

Pre-operation movement made easy





Why movement before surgery matters

If you're scheduled for surgery, chances are you've been told to "take it easy" and just wait for the big day.

That's outdated advice.

Surgery is not a rest day — it's a physical stress test. Your body is about to go through trauma, and the better prepared it is, the better you'll bounce back.

Think of it like this: Would you show up to a marathon without stretching, training, or even walking a mile? Probably not. Yet, most people walk into surgery weaker, stiffer, and less mobile than they need to be. That's a mistake. And you don't have to make it.

The Hidden Power of Pre-Op Movement

What if I told you that moving before surgery could actually:

- Shorten your hospital stay
- Speed up your return to normal life
- Lower your risk of complications
- Reduce your pain after the procedure

You don't need to be an athlete. You don't need fancy equipment. You just need to move — a little, every day — and your body will thank you.

How Movement Reduces Complications & Speeds Up Recovery

Let's get specific.

When you move your body, you're doing a few powerful things:

- You increase blood flow. That means oxygen and nutrients are getting where they need to go — faster. That speeds up healing.
- You maintain muscle strength. Bed rest breaks down muscle. Movement preserves it.
- You boost lung function. Especially important for surgeries under general anesthesia, where shallow breathing can lead to pneumonia.
- You improve joint mobility. So when it's time to walk post-op, you're not stiff and locked up.

The research is clear: patients who engage in “prehab” — structured movement before surgery — recover faster and with fewer complications.

This doesn't have to be overwhelming. You're not training for the Olympics. You're just getting your body ready to heal — better and faster.

And this guide is going to show you exactly how to do it.

BOTTOM LINE

Movement before surgery isn't optional. It's essential.
Start now. Even 5 minutes today makes a difference tomorrow.



Getting started

No Gym, no Problem

Is Prehab Right for You? (Hint: Yes)

Let's kill the #1 myth up front:

"I'm too old / weak / sore / out of shape to move before surgery."

Wrong. Pre-op movement — or "prehab" — is for everyone.

It's not about doing burpees or running sprints. It's about doing something that keeps your body engaged, even if that's just sitting and lifting your heels, or walking from one room to the next.

If you can breathe, you can do this.

If you can sit, stand, or lie down, you can do this.

And if you're about to go under the knife, you **should do this**.

Because the truth is, **doing nothing is riskier** than doing the wrong thing.

This guide gives you simple, safe movements tailored to where you are — not where a fitness influencer thinks you should be.

Setting goals you can stick to.

The goal isn't perfection. The goal is progress. Here's the magic number: 10–15 minutes per day. That's all it takes to start building momentum. You don't need a 60-minute workout. You need consistency.

Start here:

Pick a time:

Morning, after lunch, or before bed — make it routine.

Pick a space:

A chair, your bed, or a corner of the room.

Pick a goal:

Move 3x this week

Want a quick win? Do one movement from this guide every day for 5 days. That's it. Your body will already start responding.

BOTTOM LINE

You don't need a gym. You don't need to be in shape.
You just need to start where you are — and keep moving forward.

Here's a quick checklist to keep things safe and smooth



Green Lights - You're good to go

Mild soreness that goes away with rest

Feeling energized after movement

Slight increase in breathing or heart rate



Yellow Lights - Slow down, modify

Joint pain during movement

Dizziness or shortness of breath

Feeling wiped out after just a few minutes



Red Lights (Stop and call your doctor)

Chest pain or pressure

Surgical site swelling, pain, or bleeding

Any movement causing sharp, shooting pain



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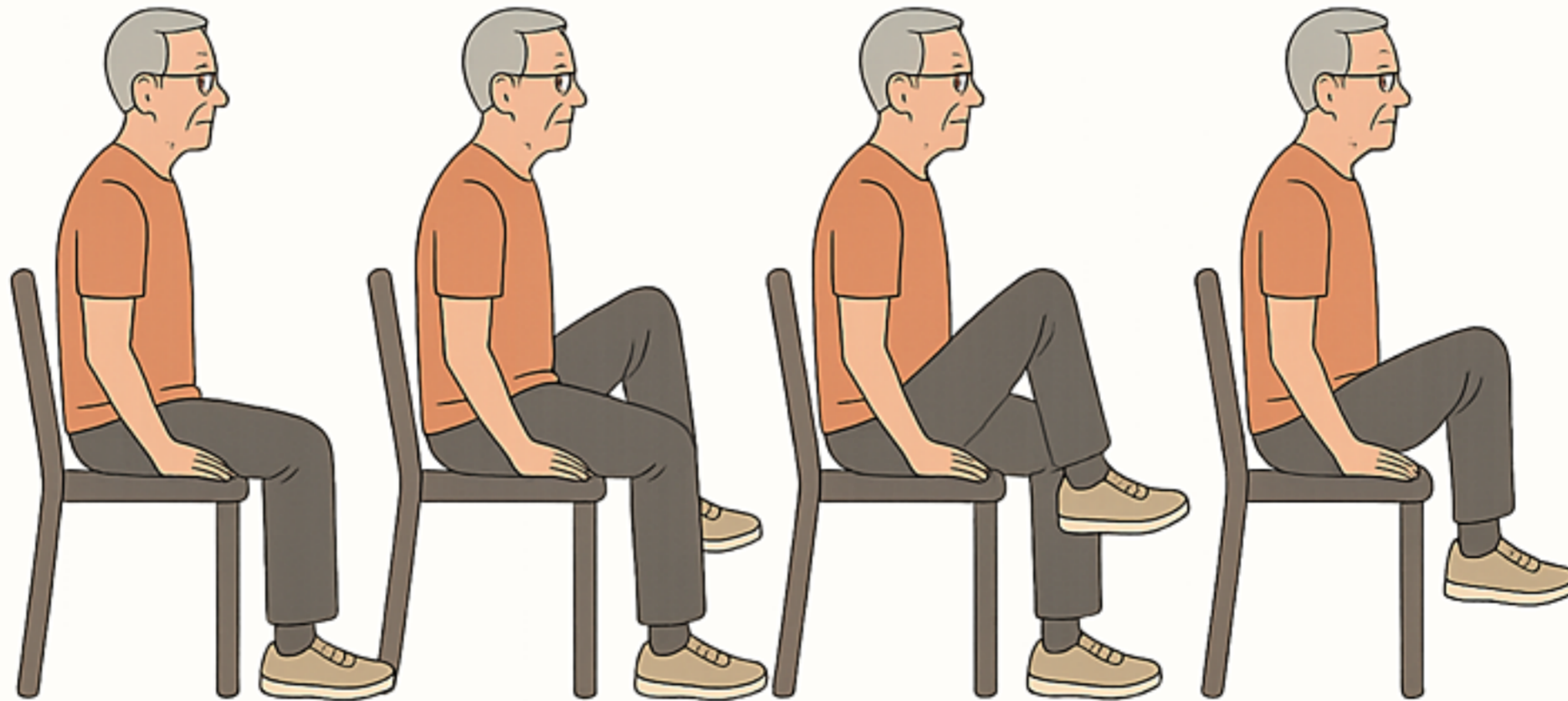


Sorassta Cup

Foundational movements anyone can do

These are the baseline moves — safe, simple, and surprisingly powerful. No gym. No equipment. Just your body and a few feet of space.

