

Back in Motion: Life After Bladder Removal

[00:00:00] Ever wonder if you can exercise after bladder removal?

[00:00:04] Spoiler. The answer is yes, but there are a few things you need to know before you get moving.

[00:00:10] Hello and welcome back to Leaks, laughs, and Life with Urostomy.

[00:00:14] I am your host, Dawn, and if you're new here, this podcast is all about real life after bladder removal, the good, the messy, the funny, and everything in between.

[00:00:25] Before we dive in, I want to gently remind you that I am not a medical professional.

[00:00:31] I'm sharing my lived experience from my own urostomy journey and from my husband Alex's Neobladder journey. Because bladder free living comes in many forms. From leak disasters to travel hacks, from emotional hurdles to unexpected victories.

[00:00:46] Always speak with your surgeon or medical team about decisions regarding your own care. My goal here is to simply create a safe space to laugh, learn, and feel a little less alone.

[00:00:59] Thank you for being [00:01:00] here. It tells me you showed up on purpose, and that means more than you know.

[00:01:05] Today we're talking about a discussion that comes up once people start feeling better after surgery, and that is exercise.

[00:01:12] At some point after bladder removal surgery, you start thinking, "okay, I survived surgery. Now what? Can I move again? Can I exercise? When can I exercise?" And the answer is yes, but there are a few things you should know first.

[00:01:29] Your body's been through a major surgery and we're talking about organs being removed, new plumbing created, and a lot of healing that has to

happen. So getting back to movement takes time, patience, and a little bit of common sense.

[00:01:44] Today we're going to talk about safe ways to ease back into exercise, how to rebuild strength, and a few things to think about if you're living with Urostomy.

[00:01:54] Let's talk about why exercise matters after surgery.

[00:01:58] After bladder removal [00:02:00] surgery, your body has been through a lot. You have probably spent time resting, recovering, maybe sitting more than usual, and that is completely normal because healing takes energy.

[00:02:13] But after a while, your muscles start to notice that you have been taking it easy and you might feel weaker than before surgery.

[00:02:21] You might feel tired faster. You might even feel a little unsure about moving your body again. That is where exercise comes in.

[00:02:29] Now when I say exercise, I am not talking about running a marathon tomorrow or suddenly becoming a gym fanatic. For most of us, exercise after surgery starts with something very simple.

[00:02:41] Walking.

[00:02:43] Plain and simple.

[00:02:45] Walking is one of the best ways to begin rebuilding strength and stamina after surgery it gets your blood flowing. It gets your intestines moving and shaking, and it helps wake up your muscles and reminds your body how to move again. [00:03:00] And honestly, those first few walks can feel like a huge accomplishment.

[00:03:04] I remember those early walks after surgery. First it was in the hospital. The daily walks down the hallway and back to the bed, and then when you got home, it was less like exercise and more like a slow parade. Sometimes out to the mailbox. Sometimes it was just around the living room, you know, the walk one lap around the house, sit down and rest another lap, sit down again, and then go back to bed.

[00:03:37] Now that you're home, when is it safe to start?

[00:03:40] One thing I always want to say very clearly is this. Always follow the guidance of your surgeon or your medical team. Everyone's surgery is different, everyone's recovery is different, and some people are ready for gentle movement sooner than others, and that's okay.

[00:03:58] Most doctors encourage [00:04:00] walking very early in recovery. Usually the second day after surgery, you are up and going.

[00:04:05] Heavier activity needs to wait until your body is healed more, and it may be a few months before you can get into the more active exercises.

[00:04:14] One big thing doctors warn about after abdominal surgery is lifting heavy objects too soon. That can increase the risk of developing a hernia.

[00:04:24] Just don't, don't lift anything over five pounds. Trust me, a hernia is something we want to avoid, not have to deal with.

[00:04:33] So, if you're thinking about getting back into exercise, start small, start slow, and let your body tell you what it's ready for.

[00:04:43] If you're living with a urostomy, there are a few things to think about when exercising.

[00:04:48] First, empty your pouch before starting any activity. It's one less thing to worry about while you're moving around and it takes some of the weight off your body.

[00:04:58] Some people also choose to wear a [00:05:00] support belt or supportive clothing during exercise. I personally wear both. I wear a supportive belt and then the underwear that I have is real stretchy, but it's keeps a support belt close to my body. And then I wear loose fitting yoga pants.

