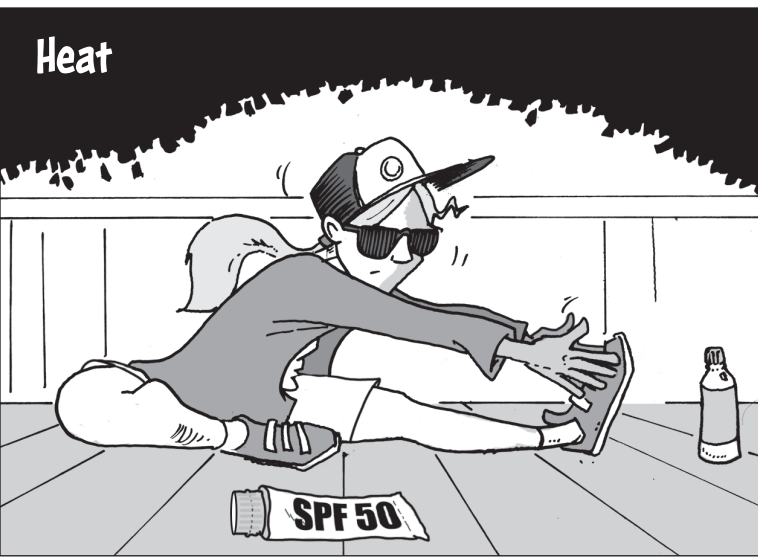
To manage pain during exercise, talk with your doctor about medications and strategies that best work for you.



Massage moisturizer into the skin before stretching. Moisturizer can prevent cracking of dry skin.



Drink water or fluids so you do not get dehydrated during exercise.



Be sure to protect yourself from the sun and overheating when exercising and avoid too much sun exposure. If you feel too hot, stop your activity and go indoors.



Talk with your doctor or therapist about what you can do to exercise safely if you have open wounds or exposed tendons.



Source: The content of this infocomic has been adapted from the factsheet “Exercise After Burn Injury,” which was originally developed by Karen Kowalske, M.D., Radha Holavanahalli, Ph.D., Gretchen Carrougher, MN, RN, Oscar Suman, Ph.D., and Cindy Dolezal, P.T., MLS in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center and updated by Oscar Suman, Ph.D. and Gretchen Carrougher, MN, RN in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center. It was illustrated by Grant Corley.

Our health information content is based on research evidence whenever available and represents the consensus of expert opinion of the Burn Model System directors.

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace the advice of a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider about specific medical concerns or treatment. The contents of this infocomic were developed under grants from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant numbers 90DP0082 and 90DPKT0009). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this infocomic do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Recommended Citation: Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). (2022). Exercise after burn injury [Infocomic] (G. Corley, Illus.).

Copyright © 2022 Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). May be reproduced and distributed freely with appropriate attribution. Prior permission must be obtained for inclusion in fee-based materials.



Model Systems
Knowledge Translation
Center