

Exercise on dialysis for better health

Disclaimer

You should ensure that you have consulted your doctor before attempting any of the exercises outlined in this programme. As with any exercise programme, you should stop immediately if you feel faint, dizzy, unwell or experience chest pain and you should contact your doctor or a nurse.

Exercises to carry out on dialysis

The following exercises can be carried out whilst you are on the dialysis machines. The safest times for you to carry these out are the second and third hours after dialysis has started. It is important that you maintain good posture at all times during these exercises, and breathe regularly as you complete them. Breathe out during the difficult part and breathe in during the easy part of the exercise. You should sit with your back straight and well supported in your dialysis chair where appropriate and keep the parts of your body that are not exercising as still as possible.

Over time you should aim to build up the intensity of these exercises.

1. You should start without any weights and repeat each of the exercises as many times as you can manage
2. You should then progress to completing a set of 10-15 repetitions
3. Once you are comfortable with this you can should aim to progress to 3 sets of 10-15 repetitions
4. Once you are able to do this comfortably you can then progress to adding 0.5kg weights to each leg and follow the above steps again
5. Once you complete steps 1-3 with 0.5kg weights, you can progress to completing them with 1kg weights instead.

You should begin your exercise programme with 5 minutes of warm-up exercises. These can be a low intensity version of the exercises you are about to carry out, without any weights added.

Exercise 1: Heel raises

1. Sit towards the front of your chair with your back straight and your knees bent at 90°
2. Lift your heel up and then lower it back down slowly
3. Repeat with the other leg. When you progress to adding weights to this exercise, you should have the weight resting on the knees and not around the ankles.





Exercise 2: Ankle flex

1. Sit on a chair with your back well supported
2. Raise one leg straight out in front of you
3. Flex your foot so that your toes are pointing towards the ceiling
4. Slowly point your toes down and then flex up again
5. Return leg to original position
6. Repeat with the other leg



Exercise 3: Knee extension

1. Sit towards the front of your chair with your feet on the floor
2. Straighten one leg so that it is out in front of you
3. Keep your toes pointing up towards the ceiling
4. Slowly bend your leg back and place your foot back on the floor
5. Repeat with the other leg



Exercise 4: Knee to chest lifts

1. Sit on a chair with your back well supported
2. Bring one knee up to the chest and lower slowly
3. Repeat with the other leg



Exercise 5: Outer thigh lift

1. Sit on a chair with your back well supported
2. Slowly move one leg sideways away from your body by 30-40°, concentrating on the muscles of your outer thigh
3. Return leg to original position
4. Repeat with the other leg



Exercise 6: Front thigh lift

1. Sit on a chair with your back well supported
2. