



What is Pulmonary Rehabilitation?

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a program for people with chronic lung conditions that uses exercise and education to put you in charge of your breathing, instead of your breathing being in charge of you. When you are short of breath, you may think that there is nothing you can do but take medicines. This is not true!

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You **CAN** exercise if you are short of breath and a pulmonary rehabilitation program will show you how to exercise safely. You will also find out how to be less short of breath and how to stay well. Pulmonary rehabilitation will teach you how to breathe more comfortably and how to take your medicines to get the most benefit. This program will also show you how to stay out of the hospital, by knowing when you need to call your health care provider. You will be in a class with others that are also short of breath.

Why Exercise?

Research in pulmonary rehabilitation has shown us that if you have chronic lung problems and you exercise, you will feel less short of breath and be less tired (fatigued). You most likely will also feel stronger and more independent in your everyday life. Other benefits you may have from exercising are a better quality of life, with less depression and anxiety. You will also notice that you will have the breath, to enjoy the things in life that are important to you. Research has also shown that people with chronic lung conditions who exercise, feel better and if they are hospitalized, are admitted for a shorter period of time than those who don't exercise.

What if there is no program in my area?

There are many things you can do on your own to improve your breathing, quality of life and independence. Begin with stopping smoking. Learn how to correctly use inhaled medicines and exercise regularly. Below is a simple exercise plan for a person with a lung condition. Talk with your health care

provider before starting an exercise plan.

Any kind of activity or exercise is important for persons with lung problems because being inactive eventually worsens shortness of breath. One of the most important exercises you can do is walking regularly. Begin walking slowly at a very comfortable pace for a short period of time such as 5 to 10 minutes daily, 3 to 5 days a week. Many people with severe lung disease can reach the goal of walking 30 minutes without stopping. Gradually, increase the time you are walking by 1 to 2 minutes each week. If you have been prescribed oxygen for regular use, be sure to use it with exercise. If you are not sure about using oxygen, talk with your health care provider.

You may benefit from using 'pursed lip breathing' when walking. To do pursed lip breathing, inhale slowly, then breathe out through your mouth for about four seconds with your lips pursed together (like you are blowing to make a candle flicker).

To find a Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program, contact the American Association for Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR) at www.aacvpr.org/programdirectory or by calling (312) 321-5146 or your local American Lung Association at www.lungusa.org or 1-800-lungusa

If you use the internet, put in these key words to find more information on exercise: *pulmonary rehabilitation, exercise, COPD and exercise, physical activity*