

STAYING ACTIVE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



When you have multiple sclerosis (MS), you can benefit physically and mentally by adopting—and sticking with—an exercise program. Physical activity can help ease fatigue and bowel stress, and help improve flexibility, mood, and outlook. Aerobic, strength-training, and stretching activities may improve your ability to move about the house and complete daily tasks. The type and intensity of the exercises you choose should align with your overall health, symptoms, and fitness level.

SOME TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- ☐ Check with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.
- ☐ If at any time while you're exercising you feel pain, soreness, nausea, or related symptoms, stop and take a break.
- ☐ Prevent overheating and optimize your exercise performance by cooling down before exercising. This can take the form of a cool bath lasting up to 30 minutes prior to physical activity.
- ☐ Try deep breathing exercises, with the help of a mindfulness app or a trainer, to relax your body, slow your heart rate, focus, and calm down when you need to.
- ☐ Practice balance and isolation exercises, to help increase awareness of your body and to improve your balance and coordination. By including these types of exercises into your fitness program, you may also improve your ability to stand and walk.
- ☐ Consider aqua aerobics, swimming, or walking in a pool, which can be adapted to fit your activity level and MS symptoms. To prevent overheating, make sure the pool is no warmer than 84 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ☐ Work with a qualified professional to begin or adapt a strength-training workout. Targeting your leg muscles, core, back, and upper body can make actions like standing upright, grabbing objects from a shelf, or balancing easier on your body.
- ☐ About half of people living with MS will experience cognitive changes. Give your brain a workout, too, by including cognitive activities in your daily routine.
- ☐ Make it fun and change it up! Keep your routine fresh to help you stay motivated—try various activities, such as exercising indoors and outdoors or adding a group class.

STRETCHING AND FLEXIBILITY ACTIVITIES	AEROBIC ACTIVITIES	STRENGTH-TRAINING ACTIVITIES	COGNITIVE ACTIVITIES AND BODY AWARENESS
Yoga Tai chi Seated hamstring stretches Calf stretches Torso/whole body stretches Hip rotations Shoulder, forearm, and wrist stretches	Biking Walking, running Hiking (with walking sticks) Air boxing Dancing Swimming (varying strokes) Aqua aerobics Gardening Ping-Pong, golf, tennis, volleyball	Weight training (paired with other exercises) Push-ups or wall push-ups Modified squats, lunges, or rising and sitting from a chair (repetitively) Resistance bands Pilates Crunches Arm and hand raises Body bridges	Solve puzzles (sudoku, jigsaw), and play board games Play a musical instrument Try balance and coordination drills with a trainer (such as marching in place) Practice breathing exercises Work on your body awareness by focusing on moving individual body parts in a seated or standing position

Sources: msif.org; mstrust.org.uk; nationalmssociety.org; nchpad.org

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