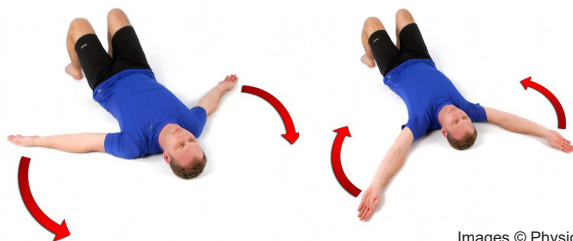


## Snow Angels

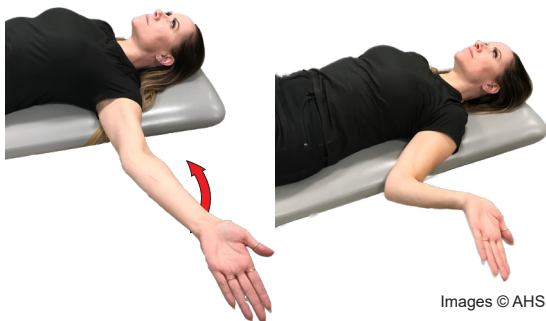
- Lay on your back on a bed or on the floor with both of your knees bent.
- Start with your arms at your sides.
- Keep your elbows straight, and raise your arms, with the palms of your hands facing upwards.
- Raise them until you feel some tension.



Images © Physiotec

## Nerve Gliding

- Lie down.
- Put your arm out to the side with your wrist bent back.
- Bend your elbow, folding your arm toward you, as if you are holding a tray. Straighten and repeat.



Images © AHS



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Cancer Care Alberta

## “Bye Byes”

- Keep your elbow straight, wave “Bye Bye”.
- Do this 2 times in each position:
  - a. Arm forward
  - b. Arm sideways



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If you have any questions or concerns,  
call your physical therapist at:

**Cross Cancer Institute (Edmonton)**  
780-432-8716 or 1-822-838-0202

**Arthur J.E. Child Comprehensive  
Cancer Centre (Calgary)**  
587-231-5701 or 1-888-221-2113

**Central Alberta Cancer Centre  
(Red Deer)**  
403-406-1963

**Jack Ady Cancer Centre (Lethbridge)**  
403-388-6846 or 1-888-221-2113

**Grande Prairie Cancer Centre  
(Grand Prairie)**  
Phone: 825-412-4211



Symp Man | Rehab Onc| PROV-C/P | 2024-R1| CPE-P0043



## Axillary Web Syndrome (Cording)

Symptom Management—Rehabilitation Oncology



## What is Axillary Web Syndrome?

Axillary Web Syndrome (AWS) is also called cording, tethering, or banding. It is a condition that may happen in the arm, armpit, trunk, or breast, after surgery and treatment for breast cancer.

- You may see thick or thin bands, or cords, in the armpit, which may run down the arm. Sometimes these cords can go all the way down to the base of the thumb.
- There can often be some pain in the area of cording making it difficult to reach, lift your arm, or straighten your elbow.
- Recent research in Alberta suggests that 1 in 5 people will develop cording after breast cancer surgery.

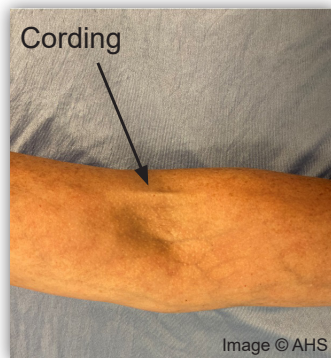
## What causes cording?

The cause of cording is not really understood yet.

It may be caused by lymph or blood vessels that become inflamed, after they are damaged by breast surgery or cancer treatment (radiation).

Sometimes, it can be caused by the cancer itself.

Cording usually becomes visible in the first 2-8 weeks after surgery, but can come back at other times.



## What can I do if I have cording?

- Don't worry! Most people affected with it will usually regain their normal shoulder and arm function within 3 months.
- It is very important to **stretch** your arm **everyday** until your normal function returns.
- Ask for a referral to physiotherapy if the cording does not go away with stretching on your own. If you can still see the cording, but you have normal arm and shoulder function, you do not need more treatment.

By doing these stretches every day, you should notice:

- A decrease in your pain.
- An increase in your arm mobility.

### For all stretches:

- ✓ Stretch until you feel tension, not pain. A good stretch should be slightly uncomfortable but never painful.
- ✓ Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds
- ✓ Repeat each stretch 5–10 times.
- ✓ Do these stretches 2 times daily.
- ✓ Move in and out of the stretch **slowly and gently**. Return your arm to the starting position after each stretch.

- ✗ Don't stretch so far that you feel a

“popping” sensation. If you do feel that sensation, it's okay, as long as you do not have pain with it.

- ✓ Do call your doctor or physiotherapist if you are having trouble getting back your normal arm function.

### Cane Stretch

- Lay on your back on a bed or on the floor with both of your knees bent.
- Hold a cane with hands shoulder width apart resting on your lap.
- Keep your elbows straight and slowly lift your arms above your head as far as possible.
- Do this with your:
  - a. Hands shoulder width apart
  - b. Hands wider than shoulder width apart, making a “vee”