Seated Marching



Why it matters: Builds hip and core control

How to do it:

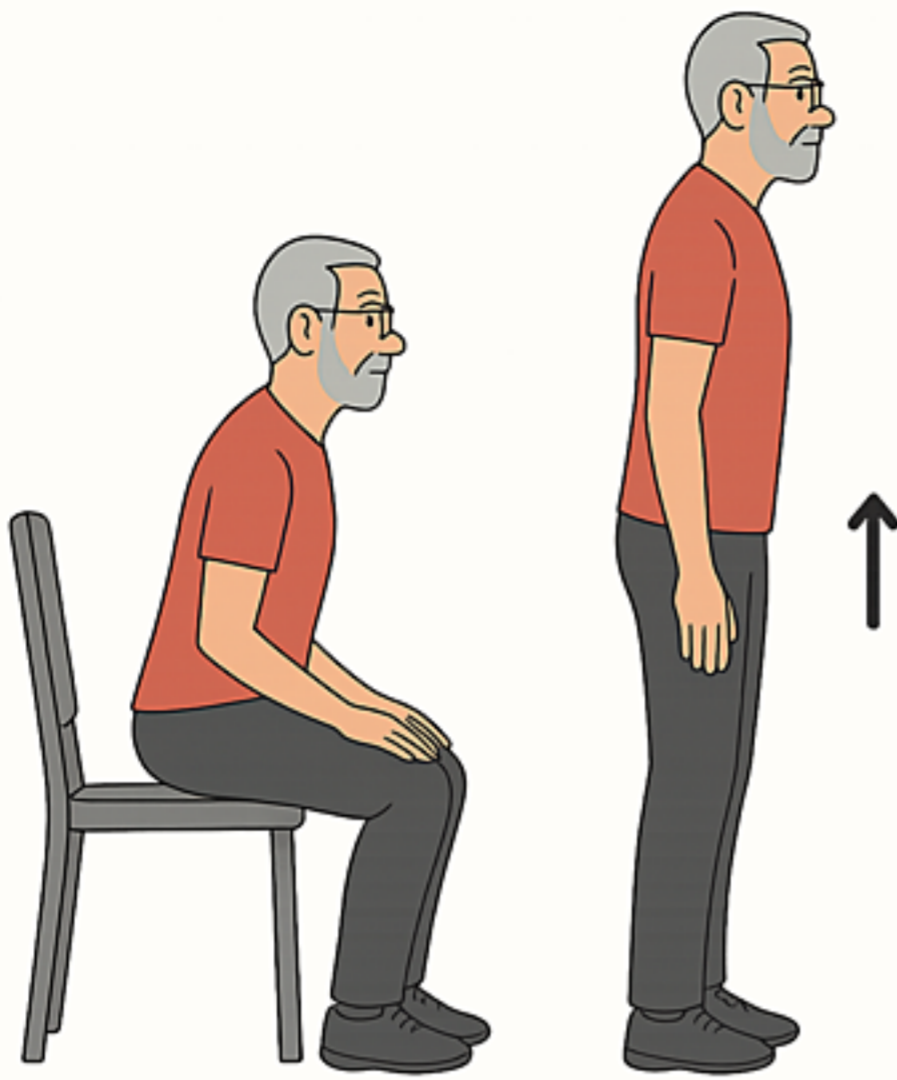
- Sit tall in a chair.
- Lift one knee toward your chest, then lower.
- Alternate legs for 10–15 reps each.

Sit-to-Stand

Why it matters: Strengthens legs, hips, and improves balance.

How to do it:

- Sit in a sturdy chair.
- Stand up slowly without using your hands.
- Lower yourself back down with control.
- Start with 5 reps. Work up to 10.

