

Lifetime Medical Associates / Rush Union Care
Exercise Prescription

Using the guidelines below, gradually work toward 30-40 minutes of aerobic exercise at least 3 to 4 times a week, preferably every day.

Consider this a prescription from your doctor and give it the same importance you would any other prescription. Although it has been proven beyond any reasonable doubt that even moderate aerobic exercise has significant health benefits, few of us get enough exercise. For most people, the potential benefits of exercise are tremendous and the risks are very small. The biggest risk to exercise is not starting.

The benefits of exercise

- Better heart and lung function and Improved circulation
- Higher HDL (good) cholesterol levels
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved mood, development of a sense of well-being, improved sleep, and stress reduction
- Stronger bones and muscles and a better shape to your body
- Prevention of heart attacks and strokes
- Prevention of diabetes or improved control of diabetes in those with the disease.

Choose the right activity for you

The exercise you choose should be enjoyable and something you can do year round regardless of the weather. An exercise “buddy” or an activity with your children would make it easier and more enjoyable. Here are some examples: **Brisk walking, Swimming, Cycling, Jogging.** You should be able to talk while exercising, but you should break a sweat, be breathing heavier than usual, experience a faster heart rate and be tired when you’re done.

Other ways to get in your 40 minutes of daily exercise

- Park in the spot *furthest* from your destination (instead of fighting for the spot next to the door).
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk to the store, the train or the bus stop instead of driving.
- Replace your sedentary activities with social activities revolving around exercise.
- Exercise during your lunch break or before dinner to curb your appetite.

How do I start?

Start out slowly. Conditioning takes months. Don’t be a “weekend warrior.” Start by walking at your usual pace for 10 minutes daily for 2 to 4 weeks. Increase the amount of time you walk by 10 minutes every 2 weeks or so. When you get to 40 minutes, gradually increase your pace.

What needs to be done first?

You do not need a medical evaluation other than the one your doctor will recommend. Stop exercising and consult your doctor if you experience any of the following: chest pain, shortness of breath (the feeling that you can’t catch your breath), significant pain, dizziness, or any other symptoms that concern you.

Other helpful hints

- Be sure to drink plenty of fluids prior to, during, and after exercise.
- Stretch before and after exercise; flexibility is important.
- Warm up and cool down slowly.