[00:05:18] But they're, how do I explain it?

[00:05:20] They're not exactly tight, but they're not loose either, and that helps keep everything in place. Because comfort is really the goal and you don't want your stoma area to be hurting while you're exercising or walking.

[00:05:36] Another thing to keep in mind is being mindful of your core muscles.

[00:05:39] Your abdominal muscles went through a lot during surgery and they need time to regain strength. This does not mean you cannot exercise. It just means easing into it and building strength gradually.

[00:05:52] The good news is that many people with a urostomy go on to live very active lives. I know people who hike, swim, bike, travel, [00:06:00] garden and do all kinds of things after bladder removal surgery.

[00:06:03] Your body may be different now, but it's still capable of a lot and it will get back to that.

[00:06:09] Now let's talk about something that's really important, especially if you're exercising and that's hydration. When you no longer have a bladder, staying hydrated becomes even more important than before.

[00:06:20] Your body relies on good fluid intake to keep urine flowing and to help prevent infections. You don't want those UTIs. And when you start exercising, you lose more fluids through your sweat. So drinking enough water becomes part of taking care of your body during activity.

[00:06:37] A simple way to think about this is, drink some water before you exercise. Sip some during longer activities as you're doing them, and make sure you hydrate afterward.

[00:06:48] Your urine can also give you clues. If it starts looking darker than usual, your body may be asking for more fluids.

[00:06:56] And hydration can also mean one more thing, you may find yourself [00:07:00] becoming very familiar with the phrase, "uh, excuse me for a minute, I need to empty my pouch." It just becomes part of the routine, and I say that a lot. Not glamorous, but very normal.

[00:07:12] One of the biggest lessons after surgery is to listen to your body again.

[00:07:16] Some days you may feel strong and energetic. Other days you may feel tired and need more rest. Both of these days are normal. Recovery is not a straight line, and what matters most is consistency. Small steps over time add up.

[00:07:31] Maybe today, it's a short walk. Maybe next week, it's a longer walk.

[00:07:36] Maybe eventually, you can add some light strength exercises.

[00:07:41] But every step forward counts.

[00:07:45] If you're recovering from bladder removal surgery and wondering whether you will ever feel strong again. I want you to know this, your body is incredibly resilient. With patience, movement, and a little bit of determination many people find their [00:08:00] strength again and even discover new ways to stay active. Exercise does not have to be intense. It just has to be something that helps keep you moving forward.

[00:08:11] I know that I was never a gym rat, but I've started going to the gym every day just to keep myself moving and getting enough steps in.

[00:08:21] I ride the stationary bikes. I walk on the treadmill. I do the stair stepping and the ellipticals, and that helps keep me moving forward and gaining strength.

[00:08:34] Before we wrap up today, I have a little request.

[00:08:37] I want to hear from you.

[00:08:39] In an upcoming episode, I am going to be celebrating real wins from people living with a urostomy or a neobladder. Big wins, small wins, funny wins, messy wins.

[00:08:49] I want them all.

[00:08:50] If you have a story to share, an "aha" moment, or something you've accomplished since surgery, send me an email at dawn. It's [00:09:00] D-A-W-N at leaks, L-E-A-K-S. Laughs. L-A-U-G-H-S life.com. So it's dawn@leakslaughslife.com. You might even hear your story on the podcast.

[00:09:17] Let celebrate these wins together.

[00:09:20] Thank you for joining me today on Leaks, laughs, and Life with your ostomy. I hope this episode gave you a few insights, maybe a laugh, and reminded you that you're not alone in this journey.

[00:09:30] If you found it helpful, please subscribe so you don't miss an episode. And share it with someone who might need to hear it.

[00:09:37] For more information, tips and tricks or a copy of the show notes, please go to my website@leakslaughslife.com.

[00:09:46] In the next episode of Leaks, Laughs, and Life with Urostomy, we explore the medical conditions that might lead someone to needing a bladder removal surgery or a radical cystectomy.

[00:09:58] If you're facing a bladder related health [00:10:00] concern or supporting someone who is this episode provides clear information, reassurance, and insight into the journey ahead.

[00:10:07] And remember, this journey is full of leaks, plenty of laughs, and a whole lot of life.

[00:10:12] Until then, take care of yourself. Be gentle with your body, and I'll see you next week.