

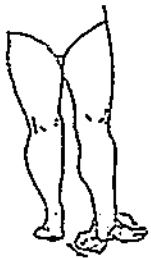


Bed Rest Exercises During Pregnancy

In order to prevent circulatory complications and decrease the risk of blood clots due to immobility, you need to perform bed rest exercises every hour while awake. The exercises may be performed in side lying or on your back with a small pillow under the right hip (see positioning on back of page):

*Keep breathing during your exercises – do not hold your breath!

*Make sure you clear any exercise program with your physician before beginning!

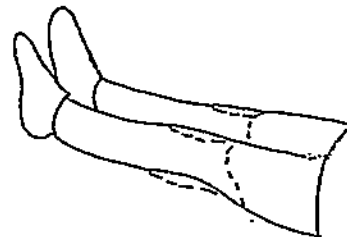


Ankle Circles – Circle ankles 10x clockwise, then 10x counter-clockwise

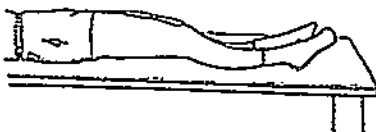


Ankle Pumping – Point your toes downward then upward quickly 10x.

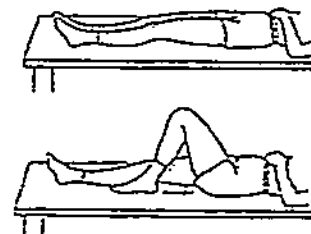
Deep Breathing and Coughing – Breathing exercises are important because bed rest, decreased mobility and the increasing size of the baby prevent full expansion of the lungs. Perform the following every hour: Breathe in deeply through the nose to fill up the lungs completely. Breathe out through the mouth. Repeat 3 times then breathe in through the nose deeply and cough to clear any secretions.



Quadriceps Sets – Tighten the quadriceps muscle on the front of the thigh by pressing the back of the knee flat, tightening the kneecap. You should feel the heel lift slightly. Hold 5 seconds. Release. Do 10 repetitions.



Gluteal Sets – Squeeze buttocks together and hold for 3 seconds. Relax. Repeat 10x



Hip/Knee Flexion – Slowly slide your heel towards your buttock. Hold 3 seconds then slowly slide your leg to the starting position. Perform 10 repetitions on each leg.

Bed Rest Positioning During Pregnancy



After 6 months of pregnancy it is preferable and often more comfortable to position yourself on your side during bed rest, rather than on your back. *You should lie on your back only for ultrasound, medical exams etc., otherwise try to lie on your side.* The following are suggestions of positions of comfort. Try to change positions at least *every hour*.

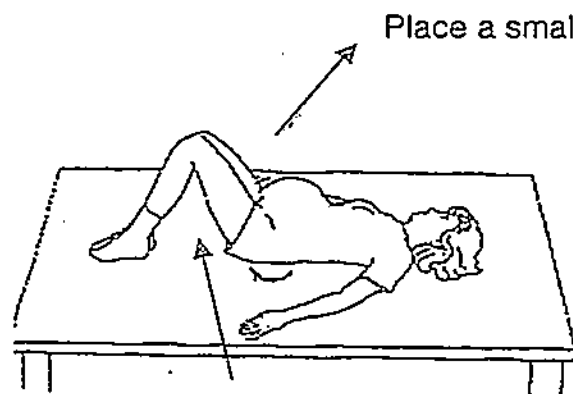
ng on your side



When lying on your side, put a pillow between your legs, under your tummy, under your head, and under your top arm for comfort.

ng on your back

As blood vessels that return blood to the heart travel up the right side of the trunk. After 6 months of pregnancy the growing baby can compress these vessels, therefore a small pillow should be placed underneath the right hip when lying on the back in order to shift the baby's weight slightly towards the left.



Place a small pillow under your right hip

When lying on your back, bend both knees up and place a pillow underneath them to take strain off your lower back. Performing 'posterior pelvic tilt' by flattening the low back onto the bed is also helpful in reducing lower back strain.

Place a pillow under your knees and flatten your low back onto the bed.

If you have any questions, contact your nurse or the Victoria General Hospital physiotherapy department at 727-4173

Revised November 2003

Reduced Activity? What You Can Do



Some helpful tips...

- Use a small pillow or towel to support your lower back when sitting up in bed or in a chair.
- Moving in bed will help you have fewer aches and less stiffness.
- Get in and out of bed from side-lying. This causes less strain on your back and belly.
- Stand and walk tall.
- Use a small pillow or towel to support your lower back when sitting up in bed or in a chair.
- Use the foot and head controls on your bed for added comfort

Reduced Activity During Pregnancy

These exercises are safe to do and have been prescribed for you while you are on reduced activity.

Why?

