

Getting Moving Again



Why is getting moving again important?

After being in hospital for a period of time, your muscles will be much weaker than normal and you will certainly be less fit than you were.

It is important to get back to your previous level of activity or possibly aim to be more active!

How will I know if I am less fit than I was?

- You will find doing everyday jobs that you used to do easily, tiring.
- Walking up and down the stairs may make your legs ache and you may be quite short of breath.
- Going for even a short walk, is exhausting.

Why is doing some exercise important?

- By being active and starting some exercise you become stronger and fitter. You may notice your tiredness increase and some breathlessness at first but these should improve the stronger you get; this is a normal response to doing more exercise for all of us.
- You will feel better in yourself and can do more of the things that are important to you.
- Regular activity will help to minimise pain and stiffness in joints and will help you regain muscle strength.
- Being active during the day may help you sleep better.
- Over time regular exercise will help you manage chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.
- **The more time spent being physically active, the greater the health benefits.**

What can I do after discharge from hospital?

- It is important that you start being active as soon as possible after discharge from hospital. This will help improve both your mental and physical health
- It is likely you will only be able to manage small amounts of exercise and activity at the beginning of your recovery.
- **Regular physical activity along with eating well can help you recover, build your muscle strength and become independent again.**

How do I start being active again?

- Start slowly and build up your level of activity over time.
- Try to do little and often, allow rest between activities and don't overdo it.
- Reduce sitting time. Try standing up every hour and marching on spot.
- Set yourself small goals that you can do in the day. You can start with small tasks such as making a drink or something to eat.
- Aim for a daily walk. Do walk with someone until you are confident to go out on your own.
- Try making a walk part of your daily routine to give your day structure.
- Don't worry if you need to stop and rest, that's a normal part of recovering and getting strong again.
- If you have an exercise bike at home this might be a good alternative to walking, particularly on wet days.

What should I be aiming for with my walking?

- You should aim to build up to 30 minutes of activity at least five days a week, but this is not going to happen at the beginning of your recovery.
- Take your time and build up as you feel you can and aim to do a little more each day.
- Choose a good time of day (when you are not too tired) to go for a walk.
- You might want to think about times when routes are a little quieter (early morning or evenings).

- Wait an hour after eating a meal before you exercise and take a drink with you.
- Walk with someone until you feel confident to be out on your own.
- If you live alone you might want to walk with a friend but you must maintain distance between both of you.
- Start with just walking for five minutes without stopping (or less if you feel breathless and tired).
- Gradually build this up, by one or two minutes.
- Once you can do 10 minutes without stopping aim to do two 10 minute walks a day.
- Once you can achieve three 10 minute walks aim for two 15 minute walks.
- Gradually progress to a 30 minute walk.
- Once you can walk for 30 minutes without stopping, you can begin to build up your speed.

How do I know if I'm working at the right level?

- You should be able speak a sentence when you are exercising.
- If you feel uncomfortable at any point, stop and rest for as long as you need.
- It's normal to feel a little breathless, warm and sweaty during exercise.
- Your muscles may ache afterwards but this should not last for more than a couple of days.
- You may feel more tired afterwards, but it's important to keep walking to build up your fitness and eventually feel less tired.

- It may help to record the times that you walked so you can see your progress. You may not feel as strong on some days than others and walk quite as far, but don't get disheartened, look at your progress week- on- week. We all have good days and bad days.

What if I have a bad day?

- It is normal to have setbacks so don't give up. There is no reason to feel that you've failed.
- Learning from your experiences helps you to set goals that are more realistic and more likely to last. This will help you to set activity goals that become part of your daily routines.
- Remember the less you do, the less you will want to do and the less you will be able to do.

Please read this before starting

- Any exercise could lead to risk of physical injury.
- You should feel good when participating in activity or exercise.
- If you experience any extreme pain, shortness of breath or dizziness, stop and seek advice.
- Following this, activity and exercise advice, is at your own risk. You are agreeing to undertake these activities voluntarily and as such assume all risk of injury to yourself.
- If you feel unwell before, during or after, stop immediately and seek advice.