

EXERCISE FOR COPD A Key to Improving Your Health

COPD

(Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) is a lung disease sometimes called chronic bronchitis or emphysema.

WHY IS EXERCISE SO IMPORTANT?

- Improves your breathing
- Strengthens your muscles
- Helps your body use oxygen better
- Gives you more energy



**First key is
NO SMOKING!**



HOW CAN YOU GET STARTED?

1. Don't let the word 'exercise' frighten you. Any type of activity counts as exercise – walking, climbing stairs, everyday chores, gardening.
2. Start slowly and gradually do a little more (maybe 2 to 3 minutes more each week). Walking is one of the best ways to start increasing your fitness level. It's easy and can be done any time of year. The key is to do it – but not to overdo it!
3. Stick with it! You have to exercise regularly to benefit. Even a small amount of exercise every day can help – and is definitely better than none at all.

“Pulmonary rehabilitation” (sometimes just called rehab) is a special program for people with long-term lung diseases. If one is available in your area, talk with your doctor about a referral. When that is not possible, or if you are better on your own, you can:

- Talk to an expert at The Lung Association's Breathworks program. They provide support for folks with lung disease and give exercise advice through a helpline (1-866-717-2673).
- Plan your own home program.
 - **Download the Exercise Factsheet booklet** from The Lung Association's Resources section at www.lung.ca/copd. It tells you what you need to know and gives picture examples of the three main kinds of exercise (Stretching, Aerobic and Strengthening) to include in a COPD fitness routine.
 - Check out this **video** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwxy9FLBMjk>; 38 mins) to follow an instructor and do “lung exercises” in the comfort of your own home.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Find an activity you **enjoy**.
2. Plan to exercise when your energy level will be good (perhaps first thing in the morning) and when your stomach isn't full (either before a meal or two hours after eating).
3. Set aside specific times to exercise and aim for at least 3 to 5 days per week.
4. Work at a steady pace that requires a bit of effort. If you start to feel tired or breathless, stop and rest. Better yet, alternate short periods of activity with short breaks.
5. Adopt an exercise buddy. An activity partner can help you “stay with it.”

Sources and More Information:

- 1) The Lung Association. Ask The Breathworks Coach – Factsheet: Exercise. www.lung.ca/copd
- 2) MacNaughton K. Why Exercise is So Important When You Have COPD. 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/y3g3h4nf>
- 3) COPD: Exercise & Activity Guidelines. <https://tinyurl.com/y4rd2lsz>
- 4) European Lung Foundation. Your lungs and exercise. <https://tinyurl.com/yyo8zfe7>
- 5) American Lung Association. Physical Activity and COPD <https://tinyurl.com/y4oltg4f>
- 6) Physical activity for your lung health. <https://tinyurl.com/yau9rsu5>

