

Exercising with Cystic Fibrosis

People with Cystic Fibrosis can find ways to exercise safely. Regular exercise is tough, and we all find reasons to avoid it. **But exercising is ideal for the following reasons:**

1. **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.
2. **More energy:** when you improve your heart, lung, and muscle function, you have more energy for daily tasks, as well as daily CF treatments.
3. **Better lung function:** Regular exercise can improve your ability to get mucus out of your airways.
4. **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.

It only takes 21 minutes of exercise a day. People are encouraged to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week, and it should at least be moderately intense. For instance, you could take a brisk 10-to-15-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:

1. Walk the stairs instead of taking the elevator.
2. Walk your dog (or a friend's or neighbors).
3. Dance to your favorite music.
4. Walk the shopping mall.
5. Park farther from the store entrance.

Active but not uncomfortable:

Do some type of exercise 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 lasts more than ten 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.

Dehydration is a real concern for active people living with CF because they can lose more salt (sodium and Chloride) when they sweat than those who don't have CF. This is especially important if you're playing sports or exercising outside when it is hot and humid.

You can prevent dehydration by:

1. Drinking plenty of fluids throughout the day, even if you are not thirsty.
2. Eating salty snacks such as potato chips, crackers, pretzels, cheese, or nuts.

