



*"When you can't breathe...
nothing else matters"*TM

Exercise and Lung Disease

"I can't catch my breath standing still, why should I exercise?"

People who have chronic lung conditions are often less active and can lose their fitness and muscle strength. By exercising regularly, a person's fitness and muscle strength can be maintained or improved.

Exercising for more than two hours per week performing activities such as walking or cycling, can improve the health of people with chronic lung conditions. As a result they will feel better and stay well.

People who exercise regularly can reduce their need for hospital admission. Walking is one of the most important aspects of an exercise program for respiratory health and should be combined with some weight or resistance based upper and lower limb exercises.

Exercise will help to:

- Make your heart stronger and healthier
- Improve your arm, body and leg muscle strength
- Improve your breathing
- Clear mucus (or sputum) from your chest
- Reduce your breathlessness during daily activities
- Increase the number of activities that you are able to do each day or each week
- Improve your balance
- Improve your mood and make you feel more in control
- Make you more independent
- Assist your weight control
- Improve your bone density ¹

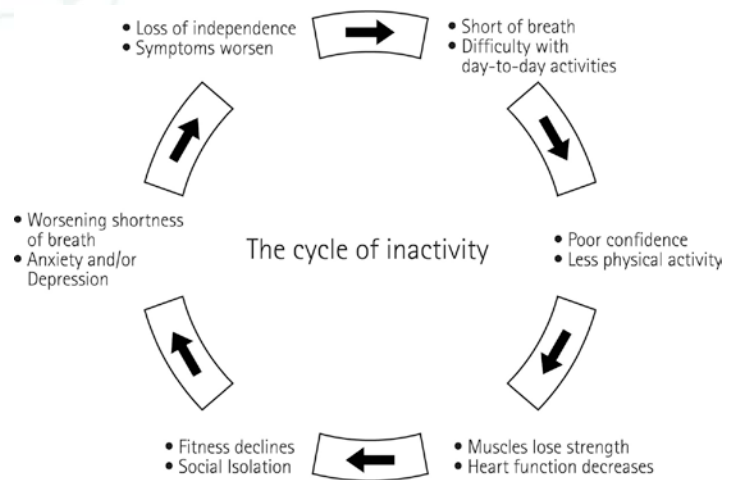
Before embarking upon an exercise program, it is important to speak to your doctor or respiratory specialist to ensure you are medically clear to exercise. Enrolling in a hospital or community health centre based pulmonary rehabilitation program is one of the best steps toward improving your health. Health professionals will teach you how to breathe, pace yourself and how to coordinate your breathing with movements in addition to providing you with other information. Pulmonary rehabilitation also prepares you for home exercise programs or community based group exercise maintenance classes.

Group exercise programs such as *Lungs in Action* are an excellent way for people who lack motivation to find encouragement to continue their exercise. It also provides much needed social interaction and continued support. *Lungs in Action* is an exercise maintenance program

designed for people with stable chronic lung conditions or heart failure who have completed a pulmonary or heart failure rehabilitation program.

For patients with moderate to severe COPD, a weekly community-based exercise maintenance class, supervised by a trained fitness instructor or exercise physiologist, combined with a home exercise program is an effective intervention for maintaining improvements following pulmonary rehabilitation.^{2,3}

This diagram illustrates how symptoms such as breathlessness lead to a reduction in a person's ability to undertake physical activity. This reduced level of activity reduces confidence and then leads into a cycle of inactivity as they become unfit and poorly conditioned. Lack of conditioning makes their movements less efficient, requiring greater effort to complete everyday tasks such as showering.



Please refer to “Better Living with COPD – A Patient Guide” for more details about exercise and other information for people living with COPD.

For more information on the location of Pulmonary Rehabilitation programs or *Lungs in Action* programs, contact Lung Foundation Australia on 1800 654 301 or visit www.lungfoundation.com.au

1. Queensland Health Statewide Respiratory Clinical Network and Lung Foundation Australia (2012). Better Living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Patient Guide (2nd Edition). Brisbane, Queensland, Australia: Lung Foundation Australia.
2. Ries AL, Bauldoff GS, Carlin BW, Casaburi R, Emery CF, Mahler DA, et al. Pulmonary Rehabilitation: Joint ACCP/AACVPR Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines. Chest. 2007 May; 131(5 Suppl): 4S-42S.
3. Spencer, L., Alison, J., & McKeough, Z. (2010). Maintaining benefits following pulmonary rehabilitation: a randomised controlled trial. European Respiratory Journal , 35 (3), 571-577.

This brochure is one in a series produced by Lung Foundation Australia to provide information on lung disease, its treatment and related issues. The information published by Lung Foundation Australia is designed to be used as a guide only, is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical treatment and is presented for the sole purpose of disseminating information to reduce lung disease.

Any information relating to medication brand names is correct at the time of printing. Lung Foundation Australia has no control or responsibility for the availability of medications, which may occasionally be discontinued or withdrawn.

Please consult your family doctor or specialist respiratory physician if you have further questions relating to the information contained in this leaflet. For details of patient support groups in Australia please call 1800 654 301.