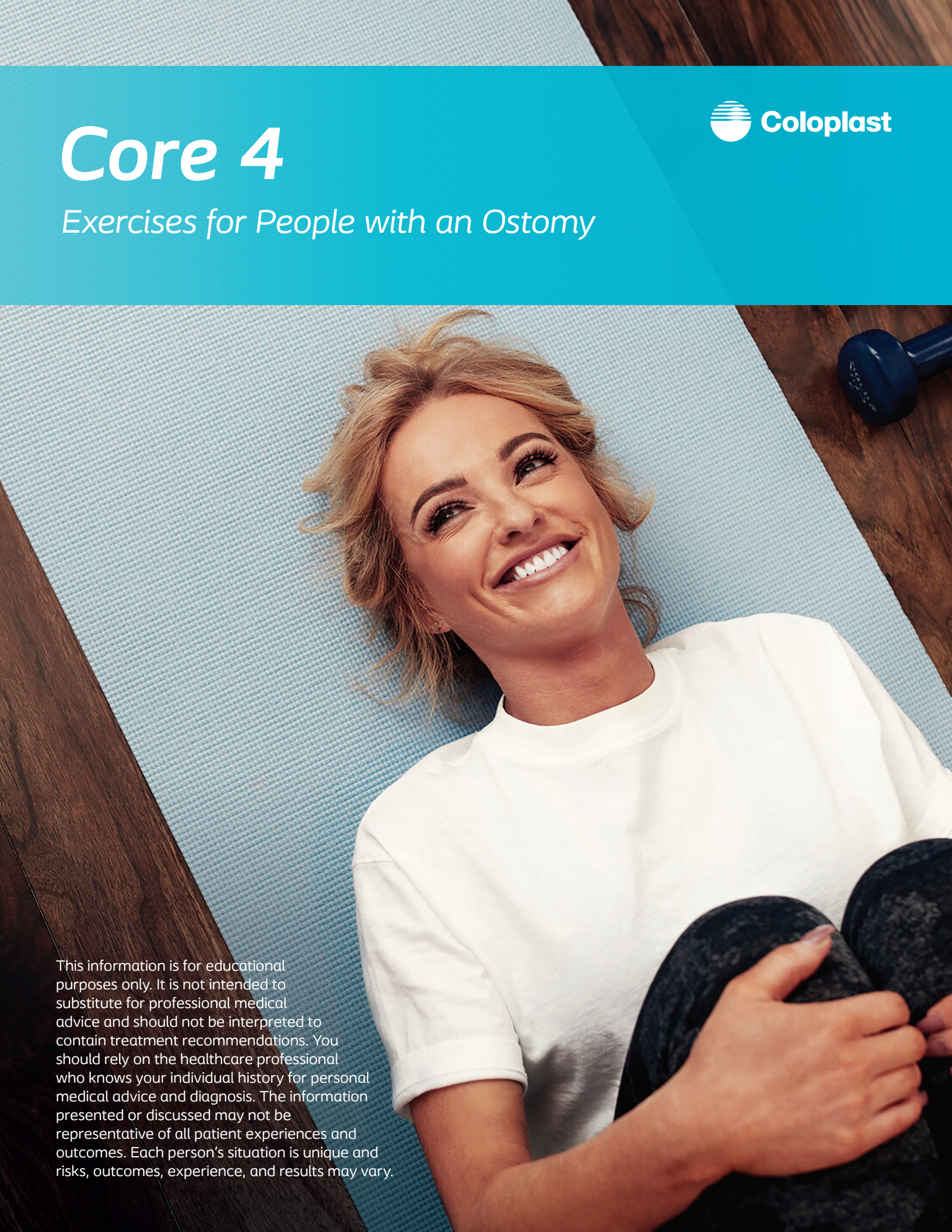


# Core 4

## Exercises for People with an Ostomy



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# Introduction:

## *Why Exercise is Important*

Why is exercise important specifically for people with ostomies? Exercising may increase your enjoyment of life, and it may also help improve your recovery time. Physical activity gives you more energy and makes you stronger and better equipped to cope with illnesses. Exercise can also prevent complications that may otherwise occur from sitting or lying down too long. Check out these three key benefits of exercising when you have an ostomy:

### **1** Being in good shape may help your pouching solution fit better

A benefit of exercising is weight-maintenance and to build strength. Depending on the shape of your stoma, a firmer, flatter abdomen could make it easier to get a secure fit with your ostomy pouching system, which in turn minimizes leakage risks.

### **2** Exercise may boost your confidence

Exercising can make you feel better about yourself in ways that go far beyond physical appearance. As you start exercising, you will feel a boost in your self-awareness. Exercise can help build self-confidence and could help give you the courage to get back to the way you lived prior to your surgery.

### **3** Exercise may lower stress

An active lifestyle can mean a stronger heart, improved circulation and lung function, as well as healthier skin. It may give you more energy overall. This can help balance any stress you might feel after your surgery.

