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Exercising with a Lung Condition

Physiotherapy Departments

www.ulh.nhs.uk

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Aim of the leaflet

This leaflet is aimed at patients who have been identified as having reduced exercise ability as a result of a lung condition.

This leaflet aims to tell you about the benefits of exercise when you have a lung condition.

Please make sure you read through the whole of this booklet before you begin any exercise.

Contents

Introduction
Why exercise?
Important points about exercise
How hard to be working
Borg scale
Common exercise questions
Exercise programmes
Exercise diary
Contact Details

Contact details

If you have any questions about any of the information contained in this leaflet please contact your physiotherapist at:

Lincoln County Hospital, Physiotherapy Dept.

Tel: 01522 573945

Pilgrim Hospital, Physiotherapy Dept, Boston

Tel: 01205 445359

Grantham and District Hospital, Physiotherapy Dept.

Tel: 01476 464253

County Hospital Louth, Physiotherapy Dept.

Tel: 01507 631234

All departments open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Your Physiotherapists name is:

Acknowledgements

Information provided is based on recommendations from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

References

British Lung Foundation (n.d) Pulmonary rehabilitation leaflet.

NICE (2009) Rehabilitation after critical illness. NICE.

Institute for Clinical Symptoms Improvement (2013) Diagnosis and management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Other resources, support groups etc.

British Lung Foundation www.blf.org.uk

Breathe Easy Support Group.

'Support for people affected by lung conditions including friends, family and carers'

Groups held in Lincoln, Gainsborough, Grantham and Sleaford. Phone 0300 3030253 for more details.

Introduction

As a result of your lung condition, when you move around or exercise you may be experiencing some or all of the symptoms listed below.

- Shortness of breath
- Wheeze
- Cough
- Increased phlegm production
- Malaise
- Fatigue
- Decreased exercise tolerance

This booklet will introduce you to low level exercise suitable for completion when you have a lung condition, have been in hospital or within the first few weeks of returning home. Many of the principles can be used at any stage of your condition.

When completing the exercises, you may feel easily tired at first, which is normal as your muscles need time to build their strength again. It may take some time until you feel that you are back to normal. Everyone is different and so it is impossible to give an exact timetable for how much exercise you should take and when.

This booklet aims to give you general advice about exercise and how regular exercise should form part of your daily routine. It may be quite a shock when you realise how weak you have become as a result of your lung condition.

As a result of your lung condition you may have reduced strength in your thigh muscles (quadriceps) and arms. Completing the suggested exercises in this booklet should help to reduce the impact that reduced muscle power will have on completing your daily activities.

You may be given some other information leaflets which will help you to manage your lung condition. Your physiotherapist may go through these leaflets with you or leave you to read them in your own time.

These booklets are:

- Coping with breathlessness
- Chest clearance

Your physiotherapist may also discuss a programme called pulmonary rehabilitation. Pulmonary rehabilitation in general is a programme of exercise and education aimed at patients with a lung condition where their breathlessness impacts on daily activities. The programme can help you to regain your muscle strength, reduce some of your symptoms such as the feeling of shortness of breath and give you some advice on various aspects of your disease and how to cope in day-to-day life. The programme is based in various locations around the county which your physiotherapist will explain to you.

If you have any questions please contact your physiotherapists.

As part of this exercise programme you will be asked to complete a combination of:

- Arm exercises
- Leg exercises
- A walking programme

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Why Exercise?

Exercise is important after being ill, it can:

- Strengthen your lungs
- Strengthen your heart
- Help to rebuild lost muscle
- Help to reduce stress
- Help you to get good refreshing sleep
- Improve movement in your joints
- Help to improve your confidence

Due to your lung condition you may:

- Feel tired very quickly even when you are pottering about
- Get short of breath very quickly
- Have difficulty climbing stairs or have to take a break part way
- Find your balance is not as good as it used to be

The good news is you can rebuild your muscles back to what they were before and in some cases, even better. But you will need to do some exercises, it will not happen by itself. It may take some time until you feel that you are back to normal. Everyone is different and so it's impossible to give an exact timetable for how much exercise you should take and when.

This booklet contains instructions on exercises for your arms and legs which will help when you complete daily tasks such as washing and dressing. A key component to improve your exercise ability is walking, so you will be asked to walk a certain amount daily if this is suitable for you.

You will be asked to complete a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes of activity per day which will include walking and exercises. The 30 minutes do not have to be completed in one go, the target is cumulative so can be built up across the day. You may want to complete other activities to help reach your target time. As you feel better you can increase your time spent being active.

Other activities include bowling, dancing, swimming, golf, gardening and walking up and down the stairs.

Important points about exercise

Follow the instructions in the exercise plan (see page 11).

- Do not try to do too much too soon, because this will just make you feel overtired and disheartened.
- If you have had a bad day, don't get upset about it.
 Everyone feels like that at some time. Ask yourself if you've been doing rather more than normal over the past few days.
 This may explain why you feel a bit tired.
- Always warm up and cool down before and after your exercise.
- Allow 2 hours after eating before you exercise, to allow food to be fully digested.
- If you feel unwell, reduce your normal level of exercise until you feel well again.

