

EXERCISING

WITH

CYSTIC FIBROSIS



Research studies have shown that individuals with cystic fibrosis who attain higher levels of aerobic fitness report feeling better and having a higher overall quality of life. And, while cystic fibrosis can certainly make exercise more challenging, regular physical activity may actually improve your symptoms, particularly mucus clearance, and possibly even delay decreases in your pulmonary function. Start exercising regularly and you'll likely find it much easier to perform everyday tasks as well. The key is to determine what type of exercise is best for you and to follow a program that accommodates your individual needs and concerns.

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program and ask for specific programming recommendations.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- The goals of your program should be to increase your cardiovascular fitness, facilitate mucus clearance, and improve your ability to perform activities of daily living.
- Choose activities that you enjoy such as walking, cycling, rowing and swimming and work up to a moderate intensity.
- Start slowly and gradually increase the intensity and duration of your workouts. You may need to start with five- to 10-minute sessions and build up to 30-minute sessions, three or more days per week.
- Two days per week do three 10-repetition sets of light-resistance strength-training exercises targeting all the major muscle groups.
- Use the Ratings of Perceived Exertion and dyspnea scales as well as heart rate to measure your intensity, and adjust your workouts according to fluctuations in your symptoms.

Exercise Cautions

- Supplemental oxygen may enhance your training effect. Initially, you may want to have your oxyhemoglobin saturation monitored to determine your optimal level of oxygen supplementation.
- Avoid extreme weather conditions; prolonged exercise in the heat may increase your need for fluids and dietary salt.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.

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