Don't worry if you're not used to exercising. It doesn't matter if you didn't exercise much before your surgery; you can get started now. Take it easy, start out slowly, and build up the intensity gradually.



# Why You Should Strengthen Your Core Muscles

Your core muscles are important! They're part of everything you do – from rolling over in bed, to breathing, to exercising, to getting you out and about through life.

Following ostomy surgery, abdomens go through considerable trauma and are weakened due to the incision that has been made to create your ostomy. These exercises are designed to be done before and after your ostomy surgery to help strengthen the core muscles. They may help you on the road to rehabilitation and prevent many of the complications that can occur while living with a stoma.

## Introducing the Core 4

Usually when you think about abdominal exercise, you might think about crunches, sit ups and other exercises designed to push your core strength to the limit. But when it comes to rebuilding your abdominal muscles after ostomy surgery, a 'slow and steady' approach is key.

Don't be afraid that you will not be able to perform the exercises meant to strengthen your core. The exercises presented in the Core 4 program are designed with the sole purpose of re-engaging the weakened muscles in your abdomen. Think of them as part of the healing - something you do at your own pace.

## Before You Start

The following exercises are designed to aid your recovery and help restore muscle function in your abdomen. They're entry-level exercises that everybody with an ostomy should be able to do. Before starting any exercises, it's important to check in with your health care provider and ensure you're well enough to start. Please remember, if you're uncomfortable or start to hurt, seek medical advice.

Before exercising be sure to empty your pouch for greater freedom of movement and a reduced risk of leakage. Make sure you drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after exercising.

Until your ostomy and abdominal area are fully healed, strenuous activities can put you at risk for a hernia. You should avoid any kind of heavy lifting for the first six to eight weeks after your surgery.

If you decide to get a personal trainer, be sure to tell them about your ostomy. Make sure your personal trainer is well-educated on what exercises work best with your medical condition and always check with your healthcare provider before starting or changing any exercises.

## Exercise #1:

# Stomach Tightening Breathing

## When to start

This exercise can be started within days of surgery. You may even be able to start while you are still in hospital, provided your recovery is progressing normally and you check with your healthcare provider first.

## How to do it

Lie on your back, with your head supported by a pillow and your knees bent as far as is comfortable. Simply take a deep breath in and slowly exhale through your mouth. As you exhale, gently tighten up the deep muscles in your lower stomach. You should feel a very gentle 'tightening'. Do not try to lift your bottom or press your back into the bed. Just hold this 'brace' feeling for a count of 3-5 seconds, and then release. Breathe and relax and then repeat 3-5 times.

As you progress, you can do the exercise on the floor without a pillow and aim for a 'stronger' tightening feeling. Hold the 'brace' for a count of 10-15 and breathe deeply in and out 2 or 3 times. Repeat up to 5 times. Place your hands on your stomach so you can check and feel the muscles tightening.

Try to do this exercise 2 to 3 times per day.



## Exercise #2:

# Pelvic Tilt

## When to start

This exercise can also be done just days after surgery. Just be sure to start very slowly and gently. Consult your healthcare provider before attempting this exercise.



## How to do it

Lie on your back, with the option for your head to be supported by a pillow, and bend your knees as far as is comfortable. Very gently rock your pelvis upwards and flatten your back into the bed or floor. You should feel your stomach and bottom muscles tighten a little. Rock back to your starting position and repeat. Initially just aim for 5 repetitions and go very gently.

As you progress, allow your back to arch up a little more, and tighten your stomach more strongly as you push your back into the floor. Build up towards 20 reps.

Try to do this exercise 2 to 3 times per day.



### Exercise #3:

## Hip Lift / Bridge

### When to start

Introduce this exercise 7-10 days after surgery. Be sure to very gently and with a small movement, and only go as high as feels comfortable. Consult your healthcare provider before attempting this exercise.

### How to do it

Lie on your back, with the option for your head to be supported by a pillow, and bend your knees as far as is comfortable.

Very gently tilt your pelvis backwards and tighten your pelvic floor muscles. Lift your bottom off the bed/floor and slowly lift up vertebrae by vertebrae until your bottom is off the bed. Lift your bottom as high as you comfortably can. Hold this for a moment, then slowly lower your spine and pelvis back down. Imagine you're lifting a string of pearls off the floor and back down again.

Repeat 3-5 times initially building up to 10-15 repetitions in time and lifting higher as you feel more comfortable.

Try to do this exercise 2 to 3 times per day.



### Exercise #4:

## Knee Rolls

### When to start

Introduce this exercise 7-10 days after surgery. Make sure you are not experiencing any pain and keep your movements very small to begin with. Consult your healthcare provider before attempting this exercise.