When to stop exercising

You should stop exercising and rest if you experience any of the following:

- Severe chest pain
- Increase in chest tightness
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Much more breathlessness than you experienced the last time you did this exercise
- Joint or muscle pain

If the symptoms persist, contact your physiotherapist or nurse immediately if you are in hospital or your GP if you are at home. If the symptoms settle in 2 to 3 minutes, do not continue with the exercise but contact your physiotherapist or GP for advice.

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Borg Breathlessness Scale

How hard should I be working?

0	Nothing at all	
0.5	Very very slight	
1	Very slight	Warm up/cool down
2	Slight	
3	Moderate	During exercise
4	Somewhat severe	
5	Severe	
6		
7	Very severe	
8		
9	Very very severe (Almost maximal)	
10	Maximal	

The Borg Breathlessness Scale is used to monitor your sensation of breathlessness during activity.

- It is rated from 0 to 10, 0 being nothing at all and 10 being maximal.
- You should aim to work at a level of 3 (moderate) and shouldn't be working at a level of 4 or more.
- Use the scale to make note of any changes that occur and the advice is to keep a log to show any progress. If you feel the exercises are getting harder speak to your physiotherapist or GP.

It is very important that you do not suddenly start or stop your exercise, so always warm up before starting your exercises and cool down afterwards. During the warm up and cool down you should be aiming for 1 on the Borg scale.

Your physiotherapist will inform you how many repetitions to be doing and advise you how to progress your exercises.

When performing an exercise you want to be working at a level of 3 on the breathlessness scale. If when you first try an exercise you score your breathlessness above 4 then this exercise is too difficult for you and you should either:

- Do fewer repetitions
- Do it for a shorter time
- Choose an easier exercise to replace it

If on the other hand when you first do an exercise you score below 2 then this is too easy for you and you need to either:

- Increase the number of repetitions
- Increase the time you do it for
- Choose a harder exercise
- Add some weight i.e. hold a small bottle of water

When you have completed your exercises don't forget to record it in your exercise diary (page 16) and record your Borg score.

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Walking Programme

- In conjunction with your physiotherapist, you will be given a structured walking programme. This may be set by time or distance depending on what suits you best. You can use a walking aid if you feel you need one.
- You will then need to fill in the exercise diary to show how much you have completed. If you do not feel you can complete the recommended amount you may need to build up your exercise tolerance by doing a little more each day.

Use this table to help set time or distance goals for your walking and/or exercises.

Day/Date	Time/Distance

Common questions about exercise

"Am I too old to take up exercise?"

Whatever age you are it is possible to take exercise. Even if all you can manage is a few minutes of home exercise each day you will start to feel the benefits.

"I get breathless very quickly when I exercise - should I continue?"

As you build up your exercise you will find you will gradually be able to do more before you get breathless. As with all your other muscles, the muscles involved in breathing have got weaker and smaller. They will gradually get stronger as you exercise. This is also true for patients with chronic chest problems. To become fitter you need to be active enough to make you feel slightly breathless for at least ten to twenty minutes.

"I have a chronic chest problem, is it safe for me to exercise?"

Yes, research has shown that chronic chest sufferers benefit from graded exercise because it makes their muscles able to use oxygen more efficiently.

When completing these exercises follow the guidance from this booklet and from your Physiotherapist. Remember to complete the exercise diary to monitor your progress.

Complete the warm up exercises each time you complete any of the other exercises to prepare your muscles. 8. Standing tall behind a chair, slowly move one leg out to the side. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat _____ times.



 Standing tall behind a chair, slowly bend both knees to a squat, hold for 5 seconds and slowly return to a stand. Repeat _____ times.



10. Start in a sitting position with your arms across your chest, slowly come up into standing, and slowly return to sitting in a controlled manner. Repeat _____ times.



Exercise Programme 2

You should try these once you feel happy in standing. You may need to rest your hands on a table, chair or a walking frame. Try these when your physiotherapist instructs you to. If you have returned home and are finding the seated exercises easy then try these standing exercises.

6. Standing tall behind a chair, resting hands on the back, march on the spot. Repeat _____ times or for ____ seconds.



7. Standing tall behind a chair, squeeze your bottom together and move one leg out behind you. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat _____ times.



Exercise Programme

Warm up/Cool down

a. In sitting, alternately move from your toes to your heels touching the floor. Repeat _____ times.



o. Sit or stand. Lift your shoulders and relax. Repeat _____ times.



Exercise Programme 1

These are the easier of the exercises so complete these before you move onto the standing exercises.

Sit on a chair. Pull your toes up and straighten your knee.
 Hold for 5 to 10 seconds and slowly relax your leg. Repeat times.



2. Sit or stand. Lift your arm up letting the thumb lead the way. Repeat _____ times on alternate arms.



3. Sitting on a chair. Lift your leg off the seat keeping the knee bent. Return to the starting position. Repeat _____ times on alternate legs.



4. Sitting on a chair. Step one leg out to the side then return it back to the middle. Repeat _____ times on alternate legs.



5. In lying, bend one knee and place your foot flat. Keeping the other leg straight, lift it off the bed slowly then lower. Repeat _____ times with both legs.