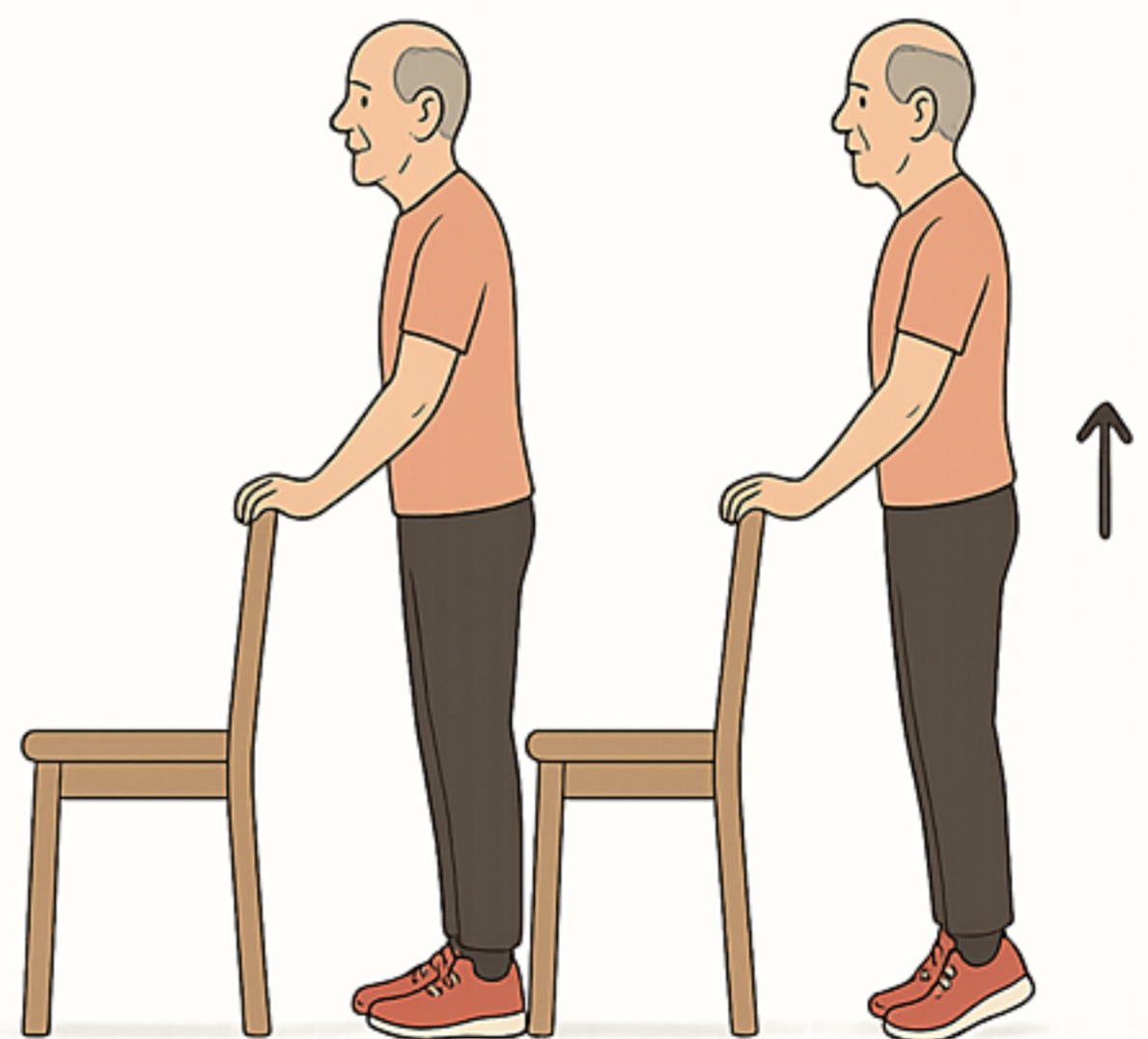


Heel Raises

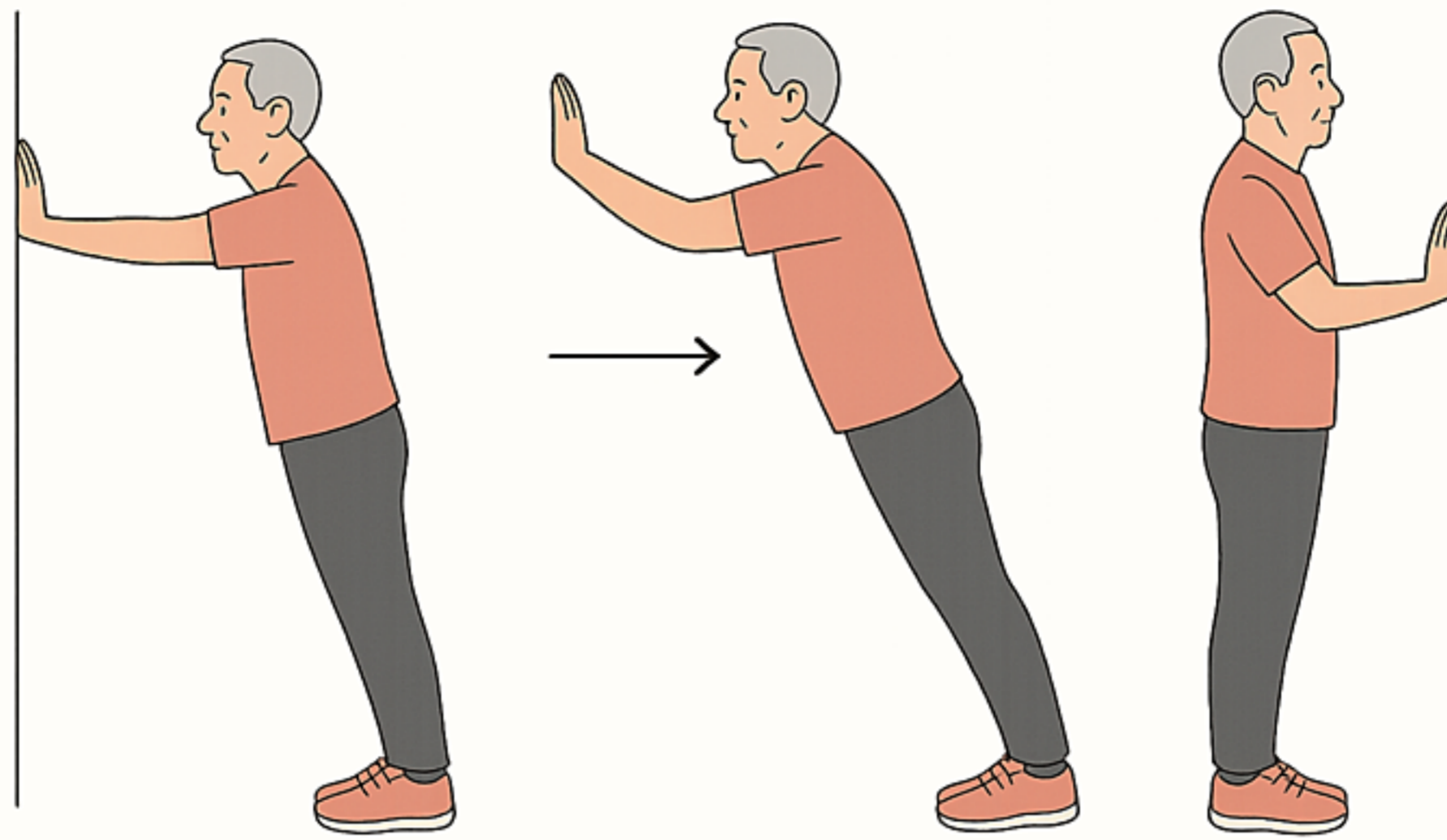
Why it matters: Strengthens calves and supports walking.

How to do it:

- Stand and hold onto a chair or wall.
- Rise up on your toes, then lower slowly.
- Do 10–15 reps.



Wall Pushups



Why it matters: Builds upper body strength without strain.

How to do it:

- Stand an arm's length from a wall.
- Place hands on the wall, lower chest toward it, then push back.
- Do 10 slow reps.

PRO TIP

These moves can be done as a circuit — one round takes under 10 minutes.



Simple Stretching for Stiff Joints and Tight Muscles

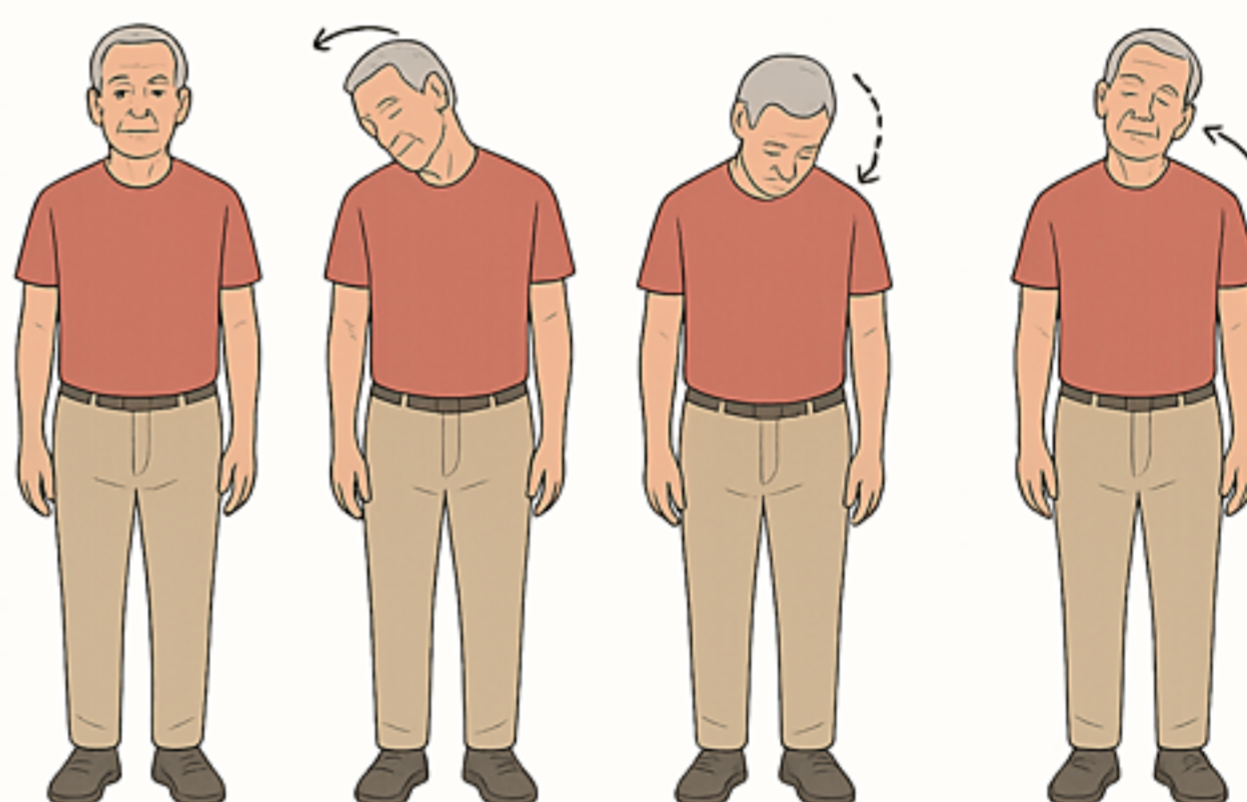
Stretching preps your joints, relieves tension, and promotes mobility — especially important when you'll be inactive during recovery.

