Exercising Independently

Let's Start!

Congratulations on starting your Pulmonary Rehab program! Now that you have completed some supervised exercise sessions, you are ready to begin doing some activity on your own as well. The pulmonary rehab staff will be here to guide and support you as you learn to become more active!

Exercise is an important part of staying healthy for everyone, but it is **especially** important if you have lung disease. Shortness of breath caused by lung disease can make physical activity and daily chores more challenging. Slowly over time you may start avoiding physical tasks and exercise in order to avoid becoming out of breath. As a result your muscles become weaker, eventually moving around becomes even more difficult. Weak muscles are inefficient and require more oxygen than strong muscles. In order to meet this increased demand for oxygen, your body forces you to breath harder and faster leading to even worse shortness of breath! This is the vicious cycle that many people with a progressive lung disease fall into. By making regular exercise a priority, you are taking action to break the cycle.

You feel breathless
You become fearful of activity that makes you breathless
You avoid those activities which make you breathless
You do less activity
Your muscles become weaker
Weak muscles use more oxygen and are less efficient
The vicious cycle of inactivity

A Commitment to regular physical activity can improve your Quality of Life by:

- ✓ Lower blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol
- ✓ Decreased risk of coronary artery disease and stroke
- ✓ Improved blood sugar levels and prevents diabetes
- ✓ Improved body composition (increase muscle and decrease fat)
- ✓ A stronger immune system
- ✓ Improved sleep
- ✓ Increased energy levels
- ✓ Less difficulty doing daily chores and leisure activities
- ✓ Reduced stress and anxiety
- ✓ Increased bone density reduced risk of osteoporosis/fracture
- ✓ Decreased osteoarthritis pain
- ✓ Improvement in strength, balance and flexibility,
- ✓ Stronger respiratory muscles
- ✓ More confidence!

Time to Create a Plan…

Often, getting started on an exercise routine is the hardest part. The more detailed your plan is the easier it will be to put into action Using the F.I.T.T principal can help you come up with a structured plan. F.I.T.T stands for:

Frequency

Intensity

Time

Type

Frequency

How many days per week should I exercise?

✓Aim to do some type of aerobic exercise at least 3 times per week up to 7 days per week, and strength exercises at least 2 times per week

✓If you are currently exercising in pulmonary rehab 2-3 times per week, start by adding 2 days of exercise at home.

✓ Pick days ahead of time that are convenient for you.

✓Schedule your exercise session into your day like you would a doctors appointment or a rehab session

Intensity

How hard should I be exercising?

➢The intensity of the exercise should feel similar to how hard exercise in class feels to you. Think about the RPE scale and Borg scale that we use in class.

➢Appropriate activity level should be somewhat challenging. Your heart rate, respiratory rate, and body temperature should increase.

➢Use your pulse oximeter ***during*** exercise to make sure your oxygen is staying above 92%. If you find it is low, make sure you are pursed lip breathing and slow down your pace so that you are able to maintain a safe blood oxygen level. If you are using supplemental oxygen, you may need to increase your liter flow in order to keep moving.

Time

How long should I exercise for?

➢The duration that you are able to exercise varies greatly from person to person. Your endurance will increase if you continue rehab and workout at home as well.

➢Work towards the goal of exercising for 30 continuous minutes most days in the week.

➢Those that are deconditioned may need to modify their regimen, that's ok!

- ➢ **Example 1**: 15 min. AM and 15 min. PM = 30 min.
- ➢ **Example 2**: 20 min. first week, and add 3 minutes each week
- ➢ **Example 3:** 10 min., rest, 10 min., rest, 10 min. = 30 min.

Doing SOMETHING always beats doing NOTHING!

Type

- In pulmonary rehab you will learn to do aerobic exercise, strength training and stretching exercises.
- **Aerobic** exercise helps to improve cardiovascular and respiratory functioning. Examples of aerobic exercise are: walking, biking, swimming, equipment such as the treadmill, stationary bike, rower, and elliptical
- **Strength training** helps to strengthen muscles, tendons, and bones. Increasing your strength will make physical tasks easier. Lifting dumbells, using resistance bands and resisting bodyweight are examples of ways to train your body to become stronger.

Ask yourself these questions about the activity you are planning on doing:

- ❑ When was the last time I did this activity ?
- ❑ Am I physically able to do this activity?
- ❑ Can I do this activity safely and independently?
- ❑ Is this activity weather dependent?
- ❑ Do I need to travel to do this activity?
- ❑ Do I have the equipment I need?

Choosing an activity that has too many barriers prevents you from being successful

Home Exercise Plan

- Frequency: Aim to exercise 3-7 days per week

- Intensity: mild to moderate intensity. Comparable to intensity felt during pulmonary rehab. Ask yourself…

  Did I use my inhaler?

  Am I pursed lip breathing?

  Where is my shortness of breath and exertion on a scale of 0-10?

  (aim for a 3-4)

  Is my oxygen saturation over 92%

  Do I need to increase my supplemental oxygen

- Time: Aim to exercise for 30 minutes, this can be broken down into shorter increments but progressing toward 30 continuous minutes.

- Type: Aerobic / strength training

  WALK! Being able to walk maintains your mobility and independence, it requires no equipment and its free!

Important Tips…

- Use your “rescue” inhaler (ProAir, Ventolin, Albuterol, Xopenex) *before* exercise. These medications are bronchodilators that will help open your airways to make breathing easier.
- Use your oximeter when moving (not just when stopped). Oxygen levels drop with activity and this is when you want to monitor that your blood oxygen saturation is not too low.
- Don’t exercise on an empty stomach, have a small healthy snack before exercise to help maintain blood sugar levels.
- Drink plenty of fluids before and after
- Exercise with a buddy! Having company can make exercise more enjoyable and safer. If working out alone, be sure to have a cell phone handy.
- If you have supplemental oxygen it is especially important to use it during physical activity. Exercise or chores may require more oxygen than when sitting. Increase the liter flow to keep oxygen levels ideally over 92%