- Promote good blood circulation
- Reduce risk of blood clots
- Maintain mobility, strength and good posture
- Maintain good breathing patterns, reduce stress and anxiety

When and How?

- Do them 4-5 times a day (after meals and snacks)
- Lie on your back or side with the head of your bed flat or raised to a comfortable level
- Do some exercises while sitting in a chair or on the edge of your bed (check with your nurse or doctor).

Breathing Exercises

Slowly breathe in and feel your ribs expand at your sides and back. Pause. Slowly breathe out fully. Repeat 2-3 times.

Walk - Check with your doctor about how much walking you can do.

Leg Exercises

Repeat these exercises 10 times with each leg:

- **Ankle Pumps:**
Bend and stretch your feet at the ankles (feel a stretch behind your calf).



Caution:

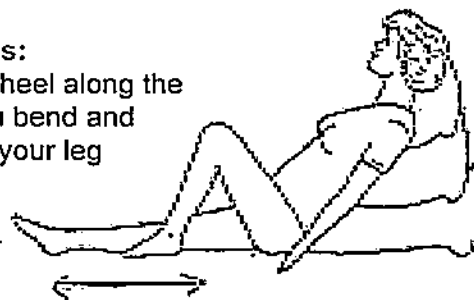
Do not point toes fully (to avoid leg cramps)



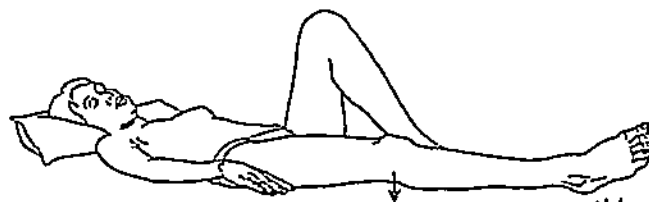
- **Foot Circles:**
Circle your feet at the ankles. Repeat in the other direction.

Heel Slides:

Slide your heel along the bed as you bend and straighten your leg



- **Quad sets:**
With your leg straight, press the back of your knee into the bed to tighten your thigh muscle. Hold for a count of 5. Relax.



cont'd...

Arm Exercises

Repeat each exercise 10 times, slowly.

- ▶ Stretch your arms out to the side. Touch your fingers to your shoulders.



- ▶ Finger tips on shoulders. Circle backward with your elbows.



- ▶ Finger tips on shoulders. Squeeze your shoulder blades together.

Neck Exercises

Repeat each exercise 3-5 times.

- ▶ Turn your head slowly to one side, pause. Repeat turning to the other side.



- ▶ Slowly drop your ear to one shoulder. Repeat on the other side.



- ▶ Tuck your chin in. Hold for 5 counts. Relax.

Ribcage Stretches

Hold each stretch for 10-20 seconds, repeat 3 times.

- ▶ **Upper Body Stretch:**
Grasp hands together then stretch arms above your head.



- ▶ **Side Stretch:**
Hold your elbow with your opposite hand and lift elbow toward ceiling. Bend to side.



Hip Exercises:

If comfortable, lie on your back with the head of the bed up slightly.

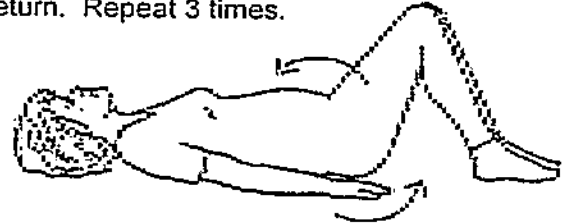
Feet together with knees bent. Move knees apart slowly. Hold for a few seconds. Return to the middle. Repeat 3 times.



Stop the exercises if you feel dizzy, faint, pain, contractions or bleeding.

1. Pelvic Tilt

Tighten your tummy muscles (pull belly button to back bone) and tuck your seat under to flatten your lower back on the bed. Relax and feel the curve return. Repeat 3 times.



2. Pelvic Floor Exercises (Kegels)

Speed'ems: Pull your pelvic floor muscles up and in quickly and strongly as if to stop urine or gas from leaking. Hold for 2 counts and then relax for 2 counts. Do 5 in a row. When this is easy, do more (up to 20 in a row). This exercise is important to help stop leakage when you cough, sneeze, lift or laugh.

Hold'ems: Pull your pelvic floor muscles up and in quickly and strongly as you did with Speed'ems but hold for 10 seconds. Remember to continue to breathe. Relax for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

Check with your doctor before doing repeated pelvic tilt and pelvic floor muscles exercises if you were admitted for, or are currently experiencing, any of the following:

- an antepartum bleed;
- preterm labour (irritable uterus);
- ruptured membranes;
- an incompetent cervix.

For more information please contact:

BC Women's Hospital
Physiotherapy Department
Phone: 604-875-2126