MOVING YOUR WAY TOWARD HEALTHIER LIVING

An exercise booklet for people with special health needs
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BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Before getting started in a physical activity program it is important to discuss your plans with your primary health care provider and get “the OK” to get stared. It is also important to let your health care provider(s) know how you’re doing in your exercise program with whether you are having any difficulties, such as pain or shortness of breath. You should also discuss any alternative or complementary therapies you might be thinking of trying.

MOVING YOUR WAY TOWARD HEALTHIER LIVING

Investing in your health includes following your treatment plan, eating healthy foods and staying physically active. The staff of the MFit, Health Promotion Division understands that full investment in your health is not easy especially if you are fatigued or in pain due to your medical condition and treatment. To help you to have more energy, stamina and, wellbeing throughout the course of your condition MFit has designed this physical activity guide especially for you.

There are many ways to help you manage pain and fatigue. In addition to the therapy and/or medications that your health care provider may have prescribed, aerobic exercise, therapeutic exercise, and relaxation are some ways to help you battle fatigue and control pain. Keeping as active as possible, as well as learning how to relax and how to strengthen and stretch your muscles are all ways of using your mind and body as “advocates” for your health.

Always talk with your health care provider before trying any alternative or complementary therapies to make sure it is appropriate for your medical condition.
FINDING YOUR MOTIVATION

Finding the energy to perform regular physical activity while under treatment may be difficult. It is important to figure out what motivates you to be physically active and then act on those motivators. Consider the following factors to help you build your motivation for physical activity.

Build a healthy lifestyle
Use physical activity to jump-start a healthy lifestyle. Consider ways to build activity into your daily routine. For example, stretch while watching television.

Make Progress
Feel good about your progress, even if it seems slow. Small changes over time can have a big impact on your physical well-being.

Explore the unknown
Physical activity can provide opportunities to try new things. Ask your physical or recreational therapist to introduce you to some new exercises.

Manage stress
Physical activity will help you feel relaxed to handle stress more effectively.

Challenge yourself
Setting and accomplishing personal physical activity goals can be a positive challenge and give you a sense of pride. Recognize that your goals will be different during the course of your treatment. Perhaps, during treatment your goal may be just to enjoy simple movements of your body.

Enjoy variety
There are many physical activities to choose from. Once you are finished with your treatment or surgery you can explore activities that are fun for you.

Seek Support
It will be easier if you have the support of friends and family when you start your physical activity program.

Don’t Stop Starting
Throughout your treatment and life you will have good and bad days. Our philosophy is “Don’t Stop Starting.” If you have had a bad day, leave it behind and give yourself a fresh start the next day.
YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLANNING:

Setting goals is an important step toward performing a physical activity program. Think about your short-term and long-term goals and how those goals will fit into how you feel during your course of treatment. Short-term goals reflect what you want to accomplish within the next few days or weeks. Long-term goals are changes you want to make in the next few months and continue on indefinitely.

Make your goals SMART:

Specific: Making your goal specific helps you focus your efforts and clearly define what you will do. Rather than saying, “I want to be more active,” say “I want to perform my stretching exercises 4 times per week.”

Measurable: Setting measurable goals helps you keep track of your progress. You can look back and say, “Yes, I did reach my weekly goal. I know because I performed my stretches 4 times this week.”

Attainable: Choosing attainable goals means that the goals need to be realistic. Take into account your current fitness level and your phase in your treatment plan. Perhaps during treatment your goal may be to focus on progressive muscle relaxation PMR (see PMR on page 29).

Relevant: The goals you set need to be important to you. Exercising because your health care provider says you should may not be relevant to you. Make your goal personal and again keep in mind your phase in your medical treatment.

Timely: Setting a time frame for your goal will help you to build or maintain your fitness level depending on your medical treatment and treatment plan.

Reassessing your goals at different stages of your disease and treatment will help you keep your goals realistic and “doable.”
MY PERSONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN

My Physical Activity Long-term goals are (For example: I want to be able to have the energy to help me get through my treatment or surgery):
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

My Physical Activity Short-Term Goals are (For example: “I want to increase my flexibility prior to my surgery by performing my MFit stretching program 3 times a week.):
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

My Action Steps to meet Short-Term Goals are (For example: I will perform my MFit flexibility exercises on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9:00a.m.):
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

My journal entry of my physical activity feelings, likes and dislikes?
Feelings: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
Likes: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
Dislikes: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
COMPONENTS OF A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Aerobic Activity
Aerobic activity will help your body use oxygen better, give you more energy, and make your heart, lungs, and muscles stronger and healthier. Walking, jogging, swimming, and cycling are examples of aerobic activity.

