

# Abdominal & core

recovery + movement  
programme



me+ recovery

Helping you to recover, one step at a time

**BLUE** PHASE TWO: Making Progress

# Abdominal & core recovery programme

## Making Progress

When you've been working through Green Phase 1 for a few weeks and you feel confident with the moves, you're ready to move onto **Blue Phase 2**.

There is no set timeframe for how long to spend on each phase. Much will depend on your condition, recovery and previous wellbeing. Only progress when you are ready and can complete all of the Green Phase 1 moves easily and comfortably.

- Blue Phase 2 forms the main ongoing recovery and movement programme. It is designed for people who have had major abdominal surgery and the formation of a stoma. There are 12 moves in total but you do not have to do them all.
- Simply choose the ones you feel most comfortable with. You could pick 3-4 moves and vary them throughout the week.
- Just try to make sure you do something every day – little and often is best.

- Of course if you want to do them all every day then that's fine, just listen to your body and rest when you need to.
- Your muscles shouldn't hurt or become too sore. If they do, then do fewer of the exercises or take more rest in between.

### STANDING ALTERNATIVES

- If you find it hard to get onto the floor or you can't kneel, then try doing the lying moves in bed, or just choose standing or sitting moves.

### GETTING DOWN ONTO THE FLOOR

- If you want to do some of these moves on the floor, make sure you get down onto the floor and back up safely to avoid straining your abdomen.
- Avoid 'sitting up' hard or pulling on your abdomen.
- Use a chair or bed as support and get down onto the floor in a step by step fashion, kneeling first, then onto your hands and knees and slowly over onto your back.

**Remember, you don't have to do all the movements in this programme. Do the ones that you feel comfortable with and the ones you feel you need most**

## 1 Core Connect with Knee Drops



- **Lie on your back** with your knees bent, and feet flat on the floor/bed.
- **Gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction throughout.
- **Hold this contraction** whilst continuing to breathe normally.
- **Then (keeping your knee bent) slowly allow** one knee to drop out to one side then slowly return it to centre.
- **Only go as far as you can.** As soon as you feel that you start to lose control of your pelvis, bring your knee back to centre.
- **Keep your pelvis** very stable and try to avoid any movement. Imagine having a spirit level across your hipbones and you need to stop the bubble from moving.
- **The goal** is NOT to see how low you can get your knee, it is more important to do this with control, even if you just move a small amount.
- **Then repeat** with the opposite leg.
- **Repeat x 10 in total on each side**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

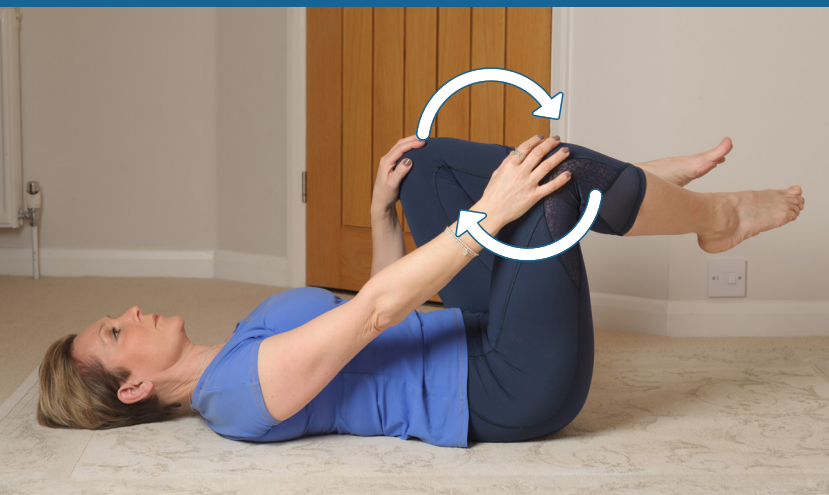


## 2 Core Connect with Leg Slides



- **Lie on your back** with your knees bent.
- **Gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction throughout.
- **Hold this contraction** - whilst continuing to breathe normally.
- **Then slowly straighten** your leg, sliding your heel along the floor/bed away from you. As you slide your leg away, breathe out. Then breathe in to return your leg to the starting point. Repeat on the other side.
- **Keep your tummy** muscles tight and maintain control.
- **Keep your pelvis** very stable and try to avoid any movement. Imagine having a spirit level across your hipbones and you need to stop the bubble from moving.
- **Pull your leg back** in and repeat on the other side. Keep the movement slow and controlled.
- **Repeat x 5-10 with each leg**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

