



Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program
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www.lifeoptions.org

Q: What is *my* role in keeping up regular exercise?

A: When you are ill, you lack the energy to do much. As you do less, your muscles get weaker. So, you do even less...and have even less energy. This cycle of weakness can lead to the need for a walker or wheelchair. But even if you are very tired and weak now, exercise can reverse the cycle and help you get stronger and more flexible and have more energy. Research shows that even people in their 90's can benefit from exercise.

Your role is to commit to doing physical activity on a regular basis so you can break the cycle. No one else can do this for you.

All you need to do is move: You don't have to go to a gym or do jumping jacks, you just need to move your body. The goal is to slowly work up to 30 minutes a day, four to five days per week. You can do this by starting with 10 minutes a few times per day and increase to 30 minutes. Find something that you like to do (convenient)—walking (with a buddy or on a treadmill), gardening, cycling, aerobics, or other movement. You can also lift weights or even try yoga.

Physical therapy (PT) can help: If you are very weak, unsteady on your feet, afraid of falling, have knee or joint pain, or you use a wheelchair or walker, ask your doctor for a PT referral. A physical therapist can give you exercises to increase your strength and help you become more mobile.

Getting started and keeping going: Set goals that are within your reach, and reward yourself with something healthy when you reach them. A starting goal may be as small as putting aside 10 minutes each day for the next 2-3 weeks for a short walk. Once you achieve that, you can increase your time to 15 minutes, then work toward the goal of 30 minutes 4-5 days/week.

Keep an exercise log: It can take a few weeks to feel better from exercise, but you will see progress sooner if you track your results. Write down what days you exercise, and what you do. Set goals for what you want to achieve, and reward yourself when you succeed—then set new goals!

What *I* can do to keep up regular exercise:

- Talk with my doctor about exercises I can do.
- Commit to a time, place, and type of exercise I will do.
- Think of healthy ways to reward myself for reaching my exercise goals.
- Take the stairs instead of an elevator if I am in a safe building and with someone else.
- Try parking a little farther away from a store.

Q: What is *my* role in keeping up regular exercise?

- ❑ Find a buddy to exercise with—this can help keep us both going.
- ❑ Plan when I will exercise and block off that time for *me*. Don't let anyone or anything get in the way of my time.
- ❑ Read *Just the Facts: Exercise* at www.lifeoptions.org.
- ❑ Read *Exercise: A Guide for People on Dialysis* at www.lifeoptions.org.
- ❑ Visit module 12 of Kidney School™: *Staying Active with Kidney Disease* at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more about different exercises I can do on dialysis.