### How to do it

Lie on your back, with the option for your head to be supported by a pillow, and bend your knees as far as is comfortable. Arms out to the sides. Keep your knees and ankles together and gently let your knees begin to drop over to one side. Only go as far as is comfortable, then carefully tighten your stomach muscles and roll your knees over to the other side. Try to keep your shoulders down and your head relaxed, looking up with your eyes. Aim for 5 rolls.

As time goes on, you can increase the range of motion, so your knees drop lower, and build up to 20 repetitions.

Try to do this exercise 2-3 times per day.







# Conclusion



The days after ostomy surgery can be challenging. You have a pouch attached to your abdomen and lots of new things to learn. It's important to remember that it takes time to adjust, but it will get easier. With support from your healthcare provider, you should soon be able to do the things you've always done.

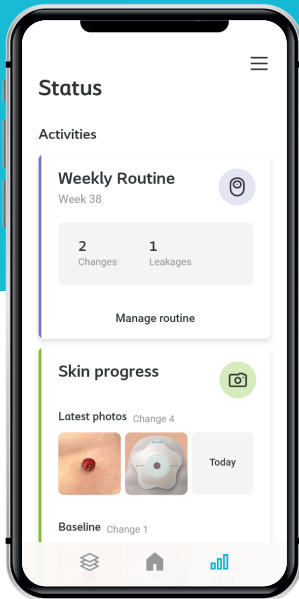
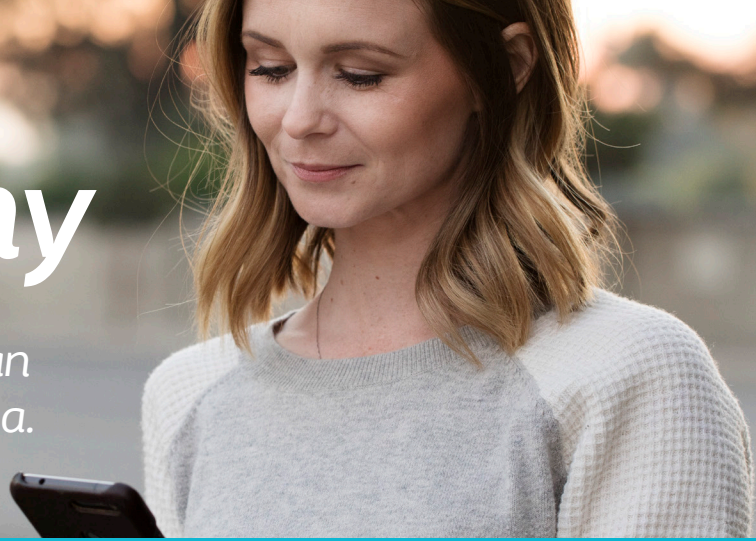
When you face a life-changing event like an ostomy surgery, it can feel overwhelming to tackle something like a new exercise routine. To build up the confidence, give yourself small targets in the

beginning. Gradually, you will feel ready for more – and wider-ranging – activities. Be patient with yourself during your recovery period.

If you take the right precautions, you can exercise with fewer limits. But you should always check with your healthcare provider for approval before you start exercising.

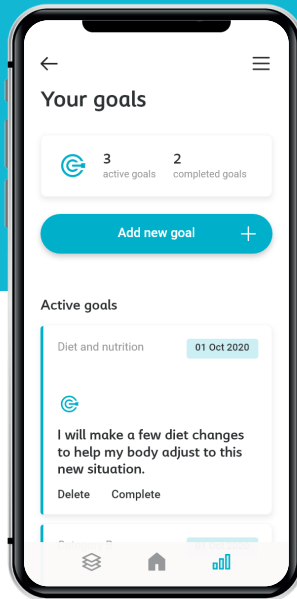
# MyOstomy

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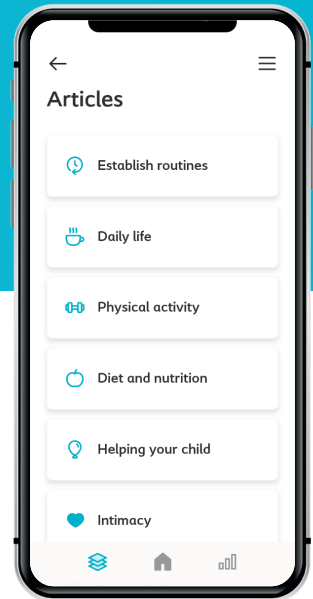
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Have any questions about MyOstomy or living with a stoma in general?

Contact our dedicated support advisors in **Coloplast Care** service program to get free and personalized advice.





# Coloplast Care



## Coloplast Care: Personal support for you

**Coloplast Care** is a product and lifestyle support program that guides you to make life easier through simple, straightforward advice about ostomy care. We offer a helping hand whenever you need support along with the tips and tools you need to take control of your ostomy.

### Coloplast Care offers you:

▶ **Online support**

A dedicated website with articles and reliable product and lifestyle advice from healthcare professionals and real users.

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Advisors ready to answer product and lifestyle questions and provide support.

▶ **Emails**

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