## 3 Core Connect with Knee Circles



- **Lie on your back** and carefully bring your knees - one at a time - up to your chest.
- **Gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction throughout.
- **Place your hands** on your kneecaps, relax your shoulders and breathe normally.
- **Keeping your tummy** muscles contracted, make a VERY slow controlled small circle with your right knee.
- **Don't allow your body to move.** Keep everything controlled and still. The only thing moving is your knee.
- **Try and get the movement** as perfect as you can. This will usually take a lot of concentration. As soon as you feel loss of control simply make the circles smaller or take a rest.
- **Repeat x 5** and then do 5 in the opposite direction. Then change legs.
- **When you've completed the movement,** carefully return your feet to the floor one at a time.
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

## 4 Hip Lift Bridge



- **Lie on your back** with your knees bent.
- **Gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction throughout.
- **Gently flatten your lower back** into the floor, squashing an imaginary pea under your low back. Imagine rolling a marble into your navel and up onto your chest. As your pelvis tilts, your bottom will start to lift off the floor.
- **Continue to lift your bottom** (vertebrae by vertebrae) until you're in a 'bridge' position with your bottom lifted. Only go as high as you feel comfortable.
- **Avoid pressing** through your legs or arms.
- **Keep the movement** very slow and controlled.
- **Hold the position at the top** - tighten your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and then slowly lower back to the floor - keeping the muscles engaged the whole time. It is important to keep control of the movement and to keep breathing normally throughout.
- **When your bottom** is back on the floor, allow your abdominal muscles to relax completely & breathe normally, then repeat.
- **Repeat x 5-10**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

## 5 Hamstring Stretch



- **Place your hands** on the seat of a chair (if you find this too low, then start with your hands on the back of the chair or on the kitchen counter).
- **Have your toes** facing forwards and legs straight – feet should be shoulder distance apart.
- **Slowly push your bottom** backwards (away from your hands) until you feel a 'tension' down the backs of your legs. Hold this for 20-30 seconds and keep breathing. You should feel the tension start to relax. Keep your legs straight and your shoulders relaxed and down.
- **Repeat this stretch as often as you like.** Remember to keep breathing throughout and keep your arms and shoulders relaxed.
- **Repeat x 10-15**
- **Do this 2-3 x per day**

## 6 Sitting Squeezes



- **Sit nice and tall** on a hard chair with your feet on the floor.
- **Tighten your bottom** muscles by clenching your bottom cheeks firmly together.
- **You should feel** that you lift up off the chair.
- **Don't press with your legs** – it's just your bottom muscles doing the work.
- **Hold for a count** of 2 and then release – and repeat.
- **Repeat x 10**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

## 7 Rotations



- **Sit upright** nice and tall on a chair or the side of your bed.
- **Clasp your hands together** and place them under your chin. Keep your arms tucked in at your ribs/waist.
- **Keep your shoulders** down and relaxed and your bottom fixed on the chair.
- **Slowly rotate** through your spine to one side until you feel you can't go any further. It's a bit like a corkscrew.
- **Keep your pelvis** fixed in position and try to rotate through your mid back.
- **Then switch** and rotate to the other side.
- **Keep this fluid rotating movement** going as you slowly repeat it from side to side.
- **Start with 10 and build up to doing 20-30 repetitions**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**



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## Self Massage Technique 1 Low Back, Hips and Glutes



### BALL ON WALL TECHNIQUE

- **Position a massage ball** (tennis ball will do, but preferably some sort of specific massage ball which is firmer) between your bottom and the wall.
- **Position your legs** wide and knees bent – with your feet a little way from the wall. Make sure you're safe and can't slip.
- **Gently press** the ball into the wall with your bottom muscles. Slowly move from side to side and up and down to massage any tight or sore areas.
- **Hunt out 'tight spots'** where you might feel more tender. When you find one, hold the pressure on that point for 10 seconds.
- **Remember** to keep breathing and stay relaxed.
- **You can do this any time and as often as you wish. Aim to do 1-2 minutes of massage on each side.**

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## Self Massage Technique 2 Low Back, Hips and Glutes



### BALL ON FLOOR TECHNIQUE: HIPS/BOTTOM MUSCLES

- **You can also use the massage ball** into your bottom muscles in the same way.
- **Lie on your side** propped up on your elbow.
- **Position the ball** in the side of your hip or bum muscles.
- **Simply sit/lie on the ball** (in a side lying position) and allow the ball to massage the tight areas.
- **You'll feel** where you need it most.
- **Relax and breathe** and gently move it around working through the 'hot spots' of tightness.
- **Try 1-2 minutes each day**

