

**Modified from:** Tandon P, Ismond KP, Riess K, Duarte-Rojo A, Al-Judaibi B, Dunn MA, Holman J, Howes N, Haykowsky MJF, Josbeno DA, McNeely M. **Exercise in Cirrhosis: Translating Evidence and Experience to Practice.** *Journal of Hepatology.* 2018. Accepted.

### Basic Tips

- Stay hydrated by drinking 1.5-2 liters of water per day. Do not do this if your doctor advises otherwise!
- Ensure you get proper nutrition and sleep. This is essential for your body to recover after exercise

### Motivation

- Remember the benefits of exercise: improved stamina and energy, increased agility and bone & joint health, better control of blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar, overall well-being, and better quality of life!
- Set both short- and long-term goals.
  - Short-term goals lead to the long-term goal.
  - Short-term goals can be walking for 10 minutes a day for 3 days a week.
- Remember to celebrate your progress and achievements; even exercising a little bit instead of nothing is better when feeling poor.
  - Celebrate yourself and your small and large successes!
- Combine fun, enjoyable activities that you like such as listening to music when gardening or walking.
- Try something new every now and then. Mix it up.
  - Change your walk route
  - Join a group for either dancing or mall walking in the winter
  - Don't do the same routine over and over
- Get a buddy!
  - Exercise with a family member, friend, or your dog (or your neighbour's dog!)
- Remember to keep a record of your activity
  - Use a pedometer or wearable electronic device like a Fitbit or get a step counting app for your cell phone
  - Keep a paper-based diary of days and times exercised
  - Measure the distance frequently walked
- One of the best parts about exercise is finishing. Focus on how GOOD you will feel after the session.
- Remember to breathe and smile!

### Adding activity to your day outside of your exercise routine

- Add activity in other ways:
  - Take the stairs instead of the elevator
  - Park farther away from the store
  - Stand up then sit down 10 times when you're on the computer or during television commercials
  - Get off the bus at an earlier stop and walk the rest of the way

### Adjusting for "low energy" days or when you really do not want to exercise

- Change into exercise clothes or put on your walking shoes and then start the activity or exercise session. Usually you will finish it and feel better about yourself.
- Despite having swollen feet, a swollen abdomen, bruised and even yellow skin, the body **NEEDS** movement. Exercise is every bit as important as the medications you take. A strong body is necessary to make any treatment successful.
- Think about how you can modify the exercises on days you have less energy. Which activities are most important for you to complete?

**It is better to exercise even a little bit than not to exercise at all!**

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#### **Monitoring during exercise**

- Your practitioner will give you a breathlessness/exertion BORG Scale
  - Try to reach 5-6 out of 10
  - At this range, you should be feeling:
    - a little short of breath but can still speak
    - tired but can continue exercising
- If you are taking water pills and you have a blood pressure monitor, take your blood pressure before and after exercising.
  - The top number should ideally be in the range from 100 mm Hg to 160 mm Hg
  - If the top number is outside of this range, stop the exercise program and tell your doctor.
- If you have diabetes, it is recommended that you check your blood sugar before and after your exercise session.