Stretch gently. Never bounce or push into pain. These are about opening up, not overextending.

Neck Rolls

How to do it:

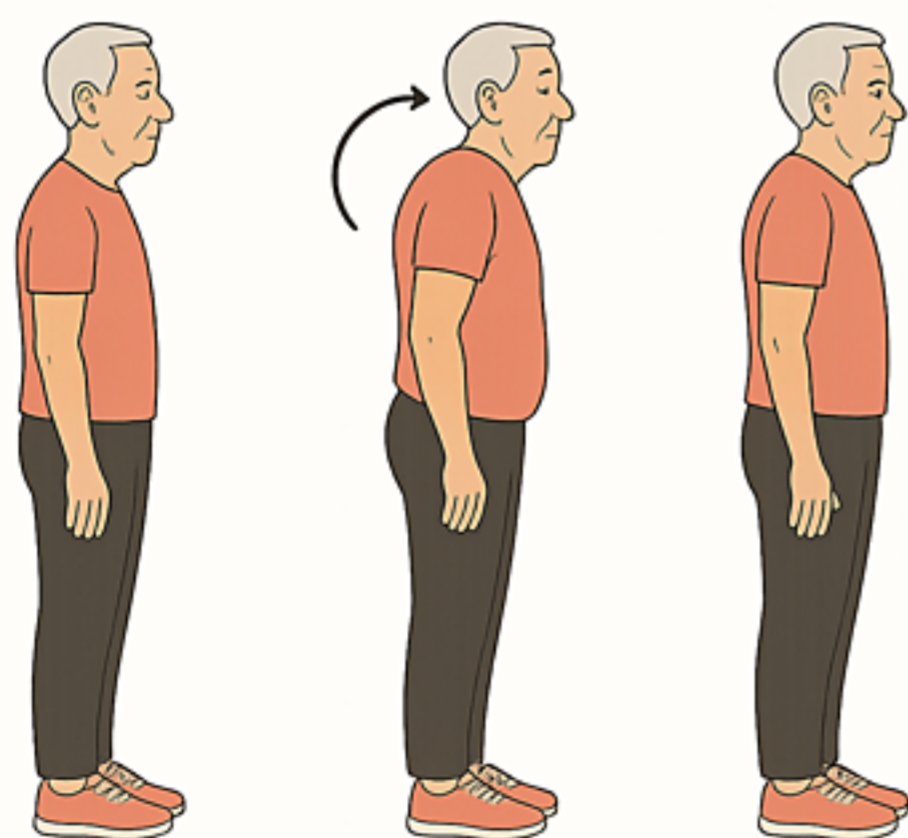
- Sit or stand tall.
- Gently roll your head side to side.
- Hold each side stretch for 5 seconds.



Shoulder Rolls

How to do it:

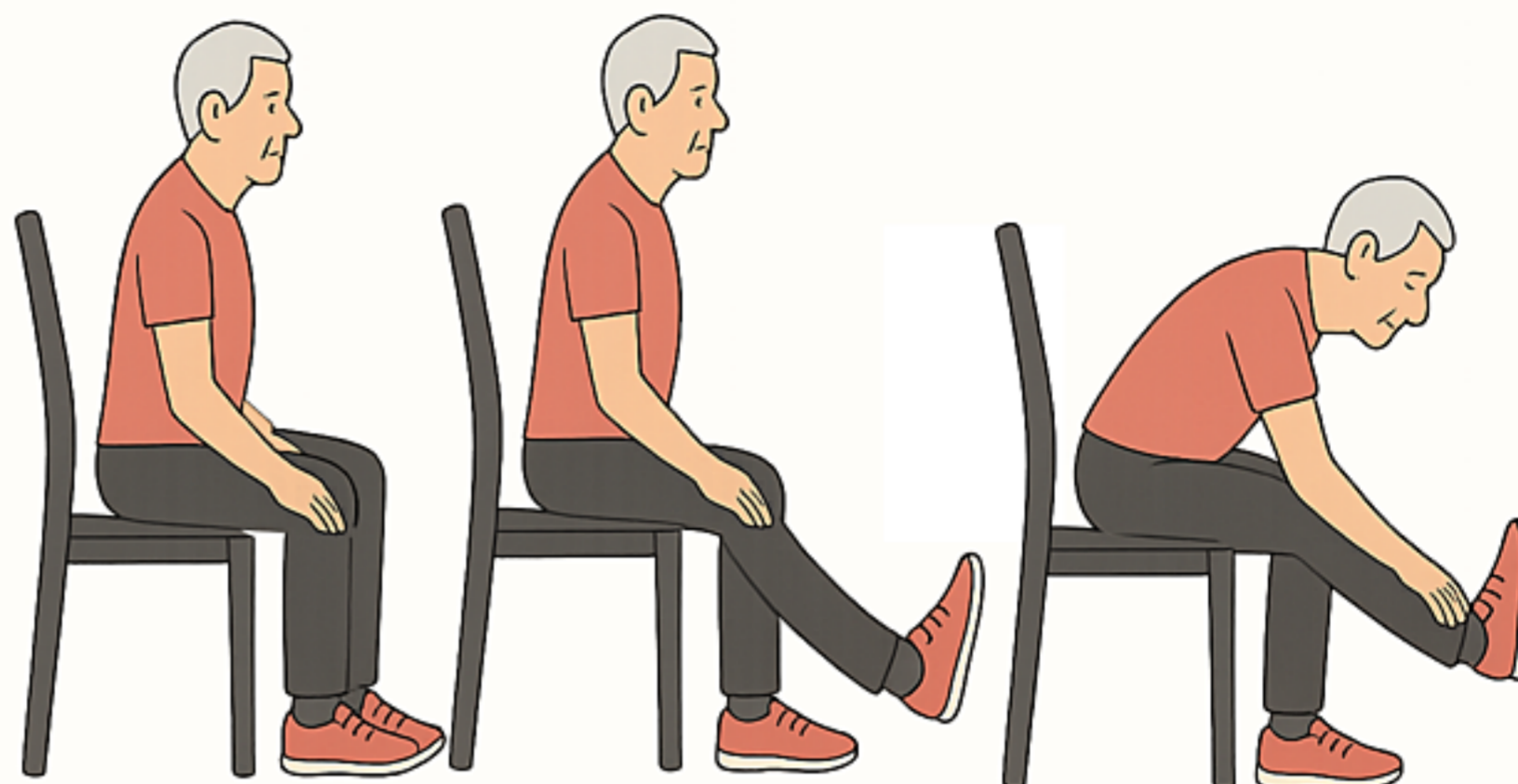
- Roll shoulders forward 10x, then backward 10x.
- Keeps upper back loose and helps with posture.



