

COPD Exercise Precautions

- Call your doctor if changes have been made in your medicines before continuing your regular exercise program. New medicines can greatly affect your response to activity.
- If you are too tired and are not sure if it is related to "over-doing it," ask yourself, "What did I do yesterday?" Try to change your activities by starting out at a lower level today. (Do not exercise at all if you are feeling very over-tired.) Pace yourself and balance your activities with rest.
- Avoid heavy lifting, pushing heavy objects, and chores such as raking, shoveling, mowing, scrubbing. When lifting any object, exhale while lifting. Chores around the house might sometimes be tiring, so ask for help.
- Ask your health care provider if you can participate in these activities: weight lifting, weight machines, jogging, or swimming.
- Avoid push-ups, sit-ups, and isometric exercises. Isometric exercises involve straining muscles against other muscles or an immovable object.
- Avoid even short periods of bed rest after exercise since it reduces exercise tolerance. If you become overly fatigued or short of breath with exercise, take a rest period in a comfortable chair.
- Avoid exercising outdoors when it is too cold, hot, or humid. High humidity might cause you to become fatigued more quickly. In addition, extreme temperatures can interfere with your circulation and make breathing difficult, and can cause chest pain. Instead, try indoor activities such as mall walking.
- Avoid extremely hot and cold showers or sauna baths after exercise.
- Do not go up steep hills during your activity, whenever possible. If you must walk on a hilly area, slow your walking pace when going uphill to avoid working too hard. Watch your heart rate closely and change the activity as needed.
- Reduce your activity level if your exercise program has been interrupted for a few days (for example, due to illness, vacation, or bad weather). Then, gradually increase to your regular activity level as tolerated.
- Do not exercise if you are not feeling well or have a fever. Wait a few days after all symptoms disappear before starting your exercise program, unless your health care provider gives you other directions.
- If you are short of breath during any activity or have increased fatigue, slow down your activity level or rest. Keep your feet raised or elevated when resting. If you continue to have shortness of breath, call your doctor. Your doctor might make changes in your medicines, diet, or fluid restrictions.
- If you develop a rapid or irregular heart beat, or have heart palpitations, rest and try to calm yourself. Check your pulse after you rest for 15 minutes. If your pulse is still above 120-150 beats per minute, call your doctor for further instructions.
- Do not ignore pain. If you have chest pain or pain anywhere else in your body, do not continue the activity. If you perform an activity while you are in pain, you might cause stress or damage to your joints. Ask your doctor or physical therapist for specific guidelines. Learn to "read" your body and know when you need to stop an activity.
- Stop exercising and rest if you:
 - Have chest pain
 - Feel weak

- Are dizzy or lightheaded
- Have unexplained weight gain or swelling (call your doctor right away)
- Have pressure or pain in your chest, neck, arm, jaw, or shoulder
- Any other symptoms that cause concern

Call your health care provider if these symptoms do not go away.

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