

EXERCISING

WITH

POLIO OR POST-POLIO SYNDROME



The last major polio epidemic occurred more than 40 years ago, but if you contracted and recovered from the disease, chances are you continue to experience symptoms of fatigue and muscle and joint pain. The good news is that physical activity has been shown to significantly increase lower-extremity strength and aerobic capacity. Furthermore, regular exercise can help you maintain your weight and reduce your risk of developing other diseases. The key to maximizing the benefits of exercise is to follow a well-designed 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.
- The goals of your program should be to improve mobility, your ability to perform activities of daily living, and your overall fitness.
- Choose activities you enjoy and that are within your functional capabilities, such as using an arm ergometer, recumbent bicycle or water exercise. Aim to exercise aerobically 20 to 30 minutes, three days per week, at a moderate-to-somewhat hard intensity.
- Do three, 10- to 15-repetition sets of strength-training exercises for the major muscle groups two times per week.
- Perform stretching exercises daily to improve your range of motion and prevent contractures.
- Start slowly and gradually progress the intensity and duration of your workouts. Take frequent breaks during activity if needed.

Exercise Cautions

- To help you stick to your program, consider having a trained health professional supervise and monitor your response to exercise for the first two months.
- If you experience spasms during exercise, lower your intensity and increase your recovery periods.
- Progressive sudden fatigue is a sign that you are overdoing it and should reduce the intensity of your workout.

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.

IN THE SERIES:

- > Cardiovascular Diseases
- > Pulmonary Diseases
- > Metabolic Diseases
- > Immunological/ Hematological Disorders
- > Orthopedic Diseases and Disabilities
- > Neuromuscular Disorders



Support for the Exercise is Medicine® Global Initiative is Provided By:

