

## Chapter Five: Build Your Strength

Do you feel too tired to do many of the things you'd like to do? If you've been in a hospital or you've been resting at home because of your illness, your body is out of shape. You can build your strength with a daily walking and exercise program.

- Ask yourself. "What do I want to be able to do?" Do you want enough strength to walk to a store? Go back to work? Tend your garden?
- Ask your doctor what goals are realistic for you at this time and which of the exercises in this section you can do. Write down a goal or goals you and your doctor agree on:  
Goal(s):

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- Set your mind and your will power for success. Expect steady progress but not overnight success. Promise yourself that you'll stay with it, even when you don't feel like exercising. Keep your goals in mind.

### Walking

Walking is one of the most useful and enjoyable ways to strengthen your body. Here's how to build your strength by walking:

- Start with a short daily walk as far as you can go without getting short of breath. Outdoors is best if the weather is good, but you can walk in the house or inside a shopping mall or store.
- Walk with your arms hanging loosely, your chest and shoulders relaxed.
- Breathe slowly, using your diaphragm while you walk. Try to breathe out for twice as long as you breathe in.

- Find an easy, even speed. Take the same number of steps for each breath. For example, two steps while you're breathing in and four steps while breathing out. This will give you six steps to each breath. Find the number of steps that works best for you. The number may change from day to day.
- Try to walk a little farther each day, even if it's only a few feet, but don't push yourself too hard. If you become short of breath, stop and rest, and practice pursed-lip breathing.

### Toning your legs and abdomen

- Sit upright in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Inhale deeply.
- As you exhale, raise one knee toward your chest as far as possible without being uncomfortable. Inhale again as you lower the leg back to the floor. Relax.
- Repeat with other leg.



### Exercise reminders

- Exercise before meals or allow enough time after eating to digest your food (two hours).
- As with any exercise, you may feel a little sore at first but this should subside as you practice regularly.
- Ask your doctor before starting any exercise program.

### When to exercise

Make two daily appointments with yourself to do your exercises. The secret to success is doing it every day. The best times are in the morning and evening after you've cleared your lungs from mucus. Write your two daily exercise times here:  
\_\_\_\_\_ a.m. and \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

### How does it work?

Walking and other exercise in this section use many muscles, including your heart and breathing muscles. As you work them, they will slowly be able to do more work with less oxygen. That means you don't have to breathe in as much air to do the same amount of work. You're stronger and can do more before feeling tired.

When you do your exercises, follow these steps:

- Clear your lungs from mucus by coughing.
- Practice relaxing and deep breathing for a few minutes. Continue deep breathing as you exercise. Try to keep breathing out twice as long as you breathe in. Counting as you breathe can help. Breathe in: 1-2. Breathe out: 1-2-3-4. Remember not to hold your breath.

- Do each strength-building exercise three times slowly.
- If you feel tired or short of breath, stop and relax a few minutes, then continue.
- When it becomes easy to do each exercise three times, do it four times, and then five times. Continue to do more as your strength builds.

### How much is too much?

You can use the Dyspnea scale or Shortness of Breath scale during exercise to measure the intensity of your exercise. The scale runs from 0 to 10, 0 being slightly short of breath and 10 being extremely short of breath. Try to keep your level between 3 to 4 (moderate) so as not to overexert yourself. For more individualized recommendations, ask your doctor.

You should also be able to recognize the signs and symptoms that you are overexerting yourself and may need to stop. They are:

- Weakness
- Excessive sweating
- Chest pain or pain of any kind
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Increased shortness of breath that does not return to normal within a few minutes