



National MS Society Information Sourcebook

www.nationalmssociety.org/sourcebook

Exercise

In addition to being essential to general health and well-being, exercise is helpful in managing many MS symptoms. A study published by researchers at the University of Utah in 1996 was the first to demonstrate clearly the benefits of exercise for people with MS. Those patients who participated in an aerobic exercise program had better cardiovascular fitness, improved strength, better bladder and bowel function, less fatigue and depression, a more positive attitude, and increased participation in social activities. Since 1996, several additional studies have confirmed the benefits of exercise.

Inactivity in people with or without MS can result in numerous risk factors associated with coronary heart disease. In addition, it can lead to weakness of muscles, decreased bone density with an increased risk of fracture, and shallow, inefficient breathing.

An exercise program needs to be appropriate to the capabilities and limitations of the individual, and may need to be adjusted as changes occur in MS symptoms. A physical therapist experienced with the unique and varied symptoms of MS can be helpful in designing, supervising, and revising a well-balanced exercise program. Any person with MS who is initiating a new exercise program should also consult with his or her physician before starting.

Periods of exercise should be carefully timed to avoid the hotter periods of the day and prevent excessive fatigue. With some guidelines, a good exercise program can help to develop the maximum potential of muscle, bone, and respiration, thereby avoiding secondary complications and gaining the benefits of good health and well-being.

.....

See also...

Sourcebook

- Aquatics/Aquatic Exercise
- Fatigue
- Heat/Temperature Sensitivity
- Physical Therapy
- Rehabilitation

Society Web Resources

- Healthy Living with MS
www.nationalmssociety.org/Healthy
- Spotlight: MS and Fatigue
www.nationalmssociety.org/Fatigue
- Spotlight: MS and Mobility
www.nationalmssociety.org/Mobility
- Spotlight: Rehabilitation in MS
www.nationalmssociety.org/Rehab

For Healthcare Professionals

- Clinical Bulletin: Physical Therapy in Multiple Sclerosis Rehabilitation
www.nationalmssociety.org/ClinicalBulletins
- Expert Opinion Paper: Rehabilitation: Recommendations for Persons with Multiple Sclerosis
www.nationalmssociety.org/ExpertOpinionPapers

Books

Holland NJ, Halper J (eds.). *Multiple Sclerosis: A Self-Care Guide to Wellness* (2nd ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2005.

—Ch. 3 Fatigue, Ch. 6 Maintaining Joint Flexibility and Mobility, Ch. 12 General Health Issues, Ch. 13 Exercise Options and Wellness Programs

Kalb R. (ed.) *Multiple Sclerosis: The Questions You Have; The Answers You Need* (3rd ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2004.

—Ch. 5 Physical Therapy

Kalb R. (ed.). *Multiple Sclerosis: A Guide for Families* (3rd ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2005.

—Ch. 11 General Health and Well-Being

Kraft G., Catanzaro M. *Living with Multiple Sclerosis: A Wellness Approach* (2nd ed.). New York : Demos Medical Publishing, 2000.

Schapiro R. *Managing the Symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis* (4th ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2003.

—Ch. 20 Exercise

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is proud to be a source of information about multiple sclerosis. Our comments are based on professional advice, published experience, and expert opinion, but do not represent individual therapeutic recommendations or prescription. For specific information and advice, consult your personal physician.

To contact your chapter, call **1-800-FIGHT-MS** (1-800-344-4867) or visit the National MS Society web site: www.nationalmssociety.org.

© 2006 The National Multiple Sclerosis Society. All rights reserved.
Last updated January 2006