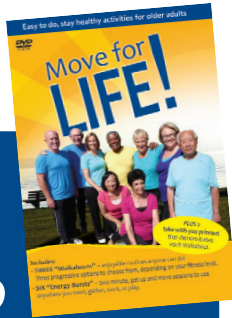


Move for LIFE!

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease & Physical Activity



The Move for Life DVD



shows older adults ways to keep strong and healthy by adding physical activity options to their daily routines.

For more information or to order a copy of the DVD please contact:

Health and Seniors Information Line at
1.800.465.4911
www.actnowbc.ca
www.bcrpa.bc.ca

Why it's important to be physically active—

Physical activity helps strengthen your breathing muscles so you can breathe easier and feel better.

Here are some of the ways that activity helps people who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD):

- Improves your energy, endurance, well-being and quality of life.
- Lowers your risk of discomfort and disability.
- Strengthens breathing muscles in your chest and helps prevent difficult breathing, shortness of breath (also known as dyspnea), muscle weakness and feeling tired.
- Helps you maintain your independence so you can do what you enjoy.

Remember - Every Move is a Good Move!

Preparing for physical activity

Doing gentle physical activity can often help people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) breathe easier, feel better and do day-to-day activities more comfortably. Here are some things you should do **BEFORE** starting any physical activity and **AFTER** each session.

BEFORE you start any physical activity

- Check with your doctor to see what types and amounts of activities are best for you. Your doctor may have specific activity guidelines and will help you decide whether or not you need oxygen during activity and how much is required.
- Keep taking your prescribed medication (including inhaled medicine).
- Plan to do activity regularly. This will make your physical activity easier, since the more you do, the more you'll be able to do.
- Start slowly and progress gradually with your activity program. Set a goal and over time increase how often you exercise, how much effort you use and how long you do the physical activity.
- Exercise as much as you feel comfortable. Rest if you become short of breath.
- Drink water before and after activity.
- If you're doing strengthening activities, rest during your activity or between sets. Do strengthening exercises one day then skip a day so your body has time to recover.
- Do a light warm-up before starting your activity.
- Avoid things that can set off your symptoms or make it difficult to breathe (also known as triggers). Common triggers are smog, pollution, wind, cold or humid air. You may need to do activity indoors sometimes to avoid triggers.

TIP: Repetitions are the number of times you do an exercise. A set is a group of repetitions. Be sure to take a rest after each set.

Recommended activities

If you have COPD, you should be physically active on a regular basis. It may seem hard at first, but over time your lungs, heart and muscles will get stronger so physical activity will get easier. Here are some recommended activities:

- Choose activities you enjoy because you'll be more likely to keep doing them. Sometimes it's more fun to do exercises with a friend or in a group. Try taking a program or course at your local recreation centre or health club.
- Activities that use large muscle groups are best, such as walking, swimming, rowing or cycling. Walking is strongly recommended because it's a natural part of your day-to-day activities.
- Include some activities that can be done indoors, in case of bad weather.
- Try to be active 3-5 days a week. Start with 3 days and work up to 5. Some people prefer being active every second day to give their body time to recover.
- Start with short periods of exercise (5 or 10 minutes) and rest after each session. Slowly build up to doing 20-30 minutes of moderate activity. Physical activity should be done with a light effort. Pay attention to any shortness of breath. Change the length of time and amount of effort depending on how you feel.
- Stretching and breathing exercises are also recommended. Try gentle stretches or Tai Chi (a Chinese system of slow physical exercise designed for relaxation, balance, flexibility and muscle strength) 3 times a week.
- Resistance training (such as lifting light weights) will help improve your muscle strength. Use lighter weight or effort, but do the exercises more times. Do this 2-3 days a week, with a day off in between so your body has time to recover.