

A Guide to Staying Active

This article has general information and is not meant to replace health guidance specific to any individual. Speak to your healthcare provider before making any changes to your lifestyle.

Physical activity is important for health and wellness. Exercise can help you feel less tired, improve your balance and physical function, and help you keep up with your normal activities. Even small movements can make an impact on your overall well-being.

Make Physical Activity a Part of Your Life

It's easy to add movement to your daily routine. Start slowly with simple walks outdoors or modifying more difficult exercises as you work your way into a new routine. Even on days when you might not feel your best, you can still do little things, like small household chores, to increase your energy.

Everyone's body and ability is different, so it's important to find what's right for you. Adjust your routine depending on how you feel, and make changes if you have any problems with your breathing, balance, coordination, or other challenges.

If you were not active before your autoimmune disease diagnosis, you may need to take it more slowly when starting a new activity. If you were already active, you may need to take care and do things more slowly. **In either case, consult your healthcare provider for advice before starting or resuming an exercise routine.**

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE FOR PATIENTS WITH AUTOIMMUNE CONDITIONS

- ✓ Reduces fatigue
- ✓ Improves joint and muscle pain
- ✓ Reduces stress and improves mood
- ✓ Enhances immune function
- ✓ Improves cardiovascular health



It's also important to eat a balanced diet to give your body enough energy to exercise properly. Use **The Basics of Good Nutrition** as a guide to help you make healthy food choices.

Consider Different Activities

Discuss these simple ideas with your healthcare team to see if they might be right for you:

Walking: A low-impact exercise that is easy to incorporate into daily routines, walking helps improve cardiovascular health, reduce joint pain, and boost overall energy levels.

Swimming: Swimming is an excellent exercise for individuals with autoimmune conditions as it provides a full-body workout without putting stress on the joints. It helps improve muscle strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular health.

Yoga: Yoga combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. It helps improve flexibility, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being and yoga can be particularly beneficial for managing symptoms of autoimmune diseases.

Strength training: Light strength training exercises can help maintain muscle mass and improve joint stability. Using resistance bands or light weights can be effective for building strength without overexerting the body.

Stretching: Regular stretching exercises can help maintain flexibility and reduce muscle stiffness. Stretching can be done daily and is particularly beneficial after other forms of exercise.

Keep Track of Your Activity

MY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

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Create an appropriate exercise plan.

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Use a journal to create a list of stretches and 3 exercises you can do. Make a plan for when you would like to try them, and track your progress in your journal daily.

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Listen to your body each day and record how you feel after you exercise. For example, do you feel less tired?

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Ask a family member or friend to join you. Sometimes it's easier to stay active when you have a partner.

Helpful Resources

For more exercise guidance, ask your physician for a referral to an exercise professional who can assist with your physical activity goals. This expert can be a physical therapist or an exercise specialist.

Navigating everyday life with an autoimmune condition is possible.