Seated Hamstring Stretch

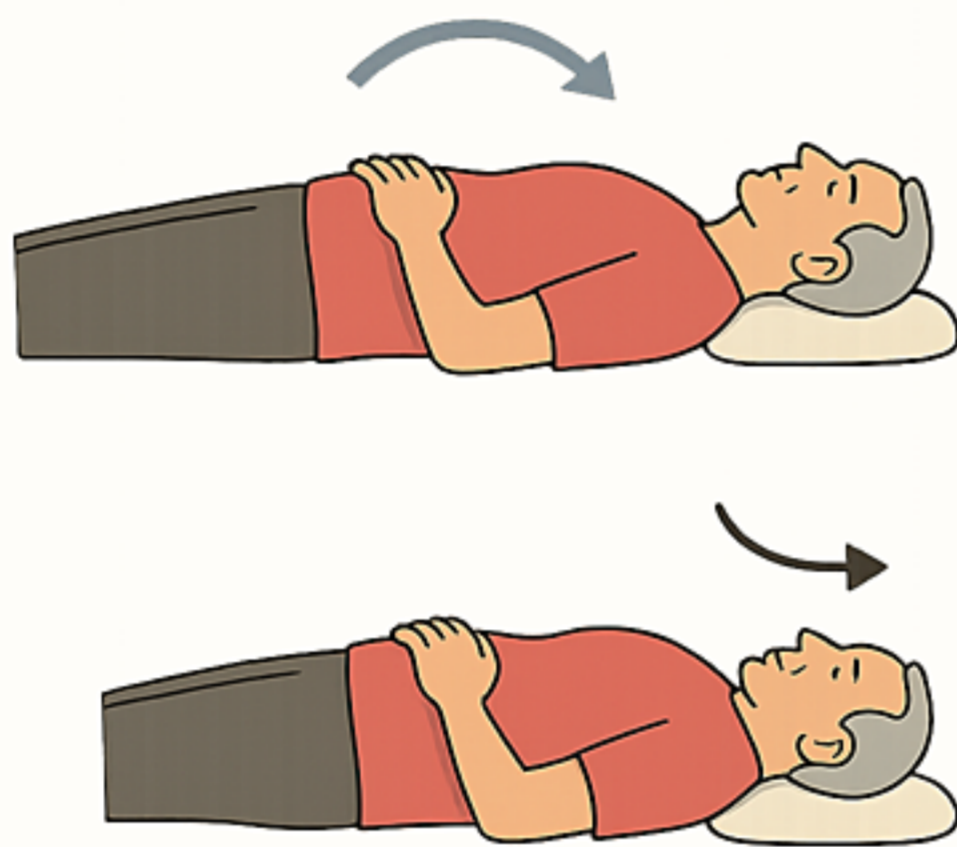
How to do it:

- Sit on a firm surface.
- Extend one leg forward, toes up.
- Lean forward from the hips. Hold 15–30 seconds per leg.



The Breathing Routine Surgeons Wish Every Patient Did

Deep breathing isn't just relaxing — it's medically important. Post-surgery, patients who breathe well recover faster and avoid lung problems like pneumonia.



Diaphragmatic Breathing:

(aka Belly Breathing)

How to do it:

1. Lie down or sit comfortably.
2. Place one hand on your chest, one on your belly.
3. Inhale slowly through your nose — belly rises.
4. Exhale slowly through pursed lips — belly falls.
5. Repeat for 10 breaths, 2–3x per day.

Want to go next level? Use an incentive spirometer if your care team gave you one — it's like weightlifting for your lungs.

BOTTOM LINE

These foundational movements are your surgical warm-up. Do them daily, and you're already ahead of 90% of patients walking into the OR

Movement Plans by Surgery Type

These surgeries are often about mobility, strength, and joint control. The stronger and more stable you are going in, the faster you'll bounce back.

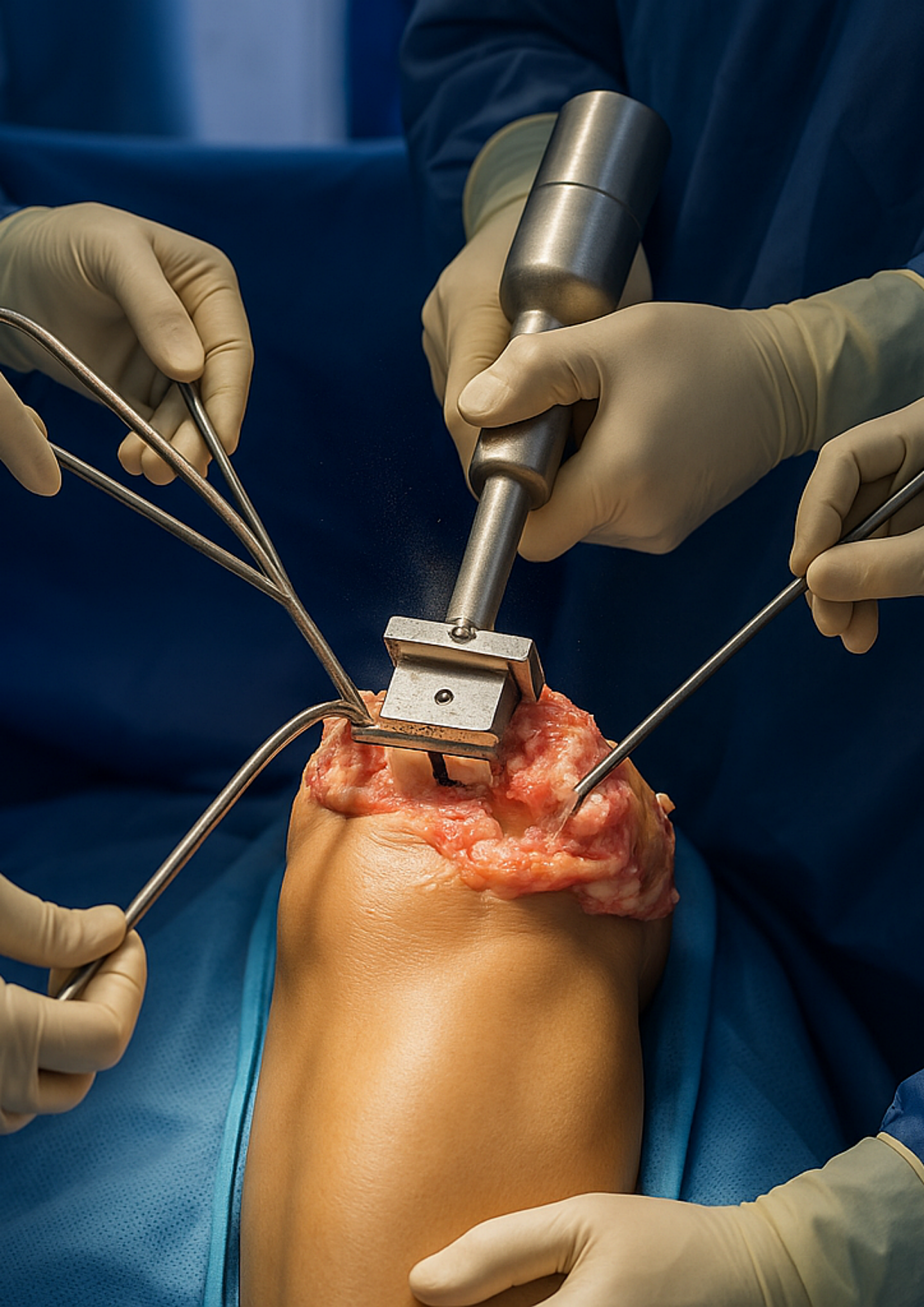
Do 2–3 of these daily for 5–10 minutes. Consistency > intensity.

