

Patty's PT Tips

Endurance-Perspectives and How to Build It

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Endurance-Perspectives and how to build it

Traditional approach to fitness and building endurance established in the 1970's through the 1990's has evolved with more research in recent years-especially for disabled and aging populations. Much more research has been done in the past 15 years for people with MS. There is value in increasing one's capacity for exercise over time BUT too much, too soon, too long contributes to deterioration of the quality of movement, poor quality of neuromotor learning and diminished capacity to perform ADL's.

Classic mistakes-Not self-evaluating one's capacity honestly and setting unattainable goals in an inappropriate time frame. These mistakes can be detrimental to a person's overall health and capabilities.

Gold standard ultimate goal:

150 minutes of exercise and 150 minutes of lifestyle activity per week.

This does not have to be done all at once. For example: 21 minutes of chair running or walking with walker/poles/independently or continuous wheeling per day could be divided into 4 individual 5 minute sessions per day. Or if your endurance is pretty low start with 2 minute sessions 5x/day and work up to the 5 minute increments. You can always add time as your endurance improves. Attach the sessions to specific activities such as meals and teeth brushing.

Examples of lifestyle activities: folding clothes, cooking, picking up kids toys, dusting, cleaning clutter, mopping/sweeping floors, gardening, yoga, tai chi, balance drills

Examples of aerobic exercise: walking, rowing, running jogging, swimming/aqua aerobics, stair climbing, dancing (in your living room listening to your favorite tunes counts),

Examples of resistance/strength training: using weight machines, free weights, resistance bands or full body weight exercises (wall pushups, squatting etc.)

All of the above contribute to your weekly goal of 150 minutes so mix it up!

Important exercises for everyone including people limited to a bed or wheelchair:

1. Breathing exercise using self-resisted chest deep breathing or use of a spirometer (that tubular gadget they give you after a surgery)
2. Flexibility routine-strap assisted stretching, yoga, passive or active-assisted range of motion with the help of a caregiver

Homework

Chart your activity over a 3 to 7 day period to see what your current level of activity is. That provides a baseline of where you are starting on your journey to build strength, endurance and capacity for ADL's. Give yourself a fatigue rating at the end of each day on a 0-10 scale (10 being can hardly imagine being able to get into bed). If you're so exhausted you don't want to try to chart anything the next day you went way over the top!

Plan for progress not perfection!! Plan for **success-overdoing can contribute to a sense of failure or what you do is never enough**. It will set you up for throwing in the towel.

Ways to measure your daily exercise/activity to achieve the 150 minutes:

- 1) Make a refrigerator chart with hash marks for every 5 minutes or 10 minutes of structured exercise and another chart for ADL exercise.
- 2) Make the chart easy to fill in so you'll do it. Categories can be as general or specific as you would like
- 3) Start with low expectations if you are new to the exercise game. You can always add time as you experience success.
- 4) Keep in mind energy conservation throughout the day to make sure you have the stamina to do your structured exercise as well as the "have to" activities like eating healthy meals. If you plan your meals to decrease food prep time it may give you the energy for your structured exercise program
- 5) It's not cheating to take a nap to restore your energy bank account to allow you to do your exercise and ADL minutes for improving endurance. Even 10 minutes to meditate or close your eyes can be restorative.