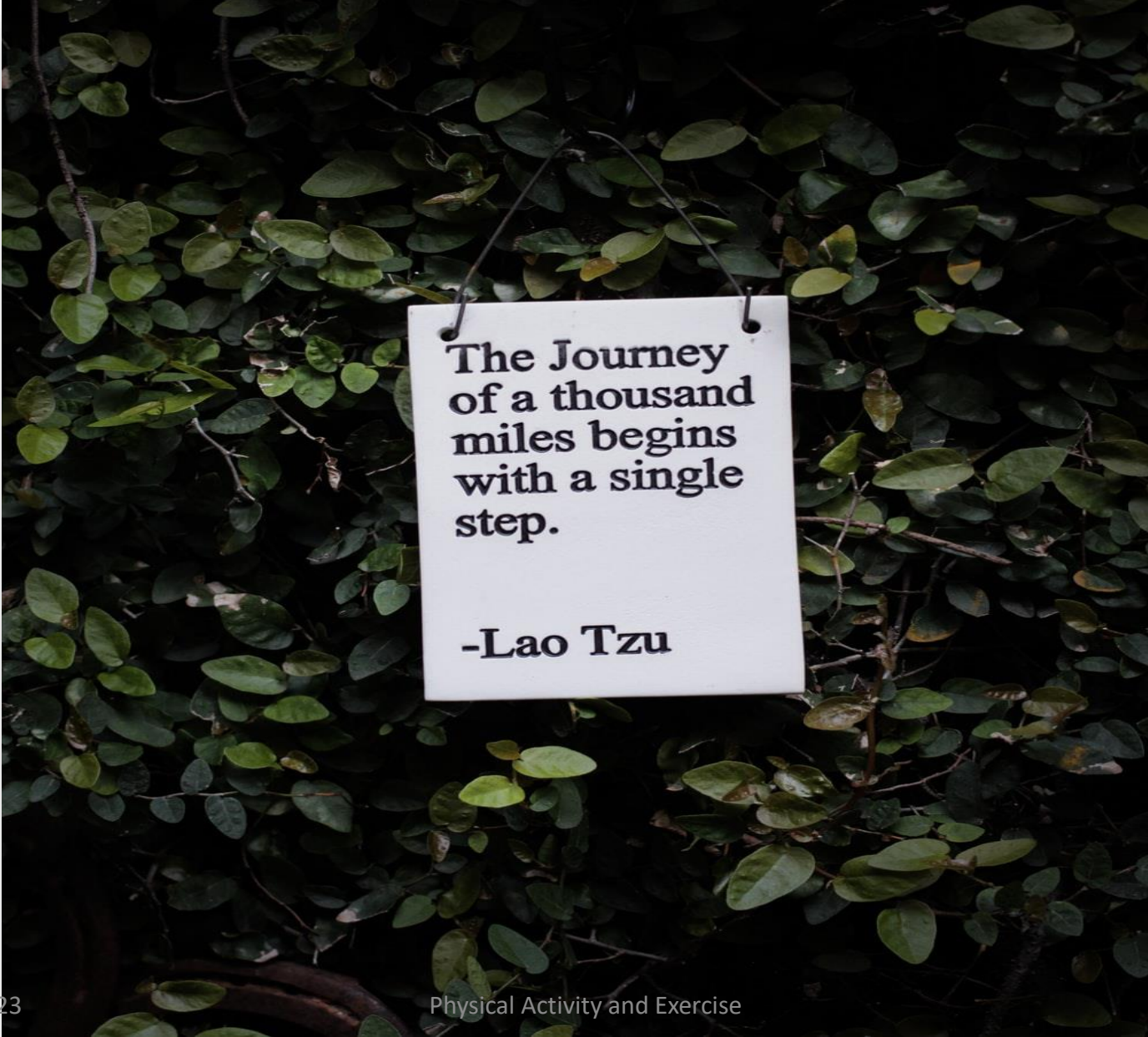


Managing Post COVID-19 Condition Therapeutic Education Program

Physical Activity and Exercise



**The Journey
of a thousand
miles begins
with a single
step.**

-Lao Tzu

Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of managing the barriers to physical activity or exercise
- Become familiar with strategies to help you change how to better manage physical activities/exercise after COVID-19
- Choose and integrate strategies that work for you into your daily routines

Physical Activity and Exercise

Physical activity is any movement that makes your muscles work.

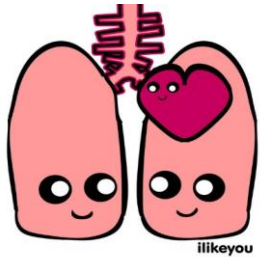
Exercise is a form of physical activity. It is something you plan to do, usually with a goal in mind.

An example of exercise:

I walk 3 times a week to keep my heart healthy.