Knee

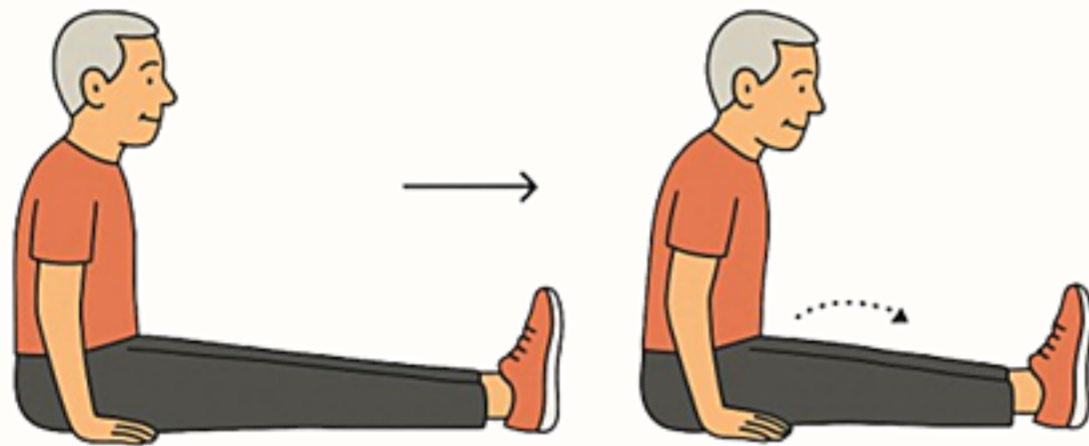
Hip

Abdomen

Chest



Knee Surgery Prep



Quad Sets

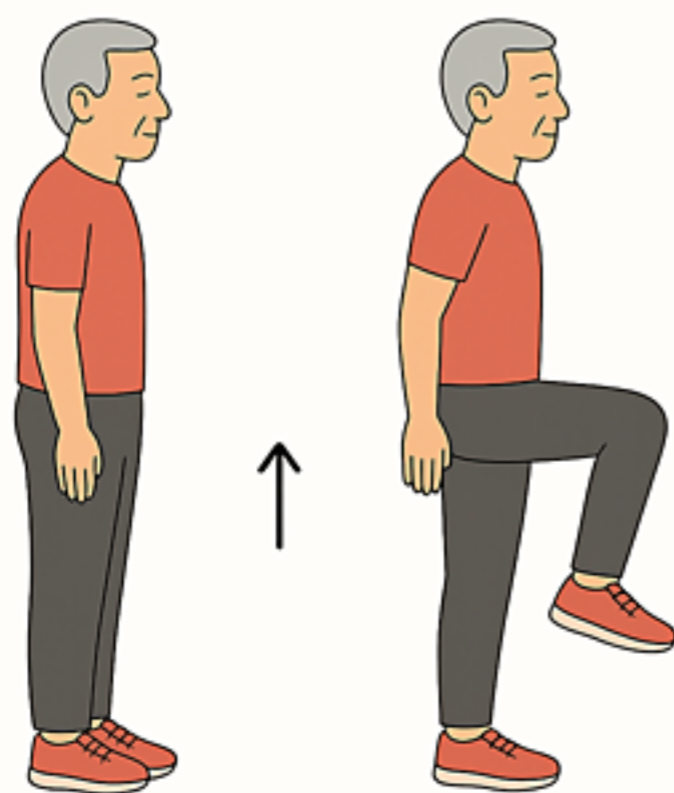
How to do it:

- Sit with legs extended. Tighten the thigh muscle (quads) to push the knee flat into the floor/bed.
- Hold 5 sec. Do 10–15 reps.

Heel Slides

How to do it:

- Lie on your back. Slide your heel toward your butt, then back down. Keeps the joint moving.



Standing Marches

How to do it:

