Exercising While on Oxygen

by BRENDA VANTA

Tips for Exercising While on Oxygen

If you are on oxygen therapy, you may be concerned that some exercises may not be suitable for you, or that the oxygen tank may be hazardous or inconvenient. Although you should get the OK from your doctor first, you can still exercise with COPD while on oxygen.

There are some longer tubes for the oxygen tank that you can buy, and small, light tanks (designed for travel) are also available and can be used during your fitness routine.

Sample Exercises

Keep your legs fit and strong so you can walk easier with these exercises.

- Leg extensions can be easily done while sitting in a chair with back support, Stretch the left leg and keep it as straight as possible while you take a deep, slow breath. Inhale slowly while lower your left foot back to the floor. This is one set. Do another set with your right leg. Repeat 10 times.
- For calf raises you will need to stand 10 inches behind a chair or table, with your feet hip width apart. Hold on the chair/table for balance. Breathe in slowly. Lift up on your toes as high as you can while exhaling for a few seconds. Next, bring your heels back on the floor while inhaling. This is one rep. repeat 10 times.

Strong arms will help you move with less effort, saving energy.

- Use a pair of small/medium dumbbells for forward arm raises. Keep the dumbbells down at your sides, with the palms facing in. Breathe in, and then exhale slowly as you bring both arms up, straight out to the shoulder level. This is one rep. Perform two sets of 10 repetitions. As you practice this exercise, you may want to use heavier weights to build strong, lean muscles.

Whole Body Exercises

Yoga and tai chi are great exercises for the person with COPD. They are gentle for your lungs and joints, the movements are flowing and the overall effort is mild. Are also known as mind-body techniques and help you relax and relieve stress. You can either join a class or use a DVD to learn the proper techniques.

If it’s nice and warm outside you can also go for a walk. Start with 15 minutes at slow pace and build up to about 30 minutes daily. If it’s cold outside you may want to use a bike or treadmill – either at home or at the gym.

Exercise Tips

Make sure you use COPD breathing exercises. Breathe in slowly, though your nose and keep your mouth closed. Exhale through the mouth even slower than you inhale. Pursed lip breathing is another good option, use it during

workouts too, not just an energy conservation technique.

The goal is to exercise half an hour 3-4 times a week, and include cardio as well as strength training.

If exercises make you feel worse, if your breaths become too fast or too shallow you should stop the exercise and rest. COPD and lightheadedness can cause issues when it comes to physical activity, so if you experience dizziness or are going through a flare-up you should not exercise. See your doctor if you experience dizziness, irregular heartbeats or severe breathing problems.