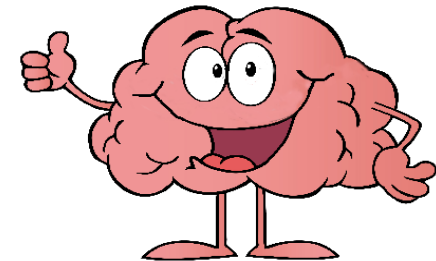
Physical activity following most illness



Reduce shortness of
breath



Increases your strength



Improves your thinking

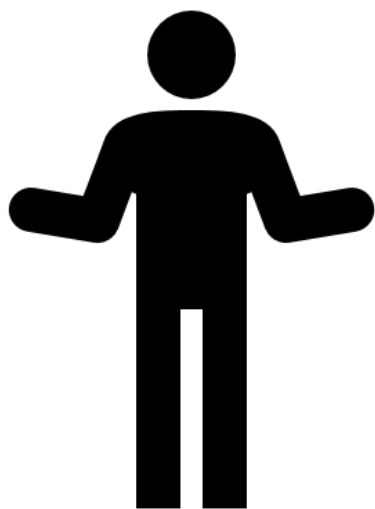


Gives you energy



Lowers your stress, improves your
mood and helps you feel better

Physical Activity following COVID-19



There are safety considerations with physical activity and exercise after COVID-19

Why is physical activity hard for you right now?





Long COVID symptoms

Most common symptoms

- Fatigue (tired)
- Post Exertional Malaise (PEM)
- Hard to catch your breath (breathless)

What is fatigue?

When you have less energy or feel tired all the time-- even after resting

Signs of fatigue:

Physical

- Sleep more than usual
- Find it hard to walk or stand
- Get tired easily

Mental

- Find it hard to concentrate
- Have trouble remembering things
- Have trouble finding the right words to express yourself

What is Post Exertional Malaise (PEM)

When you start to feel unwell after even a small amount of mental, physical, social or emotional activity. It tends to get worse over the next 12 hours to 2 days and can last for days or even weeks.



**Fatigue is NOT happening because you are
“out of shape”.**

If you keep exercising once you get tired, you can
make things worse.

What is Breathlessness?

When you feel like you do not have enough air to breathe properly (hard to breathe).

Why am I breathless?

- There may be changes to your lungs, heart, voice box
- Your blood oxygen levels may be low
- There may be changes to your nervous system





Managing your symptoms

Taking Control of your Fatigue

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8McWrSUVAU>

What did you take away from the video?



Manage your fatigue

- Change how you do things so you can accomplish more over time
- Focus on activities that you need to do or are most important to you
- Stop before you feel tired
- Use a timer to tell you when to stop so you don't get too tired
- Slowly increase the time you spend on these activities based on how you feel

Manage your fatigue-Energy conservation 4 “P”s

- **Priority** setting
- **Plan** your day/week
- **Pace** yourself and take breaks
- **Position** yourself in optimal ways