- Alternate raising your knees towards your chest while maintaining your balance



Hip Surgery Prep



Glute Squeezes

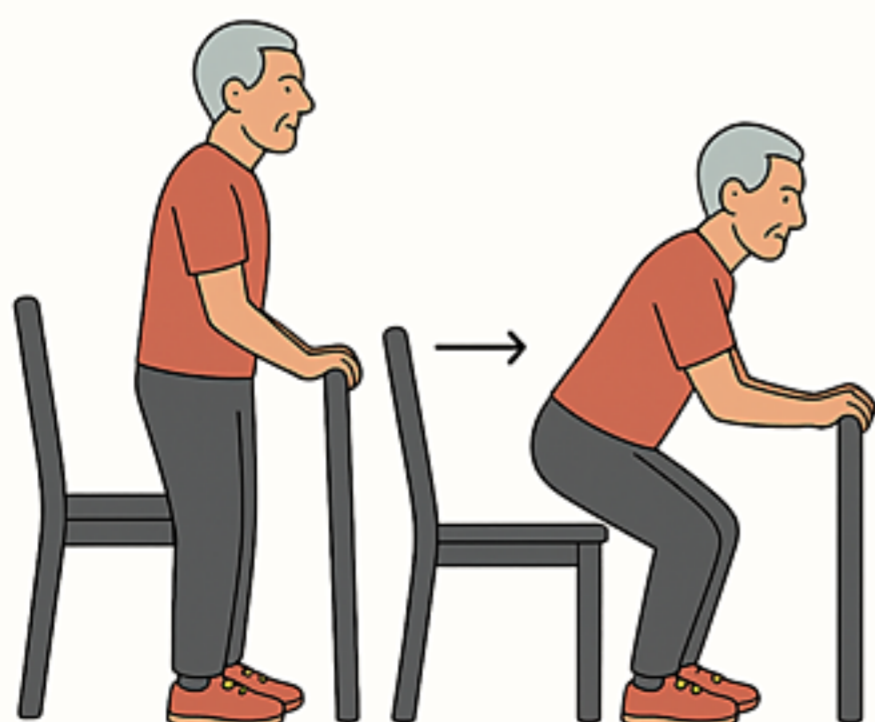
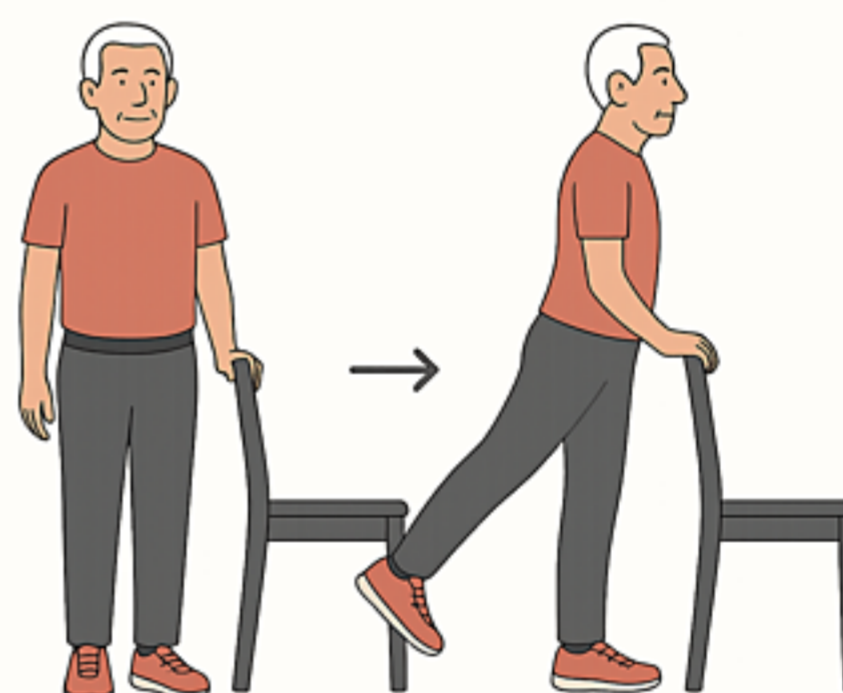
How to do it:

- While lying or seated, squeeze your butt muscles.
- Hold 5 sec. Builds strength without strain.

Side Leg Raises

How to do it:

- Stand holding a chair. Slowly lift leg to side, hold, return. Targets hip abductors.



Mini Squats

How to do it:

- Chair-supported partial squats for functional strength.



Getting Ready for Abdominal or GI Procedures

Thoracic Breathing

How to do it:

- Sit tall. Inhale deeply into your ribcage (not belly).
- Exhale slowly. Enhances lung expansion.



Pelvic Tilts

How to do it:

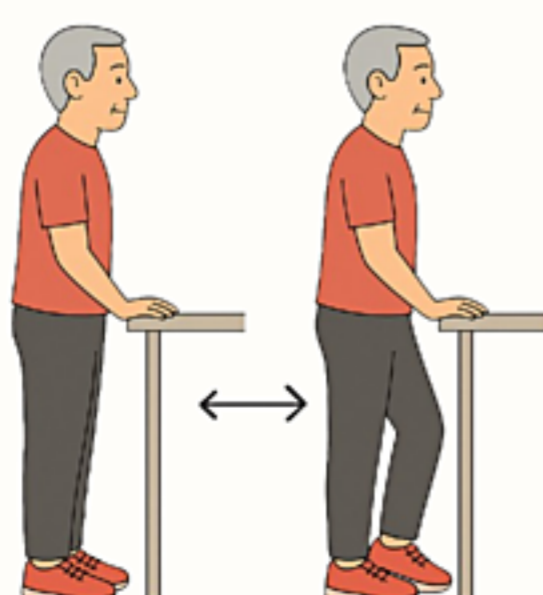
- Lie on back, knees bent. Flatten your lower back against the floor by tilting your pelvis.
- Hold 5 sec. Repeat 10x.



Supported Standing

How to do it:

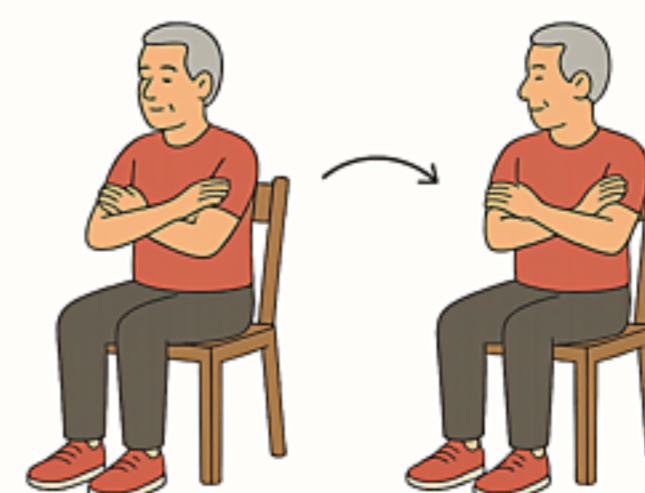
- Stand at counter or table. Shift weight from side to side.
- Reintroduces upright posture and core engagement.



Seated Trunk Rotations

How to do it:

- Sit tall, cross arms over chest. Gently rotate side to side.
- Improves spinal mobility and posture after surgery.





If You're Facing Cardiac Surgery, Read This First



Heart surgeries affect circulation, breathing, and energy. Pre-op movement should focus on gentle activation and lung conditioning. Always follow surgeon or cardiologist guidelines.

Arm Raises

How to do it:

- Sitting, raise arms overhead, lower slowly.
- Helps prevent chest tightness post-sternotomy.

Energy-Conserving Walks

How to do it:

- 2–5 min slow walk, rest, repeat.
- Focus on pacing — not pushing.

Seated Leg Extensions

How to do it:

- Sit tall, straighten one leg, hold for 3–5 sec, lower slowly.
- Builds circulation in lower limbs.

Breathing Ladder

How to do it:

- Inhale for 4 sec, exhale for 6.
- Build up to 10 rounds.
Oxygenates blood and supports heart recovery.

BOTTOM LINE

The more surgery-specific your prep is, the faster your recovery clock starts ticking. You're not just going into surgery — you're going in stronger.

Time-Based Routines

Your 7-Day Pre-Surgery Movement Plan

The final week before surgery is prime time. It's not about going hard — it's about being consistent, intentional, and smart.

Here's a simple 7-day movement plan that anyone can follow:

Day 7–4 (Build the Base)

Goal: Activate muscles, improve circulation, and build a habit.

- 5 mins: Breathing practice (diaphragmatic or incentive spirometer)
- 5 mins: Ankle pumps + heel raises
- 5 mins: Sit-to-stands + shoulder rolls
- (Optional) 5-min walk outside or hallway

Day 3–2 (Lock In Mobility & Strength)

Goal: Focus on flexibility, posture, and low-impact strength.

