



## Why Fitness Matters

The benefits of regular exercise and good physical fitness for everyone have become well known in the past 50 years. So, how do these benefits apply to you?

People with cystic fibrosis can work with their care team to find ways to exercise safely. Regular exercise is tough and we all find reasons to avoid it. But it makes sense, for some pretty basic and powerful reasons:

- **Better overall health:** Our bodies were made to be active. When we become inactive, we put ourselves at increased risk for heart and bone disease, diabetes, and cancer.
- **More energy:** When you improve your heart, lung, and muscle function, you have more energy for daily tasks, as well as daily CF treatments.
- **Better lung function:** Regular exercise can improve your ability to get mucus out of your airways.
- **More time with others:** Taking part in physical activities with other people is a good way to motivate yourself and a great way to maintain social relationships.

Even when you are in the hospital you should try to move about as much as possible. This will help you maintain your fitness level and you will do better when you are discharged. When you are in the hospital, ask your CF team to have an order written so a physical therapist can help you exercise while you're there.

The bottom line is that our bodies were made to move. Being inactive is unnatural for your body and can give rise to disease and disability.

### Adults: It Only Takes 21 Minutes a Day

You don't have to do vigorous activities like running marathons or other competitive sports. Federal guidelines on physical activity for Americans encourage all adults to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week, and it should be at least moderately intense. This may sound like a lot, but it's only about 21 minutes a day.

For instance, you could take a brisk 10- to 11-minute walk twice a day. Or, you could jog part of the way to add in some vigorous intensity. The guidelines also recommend doing

resistance exercise, like weightlifting or pushups, two days a week. As your physical activity improves, you can get more health benefits by exercising longer or at a greater intensity.

### **Simple Ways to Add Exercise to Your Day**

- Walk the stairs instead of taking the elevator
- Walk your dog (or a friend's or neighbor's)
- Dance to your favorite music
- Walk the shopping mall
- Park farther from the store entrance

### **Active But Not Uncomfortable**

Do some exercise on purpose at least three to four days a week at an intensity that allows you to talk during the activity. You don't want to be so out of breath when you exercise that you can't talk.

As a guide, stay comfortably active doing a variety of activities like aerobic exercise that last more than 10 minutes, even if you take some rest pauses. On one or two of these days, include some resistance activities like weightlifting. Any exercise is better than none, but it is possible to overdo it. If you have concerns about beginning an exercise routine -- or making changes to your current routine -- talk with your CF care team and request a visit with a physical therapist.

### **Kids: 60 Minutes of Physical Activity a Day**

All children should get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Toddlers should be doing intense, short bursts of activity such as running, jumping, and climbing. Toddlers and young children are not expected to do 60 continuous minutes of exercise. The goal at this age is to make physical activity a family activity because children are influenced by their parents and siblings.

Children should be exposed to a wide variety of activities. Running, jumping, and ball games help to strengthen bones. Activity should be intense enough to cause some shortness of breath, but still allow the child to carry on a conversation.

Resistance training is recommended for children, too. School-aged children can do strengthening exercises using their body weight (e.g., calisthenics) most days of the week. Teens may begin a more formal resistance training program (using resistance bands, weights, or body weight) two to three times per week. It is recommended to first work with a physical therapist or personal trainer to learn good technique and prevent injury.

Watch the webcast below to hear Anne Mejia Downs, P.T., M.P.H, C.C.S., and an adult with CF:

- Discuss the importance of exercise and CF
- Demonstrate simple stretching and muscle-building exercises
- Offer tips for fitting exercise into daily life

### **Exercise and CF | Webcast**

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