Remember that it is essential that you get clearance from your health care provider prior to beginning your exercise program.

Where you are in the course of your condition and treatment will determine whether you can do aerobic activities and for how long. During certain treatments or soon after surgery, you may not be able to do aerobic activity. You may focus more on strengthening and stretching therapies to help your body heal. Before embarking on surgery or treatments, you may be able to use aerobic activities to get into your best physical shape so you can maintain your stamina during hospitalization, treatment or recovery.

When you have finished your treatment or recovered from surgery, you may want to get back to your regular physical activity, or perhaps start a new activity. Make sure to slowly increase your frequency, intensity and duration recognizing that it may take several months (3-9 months) to increase your aerobic capacity. Your health care provider may have cardiac rehabilitation, physical, recreational, or occupational therapy plan for you to begin. Make sure to let your therapist know any other physical activities you may be doing on your own.
Guidelines for Aerobic Activity

Frequency
Maintain your aerobic capacity by performing your aerobic activity 3-6 days per week. If you have not been doing any physical activity, start by adding short durations of physical activity into your day. Some ideas would be:

- Go for a brisk walk
- Park at the far end of the lot
- Do your own yard work
- Dance to songs you like

Intensity
Intensity refers to how hard you are working. Make sure to pace your effort so that you are exerting yourself in between fairly light activity and somewhat hard activity (see rate of perceived exertion scale (RPE) below). You should be able to talk as you exercise. If you can’t talk, you may be exercising too hard. If you can sing, you may not be working hard enough.

Duration
Start with 10 minutes of aerobic activity for a few weeks. Gradually increase by 5 minute increments at a time until you can reach 30-45 minutes per exercise session.

Warm-Up
At the beginning of your workout, warm-up the muscles you are going to use during your physical activity by performing your activity at a lower intensity for 3-5 minutes. The warm-up will prepare your body for physical activity by gradually elevating your heart rate and increase blood flow to your muscles. A warm-up will help you prevent injuries that can occur during activity.

Cool Down
At the end of your workout, cool down by performing your chosen activity at a lower intensity for 3-5 minutes. The cool down will help to restore your body to its pre exercise state by bringing your heart rate back down towards resting and moving blood back to the core of your body. A cool down can also help with lactic acid build up in the muscles, which contributes to delayed onset muscle soreness.

Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

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<td>Very strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Very, Very Strong</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Resistance/Strength Training

Resistance training includes exercises that use resistance equipment to train and strengthen muscles. The resistance used can be your body weight or a portion of it, a resistance band, a hand weight, or barbell or the weight(s) found on weight training equipment.

Remember that it is essential that you get clearance from your health care provider prior to beginning your resistance training program.

Before treatment or surgery the goal for many patients will be to maintain and in some cases increase muscular endurance and strength. Use the resistance band exercise program to help you to maintain and in some cases increase your strength.

During your treatment it may be difficult to perform strength exercises especially if you’re combating fatigue or side effects from your treatment or surgery. With clearance from your health care provider, you may be able to perform some resistance exercises in your hospital room to maintain your stamina. See the standing, seated, and laying resistance exercises. Your health care provider may have a physical, recreational or occupational therapy plan for you. Make sure to let your therapist know any other physical activities you may be doing on your own.

After you are finished with your treatment, you may want to get back to your regular strength training routine. Make sure to slowly increase your frequency, intensity and duration recognizing that it may take several months (3-9 months) to get back your strength.
Guidelines for Resistance Training

Why should I resistance train?
Resistance training can increase muscular strength, endurance, and power. In addition, resistance training:

- Improves the ability to perform everyday tasks
- Helps to maintain bone density
- Increases metabolism
- Increases stamina and energy level
- Improves muscle and therefore joint strength

Remember that it is essential that you get clearance from your health care provider prior to beginning your resistance training program.

How do I get started?
If you have never resistance trained or have not for a while, you may want to consult with a health and fitness professional, such as an MFit personal trainer, to learn safe and effective resistance training before starting your program.

Order and Progression
After completing a 3-5 minute warm-up of light aerobic activity (example: walking), begin to perform phase I exercises prescribed to you. When you can consistently do 15 repetitions in each set for three consecutive workouts, increase your resistance by moving from phase I to phase II exercises.