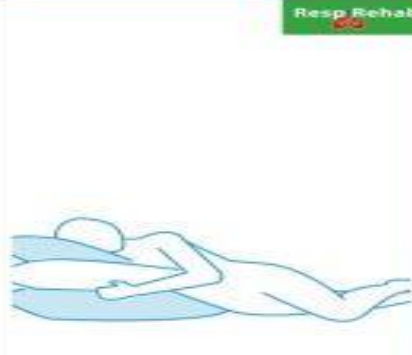
Managing Post Exertional Malaise

STOP

REST

PACE

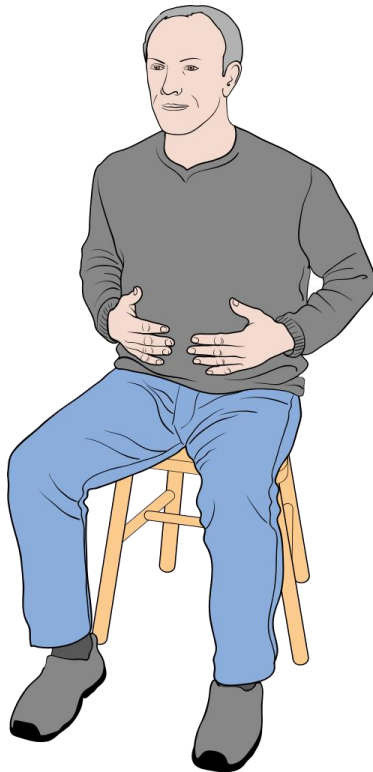
Manage your breathlessness

Relaxed Sitting	Forward Lean Standing	Backward Lean Standing
		
Sit Leaning Forward	Forward Lean Sitting (Supported)	High Side Lying
		

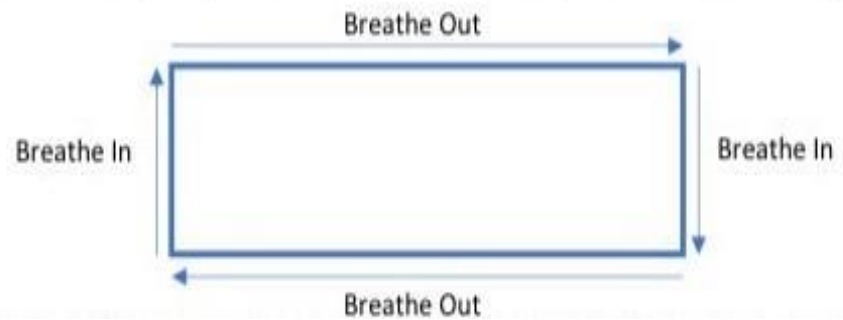


Manage your breathlessness

Controlled Breathing



Breathe in a rectangle

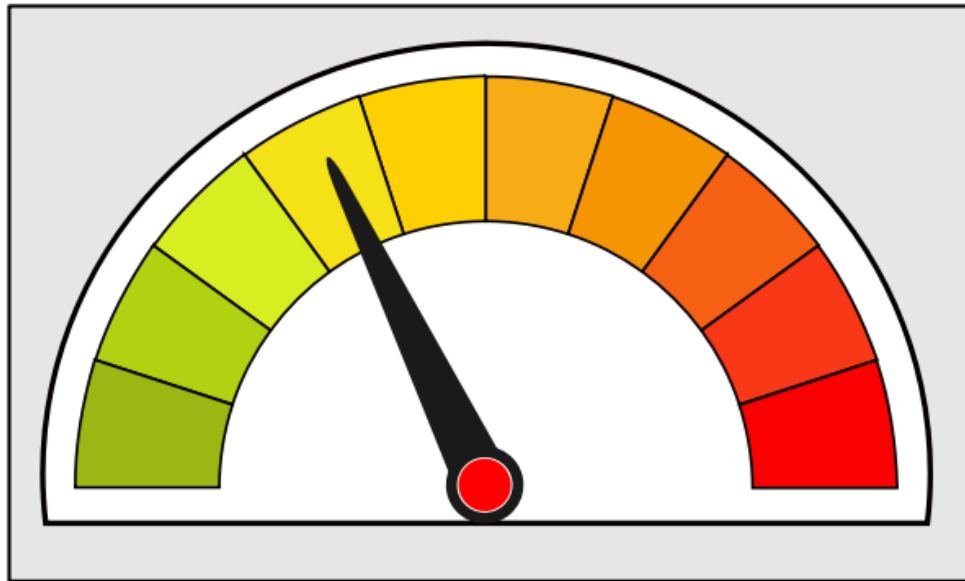




Stay safe during exercise

Before you exercise

- Do not start exercise if basic tasks such as getting dressed and showering are exhausting
- Think about how much physical fuel you have **before** starting an activity



Before you exercise

- Seek medical guidance from your Primary Care Provider for the following cardiac or respiratory symptoms :
 - Chest pain
 - Fast heart beat
 - Palpitations
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Drop in oxygen levels with exertion
 - Persistent dizziness with standing/ walking

When you exercise:

- Start at a very low intensity
- Pace yourself
- Remember to monitor your fatigue/PEM*
- *Stop if experiencing PEM*
- Progress exercise if not aggravating your symptoms
2 weeks



STOP **REST** **PACE**

When you exercise:

- Do a warm up and cool down
- Drink lots of water
- Do not exercising if it is really hot or cold outside
- Wear good shoes



STOP

if you feel dizzy, have severe shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, a fast heartbeat or pain that is getting worse.

Exercise at the right level

The Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

“How hard am I working or exerting myself doing this activity or exercise?”



- 0- Rest/no exertion at all
- 1-Really easy/extremely light
- 2-Easy/very light
- 3-Moderate/light
- 4-Somewhat Hard
- 5-Hard (heavy)
- 6- ↓
- 7-Very hard
- 8- ↓
- 9-Extremely hard
- 10- Maximal exertion



Monitor your exercise



Heart Rate Monitor



Portable Oxygen
Monitor



Portable Blood
Pressure Monitor

***Talk to your healthcare team about what numbers you should look for**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHHr8qNU9QY>

Monitor your Exercise

Date	Activity and Total Time e.g. Walking 15 minutes	Vitals before activity e.g. heart rate and oxygen level	Vitals during activity e.g. heart rate and oxygen level	Vitals After activity e.g. heart rate and oxygen level	RPE after activity (Rate of Perceived Exertion) (workbook p.13)	Comments/Notes “How did I feel after the activity? “ e.g. energized, happy, fatigued, breathless. “How long did I need to rest after the activity?”
April 2023						



Summary

- Physical Activity and exercise may have many benefits when you are recovering from COVID-19
- It is important to return to activity and exercise safely
- Know your limits, take breaks, and monitor your symptoms