

# Your Health: Stay Active While You Heal



## Why is it important to stay active?

Exercise can help you recover from an injury. For example, if you have a back injury, exercise and staying active may relieve your pain and help speed your recovery. Stretching and strengthening your stomach, back, and leg muscles could keep you from hurting your back again.

Aerobic exercise—such as walking, swimming, or walking in waist-deep water—gets your heart beating faster and makes you breathe harder. Aerobic activity helps the heart and muscles stay healthy.

## How do you get started?

- Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about activities that are safe to do with your injury. You will only want to do activities that do not increase your symptoms or make your injury worse.
- Find safe activities that keep your body moving. For example, if you have a running injury, you might be able to walk, bike, or swim. Water aerobics, yoga, Pilates, or rowing may be other activities you can do.

## Tips for exercising safely

- Talk with your doctor or physical therapist about when you can start.
- Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercise if you start to have pain.
- Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about how to best progress through your exercises. Then work your way up to where you can exercise for a longer time or do the exercise with more effort.
- If you are sore after you exercise, put a cold pack on the area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Be patient. It can take several weeks to heal. Stay with activities that don't make your injury worse, and you should heal without more problems.

## Your exercises

Use the space below to list your exercises.

### Exercises your doctor recommends:

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