Frequency
Depending on your treatment plan, 3-4 days a week is ideal; however one or two is acceptable. Rest your muscles for 48 hours between workouts to allow your muscles to recover.

Intensity
Perform each exercise with proper form (see “Form” below) until momentary muscle fatigue is reached – the point at which you cannot perform another repetition without losing form. To decrease intensity, perform exercise by moving body part(s) through a comfortable range of motion.

Duration
Repetitions: Perform the exercises so momentary muscle fatigue is reached within 8-15 repetitions for each set.

Sets: One correctly performed set for each exercise may be enough. Multiple sets may provide better results, depending on your goals.

Rest interval: If you do multiple sets, a typical rest interval is 30-60 seconds.
Guidelines for Resistance Training, Continued

Form

Proper speed: Lift your body weight or pull your resistance band (increase tension) in two counts and lower your body weight or release the resistance band (reduce tension) in 4 counts (pull 1-2, release 1-2-3-4).

Range of motion: Exercise muscles through their fullest (comfortable) range of motion.

Protecting joints: Do not lock your joints when performing any exercise.

Proper form: If you must alter your form to complete the repetition, STOP! You have reached momentary muscle fatigue for that set. Do not sacrifice form to perform more repetitions.

Safety

Breathing: Remember to breathe. DO NOT hold your breath while performing an exercise. Complete at least one breathing cycle (in and out) per repetition. Inhale when the exercise is easiest and exhale when it is hardest. If you are holding a contraction (or tightening a muscle) without moving make sure to breathe normally as you hold the contraction.
**NECK: EXTENSORS**

**Supine Push**

Take a deep breath and exhale while pushing the back of neck down on the bed. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.

---

**UPPER BACK: RHOMBOIDS**

**Shoulder Press**

Press both shoulders down into ground and squeeze shoulder blades toward spine.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat 1 or more times.
Do 1-3 sets.

---

**CORE: ABDOMINALS / LOW BACK**

**Pelvic Tilt**

Lie on back, legs bent. Exhale, tilting top of pelvis back and pubic bone up, to flatten lower back to floor. Inhale and roll pelvis opposite way with pubic bone down, and slight arch in back.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.
**HIP: HIP FLEXORS**

**Single Leg Raise**

Lie on back with one leg bent and other leg straight on mat. Inhale and raise straight leg toward ceiling. Keep hips and low back on mat. Exhale and lower leg to mat. Inhale and return to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions. Switch sides. Do 1-3 sets.

---

**HIP: HIP FLEXORS**

**Knee Raise**

Lie on back with legs bent at 90 degrees and arms by sides palms face down. Exhale and lift right knee to chest. Inhale, and return right knee to ground. Keep low back in contact with floor.

Alternate legs. Complete 8-15 repetitions. Do 1-3 sets.

---

**SHOULDERS/ UPPER BACK/CORE**

**Rib Cage Arms**

Lie on back with feet flat on floor, legs bent to 90 degrees, and arms by sides. Inhale and lift arms over head. Exhale and return to starting position. Keep rib cage and abdomen on the ground.

Complete 8-15 repetitions. Do 1-3 sets.

---
**CORE: ABDOMINALS**

**Crunch**

Place hands behind head and bend knees. While keeping head and neck in line with spine, elevate shoulders and upper back toward ceiling, then slowly return to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.

---

**LEGS: OUTER THIGH**

**Abduction**

Lie on back with pillow between legs. Slide right leg out to the side keeping kneecaps pointing up. Gently bring leg back to pillow.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Switch sides.
Do 1-3 sets.

---

**LEGS: INNER THIGH**

**Adduction**

Lie on back with pillow between legs. Gently squeeze pillow between legs and hold squeeze for 5 seconds. Slowly release squeeze or contraction.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1 set.
HIP/LEGS/CORE: HIP FLEXORS, QUADRICEPS, ABDOMINALS

Single Leg Circle

Lie on back with one leg bent and the other leg straight up. Inhale and circle leg across body, and exhale while circling down and around to starting position. Avoid rocking on hips by maintaining a still pelvis. Keep circle small.

Complete 8-15 repetitions. Switch sides. Do 1-3 sets.

NECK / UPPER BACK: EXTENSORS AND RHOMBOIDS

Head Lift

Lie on stomach with forehead resting on hands, palms down. Tuck chin slightly toward chest. Exhale and lift forehead slightly off hands. Inhale and return to starting position. Be sure to keep neck in line with the spine.

