

Exercise to Help Your Kidneys

If you have kidney problems, or have in the past, or if you want to prevent problems with your kidneys, exercise is important. The human body needs regular physical activity to stay healthy. Many diseases, physical limitations, and mental health problems are affected by a lack of physical activity.



Exercise choices

My healthcare provider suggests that I try these exercises:

- Stretching
- Swimming
- Walking
- Bicycling
- Taking a fitness class
- Taking a dance class
- Using an exercise machine, such as _____
- Other _____

How you benefit

When you exercise, your organs and tissues get more oxygen and nutrients from your blood. This gives you more energy. Exercise also makes your muscles stronger, which helps make your bones stronger. This is helpful because kidney disease sometimes weakens bones. Frequent aerobic exercise (any nonstop activity that makes your heart work harder) can also help lower high blood pressure. Exercise lowers your risk of getting diabetes. It can also help you control your diabetes if you already have it. The other known benefits of exercise are:

- A lower risk for heart attack and stroke
- Improved sense of well-being and less stress
- A lower risk for colon and breast cancer
- Prevention and improvement of joint pains (arthritis)
- Lower levels of blood fats (cholesterol)
- Better sleep

- A healthier weight

Make exercise part of your life

It's best to exercise at least 3 times a week. Try to spread your exercise out over the week. Do it every other day, for example. Make it a goal to work out for 30 minutes each time. If you can't do 30 minutes at a time, you can break it up into smaller periods. For example, you could take a brisk 10-minute walk 3 times a day. Talk with your healthcare provider about the safest way to start.

To be more active

All types of movement count. But if you have been ill, talk with your healthcare provider about what type of exercise is best for you. Also ask about how long, how often, and how hard you should work while exercising. Try the tips below to help you get more active:

- Swim laps at a local pool.
- Go for a walk, mow the lawn, or wash the car.
- Take the stairs.
- Choose a parking spot farther away from your destination.
- Take dancing lessons or join a health club

Remember, find an activity you enjoy and you will be more likely to keep it up. Some people find that exercising with a friend helps them stick to regular exercise program.