Exercise Basics

If You Have a Bleeding or Clotting Disorder

Is exercise good for me?

Yes, exercise is good for you. Adults should try to do 30 minutes of daily activity or walk an average of 10,000 steps per day. Exercise can be broken into 5 to 10 minute sessions or done at one time. The most important thing is to be active.

Why is physical activity important?

Physical activity helps:

- With range of motion (ROM) and flexibility around joints
- Increase aerobic conditioning
- Increase muscular strength and endurance
- Increase mental well-being
- Decrease health risks linked to an inactive lifestyle

Regular exercise is important. Physical activity keeps muscles and joints strong, decreases bone loss, helps move fluids to cartilage, improves circulation and helps lessen the amount of stiffness and pain felt in joints. Being active is important for people with a clotting or a bleeding disorder.

What type of exercise should I do?

Before starting an exercise program, talk to your doctor to make sure it is okay for you to take part in a physical activity. Light to moderate exercise is best to start. To measure your effort, use the talk test. If you can sing during exercise, you are working at a light intensity. If you can talk, you are working at a moderate level. If you have difficulty holding a conversation, you are working at a vigorous intensity.
A target heart rate (THR) is another way to monitor the level of intensity that is right for your age and physical condition. Your doctor or nurse can help you learn how to take your pulse and tell you what your target heart rate should be.

Walking, hiking, swimming, biking (while wearing a helmet), dancing, Frisbee, golf, and Tai Chi are good examples of safe choices of physical activity. Warming up (light activity for 5-10 minutes), stretching (low load, light stretch), and cooling down are just as important as the activity of choice. When muscles are warm, there is less risk of injury.

If you have a clotting disorder, it is very important to be active. You need to move around if you have been sitting or inactive for longer than 2 hours at a time. This is because your muscles act like a pump. When they contract, they help move blood through your body.

Here are some simple things you can do while seated or when you are at work or traveling in a car or airplane:

- Get up and walk for several minutes
- Pump your ankles up and down
- Contract and relax your leg muscles
- March in place
- Squeeze your hands

**What should I do after an injury?**

Signs of injury include swelling, redness, warmth, and decreased mobility in a joint as well as pain when touched. Early signs of an injury, before there is swelling, include tingling, warmth or any change noted in area of stress or injury.

These are the steps (R.I.C.E) to take as soon as an injury has occurred.

- **Rest** the injured part of your body
- **Ice** the area for 15 minutes every hour
- **Compress** the area by using an ace wrap
- **Elevate** the injured area.

A sling or splint can be used if support is needed. You may need to be seen by your doctor.

If these steps do not change your symptoms or if you notice you are short of breath (SOB) or have chest pain, you may be experiencing a PE or pulmonary embolism.

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When to Get Medical Care

Call 911 right away if you have any of the following problems:

- Symptoms of joint bleeding, such as tingling, warmth, pain and swelling
- Chest Pain
- Shortness of breath