Complete 8-15 repetitions. Do 1-3 sets.

LOW BACK: GLUTEALS, LUMBAR EXTENSORS

Prone Single Leg Raise

Lie on stomach with forehead resting on hands. Exhale and raise one leg toward ceiling keeping leg straight and front of hip on the mat. Inhale and lower leg to starting position.

Alternate legs. Complete 8-15 repetitions. Do 1-3 sets.
UPPER BACK: TRAPEZIUS
Shoulder Shrug

Bring shoulders up toward ears and rotate shoulders backward and down.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.

UPPER BACK: RHOMBOIDS
Shoulder Blade Squeeze

Sit up straight. Exhale and rotate shoulders back squeezing shoulder blades together. Inhale and return to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.

SHOULDER/ARM: DELTOID AND TRICEPS
One Arm Triceps Lift

Sit up straight. Place fingertips on back of neck. Exhale and push elbow up to the sky.

Hold 20-30 seconds.

Repeat with other arm.
Repeat one or more times.
**SIDES: OBLIQUES**

**Side Bend**

Sit up straight with feet flat on the floor. Exhale and slowly slide one arm toward floor. Inhale and return to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Repeat with other side.
Do 1-3 sets.

**CORE: OBLIQUES & LUMBAR ROTATORS**

**Spinal Twist**

Sit up straight with legs pressed together and feet flexed. Reach arms out to sides with palms facing forward. Exhale and twist to right side. Inhale and return to starting position. Repeat to left side.

Alternate sides. Complete 8-15 repetitions. Do 1-3 sets.

**SHOULDERS & ARMS: DELTOIDS & TRICEPS**

**Chair Push-Up**

Place hands on arm rests of a stable chair. Straighten arms by pushing down into arm rests and lift buttocks off seat. Slowly lower back down to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.
POSTURAL/BALANCE

Mountain Pose

Stand as tall as possible with feet together in parallel and arms straight by sides. To modify, stand with feet shoulder width apart and chair in front of body for support.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times.

ANKLE: ANKLE ROTATORS

Ankle Circles

Standing with feet in shoes or barefoot, circle one foot clockwise and then counterclockwise direction.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Repeat with other foot.
Do 1-3 sets.

LEGS: CALVES AND SHINS

Balancing Act

Place hands against wall or on back of chair. Start in a standing position. Rise up on toes and slowly lower back to ground. Then roll back on heels lifting toes off the ground then slowly lower back to ground.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.
**HIP: HIP FLEXORS**
Knee Raise

Holding stable object, raise right knee to hip level, then lower knee back down to the ground. Repeat with other knee.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.

---

**SIDES: OBLIQUES**
Side Bend

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, knees soft. Exhale and slowly slide one arm toward floor. Inhale and return to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Repeat with other side.
Do 1-3 sets.

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**CHEST/ARMS: PECS AND TRICEPS**
Wall Push-Up

Stand around 2-4 feet from the wall with hands on wall shoulder width apart. Inhale and bend arms moving face close to the wall. Exhale and return to starting position.

Complete 8-15 repetitions.
Do 1-3 sets.
Stretching and Flexibility Training

Flexibility is an important component of physical activity. Performing a stretching program will help you to maintain muscle flexibility and range of motion of our joints. Stretching your muscles also helps to relieve tension and provide relaxation. In addition, stretching can help to promote healthy blood circulation, since blood circulation can be impaired in times of stress.

Remember that it is essential that you get clearance from your health care provider prior to beginning your stretching program.

Before treatment or surgery the goal for many patients will be to maintain and in some cases increase your flexibility and range of motion. Follow the stretching program to help maintain the range of motion of your muscles and joints.

During treatment it may be difficult to perform a stretching program especially if you’re combating fatigue or side effects from your treatment. With clearance from your health care provider you may be able to perform some stretching exercises in your hospital room to maintain your stamina.

After you are finished with your treatment or surgery you may want to get back to your regular stretching routine. Use the stretching program to help you increase or maintain your flexibility.
**Guidelines for Stretching and Flexibility**

**Why should I stretch?**
- To improve your flexibility.
- To improve muscle performance.
- To promote better circulation.
- To help prevent muscular injuries.
- To help prevent muscular stiffness and soreness.
- To help reduce tension and to encourage relaxation.
- To help you develop better awareness of your body.