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## Slow Marching



- **Stand with good posture** holding onto a chair or support.
- **Gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction throughout.
- **Slowly peel** one foot off the floor lifting your knee and then the other knee in a slow marching action.
- **Only lift your feet** as high as you feel you can (you might only peel your toe off the floor to begin with).
- **Keep your pelvis stable** and abdominal muscles engaged throughout.
- **The key is** to maintain control and keep the move slow.
- **Start with 10 slow marches and progress to 20-30 as you get stronger.**

## 10 Pelvic Tilt in Standing



- **Place your hands** on a table or kitchen work surface.
- **Have your feet** slightly apart and bend your knees a little.
- **Then gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles.
- **Tuck your bottom under** - rounding out your lower back. This is a very gentle pelvic tilt.
- **Tighten your tummy** muscles again, then release your pelvis back to a neutral position and relax.
- **This movement** is VERY small and very gentle.
- **Think subtle**, slow, controlled and gentle pelvic rocking movement. If you get any discomfort in your back during or after doing this exercise, then stop and do the pelvic tilt (lying down) move instead.
- **Repeat x 10**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

## 11 Calf Raises



- **Stand upright** as tall as you can, and hold onto a chair or support.
- **Gently contract** your deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction throughout.
- **Slowly raise up onto your toes** - imagine a balloon on top of your head is pulling you up to the ceiling.
- **Lower back down** so your heels are on the floor and repeat.
- **Keep your legs straight** without bending your knees.
- **Imagine** you are standing inside a tube and you are going up and down inside. Try to avoid leaning forward and resting on your hands.
- **You'll feel your calf muscles** working as you do this.
- **Repeat x 5-10 (build up to 20)**
- **Do this 2-3 times per day**

## 12 Hip Stretch



- **Place one foot** on a low step or seat of a chair.
- **Keep your other leg relaxed** behind you with your toes facing forwards.
- **From this position**, simply 'tuck' your pelvis under so you feel a stretch on the front of your thigh. Hold that position.
- **From here slowly lunge forwards** (bending your front knee) maintaining the pelvic tuck position.
- **You should feel** an increasing (but gentle) stretch through the front of your hip and thigh of your straight leg.
- **Return to your start** position and repeat.
- **It's a very gentle subtle movement.** Try to do this as a flowing dynamic mobility movement rather than holding a static stretch position.
- **Repeat x 5-10 on each side**
- **Do this x 2-3 per day**

**WELL DONE FOR COMPLETING PHASE 2  
NOW IT'S TIME TO MOVE TO PHASE 3.**

Get your copy, call our me+™ member help line  
**UK: 0800 467 866 ROI: 1800 721 721**

me+™ recovery is a three stage programme to help your recovery. Sign up to me+™ today and request Phase Three to continue your journey. In addition you will receive a host of lifestyle advice and support when you need it most.

me+™ is a dedicated **FREE** support programme designed specifically for people living with a stoma. Whether you are just about to have surgery or have had your stoma for many years there is help and advice at hand to support you wherever you are on your journey.

## MEMBER BENEFITS

### Your support team

- Specialist stoma nurse help-line
- Experienced counsellors
- An expert team of product specialists and advisors

### Support for daily living

- Free Radar Key and Can't Wait Card
- me+™ Recovery activity and movement programme
- me+™ Community – hear from others living with a stoma
- A whole host of lifestyle advice and support delivered on-line and in booklets you can keep to hand.

## JOIN TODAY!

It only takes a few minutes, enrol by calling the me+™ member help-line on:

UK Mainland  
**0800 467 866**

ROI  
**1800 721 721**

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Or enrol on-line at:

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UK Mainland  
**www.meplus.convatec.co.uk**

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## Further Support



We are Colostomy UK. Here if you have questions, need support or just want to talk to someone who lives with a stoma.

[info@ColostomyUK.org](mailto:info@ColostomyUK.org) • Tel: 0118 939 1537  
24/7 Helpline: 0800 328 4257 • [www.ColostomyUK.org](http://www.ColostomyUK.org)



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**Support Group**  
Listen • Inform • Support

Living with an ileostomy or caring for someone who is? Got a question or looking for support? Give IA (ileostomy & internal pouch Support Group) a call today.

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The Urostomy Association provides information and support to people with urostomy, their family and carers.

[info@urostomyassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@urostomyassociation.org.uk)  
Tel: 01386 430140 • [www.urostomyassociation.org.uk](http://www.urostomyassociation.org.uk)

Reach out whenever you need insights, ideas or just someone to listen.

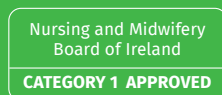
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Or call: **UK: 0800 467 866 ROI: 1800 721 721**

Freephone Nurse Advisor Line **UK: 0800 085 2516 ROI: 1800 818988**

Our friendly Stoma Care Nurse Advisor is just a phone call away

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