- 5 mins: Wall pushups + standing marches
- 5 mins: Seated trunk rotations + hamstring stretches
- 5 mins: Glute squeezes or quad sets
- (Optional) Practice getting in/out of bed/chair slowly and safely

Day Before Surgery (Final Tune-Up)

Goal: Calm the nervous system, move gently, and support circulation.

- 3 mins: Neck and shoulder rolls
- 5 mins: Breathing routine
- 5 mins: Seated leg extensions + ankle circles
- Hydrate and rest — avoid strenuous activity

Reminder: No new exercises the day before. Stick to what your body knows.

Busy? Try These 5-Minute Daily Routines

No time? No problem. This micro-routine is designed for real people with real lives:

5-Minute “Prehab Power Set

- 1 min: Ankle pumps
- 1 min: Sit-to-stand
- 1 min: Wall pushups
- 1 min: Seated marches
- 1 min: Deep breathing

Boom. Done.
Check the box!

“I don’t have time” is code for “I don’t have a system.” Now you do.

BOTTOM LINE

In just 5–15 minutes a day, you’ve turned your final week into an asset — not a liability. You didn’t just wait for surgery. You prepared for it.

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Last 24 Hours: What You Should and Shouldn't Do

This final 24 hours is about priming your body, calming your mind, and setting the stage for a faster, smoother recovery.

Do

- Gentle walking or stretching
- Breathing exercises
- Review your movement checklist
- Hydrate (unless told otherwise)
- Sleep early

Dont

- Do anything new or intense
- Skip breathing
- Overeat or drink alcohol
- Stay sedentary all day
- Stress yourself out — you’ve done the work





Tools & Tips for Staying on Track

Using a Chair, Wall, or Bed as Exercise Equipment

Here's how to turn everyday objects into effective movement tools:

Chair

- Sit-to-stands for strength
- Seated marches for hip mobility
- Hamstring stretches from the edge

Bed

- Heel slides lying down
- Glute bridges (press heels into mattress and lift hips)
- Breathing routines while supported

Wall

- Wall pushups for upper body activation
- Wall walks for shoulder range of motion
- Standing side leg raises with balance support

REMEMBER: You don't need fancy gear. You need commitment. Your home is your starting line.

How to Track Progress Without Stress

You don't need a smartwatch or an app to track progress — you need a pen and purpose.

Here's what actually matters:

Did you move today?

Did you breathe intentionally today?

Did you feel more confident afterward?

Use a simple checklist or tracker (like the 7-Day one from Section 5). Put it on your fridge, bathroom mirror, or nightstand.

Keep it visible. Make it winnable.

Getting Support from Family or Caregivers

Surgery prep doesn't have to be a solo mission. Accountability = follow-through.

Here's how to get help without feeling like a burden:

Sample Conversation Starter:

"I'm working on a short daily routine to get ready for surgery. Would you mind reminding me to move or stretch for 10 minutes each day?"

Most people want to help — they just need direction.

BONUS TIP

Start each day with a "YES" — even if it's 3 ankle pumps or 5 deep breaths. That "small win" builds momentum.

Simple Ways to Involve Others:

Ask someone to join you for a walk.

Have a loved one do the breathing routine with you.

Text a friend when you finish your daily moves.

Share your 7-day tracker and let them cheer you on.

BOTTOM LINE

You don't need more time, more gear, or more talent. You need a simple plan, visible reminders, and someone in your corner.



Common Mistakes

(and how to avoid them)

The #1 Thing People Do Wrong Before Surgery

They wait.

They sit around. They cancel their plans. They tell themselves they'll "deal with it after surgery."

That's a recipe for:

- Weaker muscles
- Stiffer joints
- Slower recovery
- Higher risk of complications

The truth: Recovery starts before the operating room.

The best outcomes don't happen by chance — they happen by **preparation**.

What to do instead

Start small. Move daily. Follow this guide. You don't have to be perfect — you just have to be consistent.

When to Stop (and Call Your Doctor)

Movement is safe — until it's not. Here's how to know the difference between normal effort and a real warning sign.

STOP if you experience:

- Chest pain or tightness
- Dizziness or sudden fatigue
- Sharp, stabbing pain (especially at or near the surgical area)
- Numbness or tingling that lasts more than a few seconds
- Shortness of breath not related to effort

If you feel any of these, stop immediately and contact your provider. You're not being dramatic — you're being smart.

KEEP GOING if you experience:

- Mild soreness in unused muscles
- Light fatigue that improves after rest
- Increased breathing or light sweat from exertion
- Tightness that improves with movement

What to do instead:

Trust your body — but listen when it speaks up. If in doubt, scale down the intensity or ask your care team before continuing. Don't Push Through Pain.

One of the worst things you can do before surgery is treat pain like weakness. That mindset gets people hurt.

Pain ≠ Progress.

Discomfort is normal. Pain is not. There's a line — and you need to know where it is.

Quick Fixes:

- Modify the movement (use a wall, a chair, or reduce the range of motion)
- Slow down the tempo
- Cut the reps in half
- Take longer breaks
- Focus on breathing instead of strength
- Knee hurts during sit-to-stand? Try partial squats or seated leg extensions.
- Back feels tight? Do pelvic tilts lying down or shift to supported standing.
- Too fatigued to finish? Just breathe — that counts.

You're building consistency, not crushing workouts. That's what wins.

BOTTOM LINE

Avoiding mistakes is just as powerful as doing the right things.
This isn't about going hard — it's about showing up smart, every day.

Summary & Next Steps

Let's Recap What You Just Accomplished

Over the last few pages, you've learned how to:

- Understand why movement before surgery matters
- Start safely, no matter your age, ability, or fitness level
- Follow a step-by-step 7-day routine that fits your body and schedule
- Use basic tools like a chair, bed, or wall to stay active
- Avoid the most common mistakes patients make before surgery
- Track your progress without stress and get your support system involved

That's not just preparation — that's taking control.

While most patients wait for surgery to “happen to them,”

You've already started your recovery.

What to Do Now

Let's make this simple:

Keep Moving Daily: Stick with your 5–15 minutes of movement each day until surgery. If you're short on time, use the 5-minute power routine.

Talk to Your Care Team: Bring this guide (or the tracker) to your next appointment. Ask your surgeon or therapist if anything should be modified — or if they have additional tips specific to your procedure.

Stay Consistent, Not Perfect: Some days will be easier than others. That's fine. The goal is momentum, not perfection.

Get Ready for Recovery: The same principles you used here — simple movements, consistent action, intentional breathing — will carry over into your post-op journey.

We'll have something to help with that too.

Want Help After Surgery?

We're building a Post-Operative Movement Guide to help you recover safely and faster — just like this one prepared you to go in strong.

Final Word

You've already done what most patients won't:

You've taken ownership of your outcome.

Surgery is just the middle of the story —

You've already written a stronger beginning.

Let's finish strong, too.



What you do today
builds the *strength*
you'll need tomorrow.

