

EXERCISING

WITH

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



Regular physical activity can help you maintain a healthy body weight, boost immunity, reduce stress, sleep better and feel more energized. Do not let fear or lack of confidence prevent you from participating in physical activities. The good news is that visual impairment generally does not affect the benefits that can be derived from regular physical activity. The key is to find activities you enjoy and feel comfortable doing so that you will stick to your program over the long-term.

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider about integrating regular exercise into your lifestyle.
- The primary goal of your program is to improve your overall fitness by finding activities that you enjoy and will do on a regular basis. Choose environments that are comfortable and familiar to you and avoid situations that increase your anxiety related to participation in physical activities.
- To improve cardiovascular fitness, choose low-impact, large-muscle activities that can be done continuously, such as walking, swimming, and indoor cycling. If balance is a challenge, use handrails for occasional support.
- If your fitness level is low, start with shorter sessions (10 to 15 minutes) and gradually build up to 20 to 60 minutes of aerobic activity, at least three or more days per week.
- At least two days per week, follow a strength-training program with one to three sets of exercises for the major muscle groups, with 10 to 15 repetitions. Stretch regularly to improve joint range of motion.

Exercise Cautions

- If you have any other conditions, such as heart disease or hypertension, follow the recommendations specific to that condition.
- Do not hesitate to ask for further explanations about how to perform exercises properly.

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.

IN THE SERIES:

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

*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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