**How do I stretch?**
- Stretch in a slow relaxed manner.
- Stretch until you feel a slight discomfort in the muscle.
- Hold each stretch for at least 20 seconds.
- Repeat each stretch two or more times.
- Don’t bounce.
- Never stretch to the point of feeling pain.
- Breathe normally.

**What do I stretch?**
Concentrate on the muscles you are going to use, or have used during your physical activity or daily activity. Emphasize any area that is particularly tight.
**BACK: LUMBAR EXTENSORS**

Grasp hands underneath knee joint and bring knee to chest.

Repeat with other leg.  
Hold for 20-30 seconds.  
Repeat one or more times.

**LEGS: HAMSTRINGS**

Lie on back and pull knee in toward chest with hands.  
Extend leg overhead. For more stretch, move hands up the leg toward ankle and straighten leg.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.  
Repeat one or more times with each leg.

**LEGS: QUADRICEPS**

Lie on side with knees bent and hold top foot with same-side hand. Pull heel in toward buttock, keeping knees in line and hip pressed forward.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.  
Repeat one or more times with each leg.
**NECK: BENDERS**

Tilt head to the side toward one shoulder.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times with each side.

**NECK: ROTATORS**

Turn head slowly to look over one shoulder.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times with each side.

**ARMS: BICEPS**

**CHEST: PECTORIALS**

With arms straight and fingers interlaced behind back, raise hands toward ceiling.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times.
ARMS: TRICEPS

Bend elbow and place hand of bent arm on back of neck. Using the other hand, pull elbow behind head.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times with each side.

ARMS: WRIST FLEXORS

Stretch arm out in front with elbow straight and palm facing away. With other hand, pull fingers backward. Repeat with other arm.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times.

SHOULDERS: DELTOID/RHOMBOIDS

Pull right arm across chest with left hand. Turn head away from pull. Repeat with other arm.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times.
**NECK: TRAPEZIUS**

Tilt head to left side. With arms behind back, use left hand to pull right arm over and down to the left.

Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat one or more times with each side.

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**LEGS: GROIN**

Place soles of feet flat together. Gently lean forward and push down on knees with forearms.

Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat one or more times.

---

**HIP: EXTERNAL ROTATORS**

Place left leg over right and bring right arm to the outside of left leg. Press left leg across body with right elbow. Turn head and look over left shoulder.

Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat one or more times.
LEGS: CALVES

Place hands on wall and stagger feet two to three feet apart. Keep back leg straight with heel on floor. Lean into the wall until stretch is felt in calf. Repeat with other leg.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times.

LEGS: ACHILLES/SOLEUS

Place hands on wall and stagger feet one to two feet apart. Keep back leg slightly bent with heel on floor. Lean into wall until a stretch is felt in achilles. Repeat with other leg.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.
Repeat one or more times.
**Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

During all phases of treatment, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) can help you notice areas in your body where you have muscle tension. PMR can help you to relieve that muscle tension and stress.

Ideally, you will want to find a quiet place where you can sit or lay down and be free from interruption for about ten minutes. Tense each muscle group for at least five seconds and then relax for about 30 seconds. Remember to breathe normally as you tense each muscle group. Repeat before moving on to the next muscle group. For the full-body version, tense and relax the following muscle groups:

- Forehead and eyes
- Nose and cheeks
- Mouth and lower jaw
- Neck
- Shoulders
- Upper arms
- Hands and lower arms
- Chest, shoulders and upper back
- Stomach
- Upper legs
- Lower legs
- Feet

For a shortened version of PMR, you can combine muscle groups for the tension and relaxation. For example, tense the forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and lower jaw, then relax these groups all at once.
Physical Wellness Resources

MFit at the Ann Arbor Ice Cube
(734) 998-8700
www.med.umich.edu/mfit/programs/fitness/icecube.htm

MFit Fit-Script
(734) 998-8700
www.med.umich.edu/mfit/fitness/fitscript.htm

MFit Weight Management Program
(734) 975-3024
www.med.umich.edu/mfit/weight/index.htm

MWorks
(734) 975-3028
1-888-7-MWORKS
www.med.umich.edu/mworks

The Spine Program
(734) 763-6464
www.med.umich.edu/pmr/spine

Comprehensive Diabetes Care Program
(734) 647-5871
www.med.umich.edu/whp

Cardiovascular Medicine
(734) 998-7400
1-877-287-1082
www.med.umich.edu/cvc

Health Education Resource Center
(734) 647-5645 or
(800) 433-6348
www.med.umich.edu/mfit/herc
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