

MS Essentials Tips



EXERCISE & MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

The fatigue and disability that can affect people with multiple sclerosis may make it a challenge to remain physically active. But exercise is very important for your overall health and for your MS symptoms. *The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults with Multiple Sclerosis* recommend:

- 30 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity at least twice a week
- AND
- Strength training exercises for major muscle groups at least twice a week

Aerobic exercises and strength training can be done on the same day.

Aerobic exercise		
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking (outdoors or treadmill) • Running (outdoors or treadmill) • Swimming • Tai chi, yoga, Pilates • Exercise programs on DVD or YouTube • Cross-country skiing • Cycling (consider a stationary bike if you have dizziness or balance problems) 	<p>TIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an activity you enjoy • Try new activities to keep things interesting • The goal is to spend at least 30 minutes per session • Avoid exercising outdoors on hot, humid days • Overheating may worsen MS symptoms temporarily • Wear layers so you can adjust to changes in temperature • Drink cold fluids
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine the activity with other tasks (e.g. walk to the store, take the stairs at work/school) • Begin with a lower-intensity activity and gradually increase the intensity and the amount of time spent 	
Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to reach a level of moderate intensity – exerting yourself without getting out of breath 	
Strength training		
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise bands • Free weights • Weight machines 	<p>TIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try a low-cost method before buying a gym membership or home equipment • After a strength-training day, give yourself at least 1 day to rest your muscles
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary the types of exercises to work out different muscle groups and to keep things interesting • Begin with a lower number of repetitions (10-15 times = 1 set of exercises) and gradually work up to 2 sets of each exercise • The goal is to do at least 2 sets of 10-15 repetitions 	
Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an exercise that you can do up to 15 times with a bit of struggle • Rest for a couple of minutes between each set 	

If you skip a few sessions – don't get discouraged! Sometimes life gets in the way of our best intentions. Begin again and try to get back into a regular routine.

Talk to your MS nurse about physiotherapists in your area who can help you design a personalized exercise regimen that suits your interests and needs.

To access *The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults with Multiple Sclerosis*, go to:

http://csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/specialpops/CSEP_MS_PAGuidelines_adults_en.pdf