

How to Exercise:

Tips for Rehab Patients

Changes in your health can make you weaker than you used to be. Your rehab therapists may suggest a fitness program to help you get stronger. Use these ideas to get you started and stay safe.

Why should I exercise regularly?

Exercise can help to:

- increase blood flow
- lower stress
- help you maintain a healthy weight
- boost your energy
- improve your mood
- improve how you move
- improve your sleep



What kind of fitness program do I need?

A good fitness program includes exercises that help to:

- build **strength**
- increase flexibility with **stretching**
- increase aerobic **fitness**
- improve **balance**

You can increase your fitness by doing everyday activities.

How do I stay safe?

1. Prepare yourself

Make sure you:

- Wear proper clothing and shoes (use shoes with good rubber soles; running shoes are best)
- Drink enough water
- Get enough sleep
- Pick a time of day when you have more energy

If you have diabetes:

- Watch your blood sugar closely
- Drink plenty of water
- Keep snacks nearby
- Make sure your skin is in good condition
- Wear the right shoes

2. Make sure you are not doing too much

Check these things while you exercise:

- **Heart rate:** Stay below the maximum heart rate that's right for you.
 - My health care team recommends a maximum of _____beats per minute.
- **Rate how hard it feels out of 10:** It should be a 3 or 4.
 - This is called Rate of Perceived Exertion or RPE. An RPE of 3 or 4 means it feels 'moderate' to 'somewhat hard'.

STOP if you cannot breathe well, have pain or discomfort

- **Talk test.** You should be able to talk to a friend without getting out of breath.
- **Blood pressure.** Talk to your doctor about what is normal for you.

3. Check if you can use weights

Only use weights if your therapist or doctor says it's okay.

What will help me to keep going?

- Exercise with a friend or family member.
- Exercise at the same time each day to develop a routine.
- Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 days of the week.
- Any amount is better than none.
- Try different kinds of exercises or join a class.
- Explore fun ways to exercise and get outside, like: walking, hiking, or sports.
- Keep track of your progress by writing a log.

Where can I exercise in the community?

- YMCA, Toronto Parks and Recreation
- Variety Village
- Baycrest - Wagman Centre and MOST (Moving On after STroke)
- Mall walking
- Pools
- Tai Chi, Yoga or Pilates
- Conductive Education – Ontario March of Dimes
- Disabled sports programs (such as, Canadian Association for the
- Riding Disabled, Ontario Disabled Golf Association)

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