Physical therapy involves prescribed exercises, stretches, or other activities to help your body build strength, balance, and coordination, and recover from surgery or injury. Physical therapy has many benefits:

• Quicker recovery after surgery. Activity increases blood circulation, which will help you heal and lower your risk of pneumonia or blood clots.
• Less pain. Physical therapy teaches you to move more comfortably and safely.
• Better rest and sleep. Being out of bed will help you keep a normal wake-sleep routine.

**Physical Therapy Before Surgery**

Practice the following four activities before surgery. These activities will help you safely get in and out of bed, stand up and sit down from a bed or chair, walk around, and climb stairs using a handrail.

1. **Use the log roll method to get out of bed.** To do this, roll your hips and shoulders at the same time and use the momentum of your lower body to keep the strain off your abdomen.

   **Step 1:** Lie on your back and bend one leg at a time to put your feet flat on the bed, knees together.

   ![Log roll step 1](image)

   **Step 2:** Roll to your side by gently tipping both knees while reaching your hand across your body so your shoulders roll at the same time as your hips.

   ![Log roll step 2](image)

   **Step 3:** From this position on your side, sit by pushing off the bed with your bottom elbow and opposite hand while you ease your legs down over the edge of the bed.

   ![Log roll step 3](image)
2. **Practice standing up and sitting down from various surfaces.** Use your leg muscles as much as you can and push off with your hands when standing up. Practice looking back and reaching for the bed or chair when sitting down. Keep your back straight and avoid holding your breath while doing this motion.

For reference, the bedside chair in most rooms at Huntsman Cancer Institute is 18 inches high, the rocking chair is 16 inches high, and the edge of the bed is 27 to 28 inches high.

3. **Walk four times a day before surgery.** This will help keep your endurance and strength up. Ask your doctor if you have any questions. Stop to rest when the walking feels somewhat hard to you. Track your distance and work to gradually go farther and farther.

4. **Practice going up and down stairs.** Use a handrail for safety. Try going up and down step over step but also one step at a time. When doing one step at a time, it's best to step up to the next step with your stronger leg first. When going down one step at a time, step down with your weak leg first. This allows your stronger leg to control your body weight and helps keep you safe.

**Physical Therapy after Surgery**

Your doctor may order therapy for you after surgery. Therapy usually begins the day of surgery or the next day. The movement you do in therapy is prescribed to help you get better. It is important to do the right activities at the right time, just like taking a prescribed medicine.

**First Evaluation**

The first time the physical therapist (PT) sees you, he or she will come to your hospital room and evaluate you. This will help the PT know specific needs to address in your treatment care plan. If you need more therapy after the evaluation, you may receive help from a PT or a PT assistant.

**Interview and Assessment**

During the initial interview, please tell the PT any concerns or goals you have. During the assessment, the PT will look at your ability to get in and out of bed, stand up from the bed or chair, walk, balance, and possibly climb stairs. This is to assess your strength, vision, endurance, sensation, ability to move your joints, and coordination. Each of these affects your function and safety. Please bring any items you use to help you get around, such as a cane or eyeglasses.

**Caregiver Involvement**

The more your caregivers participate in therapy, the better your transition from hospital to home will be. While you are in the hospital, your health-care team will help you practice therapy so you are prepared to do the activities at home.

**What the Therapy Team Expects of You**

**Give your best effort.** The best type of activity is usually short and frequent. In general, your PT expects you to be active to a point of mild to moderate fatigue, four times a day.

**Stay out of bed, sitting in a chair as much as possible during the day.** There will be times you don’t feel like doing much, but do your best.

**Practice safety.** Please follow your PT’s recommendations for safety. If you have any questions, call Therapy Services at 801-587-4091.