

Cardiovascular Exercises

The following exercises are designed for those who are not regularly active. It is important that you find the level of exercise that suits you – we would recommend starting with ‘gentle’ then ‘mild’ and finally the ‘moderate’ exercises, as you feel comfortable. When the ‘moderate’ exercises are no longer a challenge you can move on to Levels 1 – 3 of the rest of the programme which details more strenuous cardiovascular exercises as well as strengthening ones.

As discussed in the introduction, smoking affects your lungs, heart and circulation. It also increases your blood pressure and has been linked to an increased risk of osteoporosis. Cardiovascular exercise is especially important for smokers because it can help improve each of those issues, enabling your body to use oxygen more efficiently, improve muscle tone and strengthen bones. In addition it also helps to lower blood pressure, manage stress, and helps control weight gain, whilst improving one's sense of well-being.

The following exercises work the areas of your body most severely damaged by smoking – increasing lung capacity and giving your heart a thorough work-out. To ensure you are gaining the most benefit from the exercises, try and maintain a steady continuous pace – use the talk test (described in the introduction) as a check to make sure you're doing them properly.

For all 3 levels try and do each exercise consecutively without taking a break. However, if you cannot do the talk test you should take a rest. At the end of the programme you should gently walk around for 5 minutes as an active cool down to prevent your muscles from stiffing up and bring your heart rate back down to its normal level.

Begin with a five minute warm up involving gentle movements that increase your heart rate such as walking on the spot and slowly circling your arms.

GENTLE

1. **Walking** – walk for 5 minutes gently swinging your arms backwards and forwards as you do so
2. **Step-up's** – for 3 minutes step up and back down on your bottom step at a comfortable pace
3. **Sit to stand** – at a speed which is comfortable to you, go from sitting on a hard chair to standing 15 times
4. **Circling arms** – gently circle your arms round 20 times in the air – if this causes any discomfort in your shoulders make your circles smaller

MILD

1. **Power walking** – briskly walk for 5 minutes pumping your arms as you do so
2. **Step up step down** – go up and down a flight of stairs twice at your own pace but try not to take a break in-between
3. **Knee raises** – holding on to a solid surface with one hand, lift each knee up in turn towards your chest as high as is comfortable – try and do 10 knee raises with each leg
4. **Throw and catch** – throw a ball underarm against a wall and try and catch it over arm – repeat this 15 times

MODERATE

1. **Walk run** – briskly walk for 2 minutes then try and jog for 1 – repeat 3 times
2. **Skipping** – without using a rope try and ‘skip’ on the spot for 5 minutes
3. **Speedy step-ups** - ‘run’ up and down on your bottom step for 3 minutes, ensuring that you place your foot fully on the step and that you are not getting too out of breath
4. **Punches** – Punch your arms out in front of you as if you are boxing – try and do 30 in a row

LOW IMPACT AEROBIC EXERCISES

Other aerobic exercises you may enjoy and which are especially good if your doctor has recommended low impact sports, if you suffer from arthritis or if you have bad joints include:

Swimming – great for a non-impact, all-over, body workout – which will help improve your range of movement and lung function

Cycling – excellent at burning off calories, to control any potential weight gain whilst building up your leg muscles and really working your lungs

Breathing Exercises

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

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Smoking not only damages the lining of your airways but it also obstructs them and so further reduces your lung function. As a result, breathing can become more difficult causing you to change the way you breathe. This altered pattern means vital parts of your lung fall into disuse and the different muscles with which you are now breathing, tighten – causing tension and stress. Therefore, it is extremely important that you try and resume the normal pattern of breathing called ‘diaphragmatic breathing’.

Diaphragmatic breathing uses the diaphragm (a sheet of muscle situated just beneath your lungs) and practicing it will help release any built-up tension and ensure that all the areas of your lungs are given a good ‘work-out’, helping to keep them in good shape. At first, you will have to concentrate to breath in this way but with practice and regular use, it should become more natural. If you can, work your way towards using diaphragmatic breathing all the time.

Try and do this exercise three times a day, alternating between 5 ‘regular’ breaths and 5 ‘diaphragmatic’ breaths for 5 minutes. It can be done whenever you feel stressed, whilst you are watching TV or just when you have a spare 5 minutes – you may find it an extremely effective diversion when you are tempted to have a cigarette.

- Sit in a relaxed, comfortable manner with your hands resting lightly on your stomach
- Take a deep breath in ‘from your stomach’ not from your upper chest – you will know you have done this correctly when your hands peak in a ‘pyramid’ shape
- Breath out slowly by pulling in your stomach

OR

- Lie down with one pillow under your head and another under your knees
- Place one hand on your upper chest, and the other in the middle of your stomach
- Use your diaphragm for breathing, and **not** your upper chest muscles – to ensure you are doing this the hand on your stomach should rise **not** the one on your chest
- Breath out slowly by pulling in your stomach

DISCLAIMER: Participants are reminded that QUIT cannot be held responsible for any injury incurred during or after participation in the KEEP QUIT exercise programme and QUIT would thoroughly recommend that all participants consult their doctor prior to starting the KEEP QUIT programme