

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Exercise offers benefits that can help you regain lost ground, guard against loss of health and improve the quality of your life.

Some Benefits of Exercise

- Improves sleeping
- Enhances your sex life
- Combats chronic diseases
- Reduces risk of heart attack
- Improves your outlook on life
- Delays “age-related” weakness
- Strengthens your heart and lungs
- Helps control blood sugar in diabetes
- Increases stamina, strength and flexibility
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety
- Helps with losing weight and/or staying at a desirable weight
- Helps prevent Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and certain cancers
- Improves your concentration and productivity
- Improves balance, joint stability and resistance to accidental injury
- Provides greater resistance to stress and fatigue
- Lowers blood pressure and improves cholesterol levels

Exercise Comes In Three Parts

A well-balanced exercise program should include the following three elements as well as five minutes of warm-up and cool-down exercises, such as stretching and slowly paced aerobic exercise. It is important to start out slowly, gently and gradually when dealing with a significant medical condition.

- **Aerobic Exercise**
Brisk walking, swimming, bicycling or any moderately strenuous exercise that gets you huffing and puffing for 30 minutes or so is beneficial. Your heart rate goes up but should stay within guidelines established by your doctor. Aerobic exercise strengthens your heart, lungs and blood vessels and gives you increased endurance. Start very gradually and build up to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise 4-6 times a week.
- **Strength Training**
Lifting weights and working against resistance are examples of strength training. Strength training improves muscle tone, balance and joint stability. Even moderate amounts of strength training help decrease physical frailty and decrease pain in arthritic joints.
- **Flexibility Training**
Stretching and range-of-motion exercises keep your muscles and joints functioning at full mobility. They’re important for maintaining the quality of your life. Together, strength-training and flexibility exercises protect you from muscle strains, falls and other accidental injuries.

Exercise Cautions

- Get your doctor’s advice before starting any exercise program. Your individual exercise needs may be different from those outlined here.
- Learn to take your pulse and stay within the target heart range that you and your doctor agree is safe for you.
- Know the signs of overexertion and stop if you experience weakness, chest pain, dizziness, excessive sweating or increased shortness of breath that doesn’t return to normal within a few minutes.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after your workout to prevent dehydration.
- Wear a medical ID bracelet with your name, condition and allergies on it.

Ways to Ensure Success

- Some exercises can be done daily. Others might be best done 4-6 times a week.
- Start slowly and build up gradually to a full program.
- Keep an exercise diary that shows your progress from week to week.
- If getting out is hard for you, consider indoor equipment, such as a stationary bicycle or treadmill.
- Join a group: Check your local community for exercise groups adapted to your chronic condition. Mall walking is safe and can be done year round.
- Wear the proper shoes.

Taking Your Pulse

During aerobic exercises, you may need to keep track of your heart rate. Your doctor may recommend wearing a heart rate monitor. You can also take your own pulse. Practice taking your pulse for 10 seconds at a time until you can do it quickly and easily. Divide the maximum heart rate advised by your doctor by six. You should not exceed this number during your 10-second pulse count. For example, if your doctor recommends a target heart rate of 120, divide 120 by six to get 20. Your target pulse for a 10 second count would be 20. If you find that your heart rate is over your target, slow down your activity. Abruptly stopping an intense exercise can result in dizziness and fainting.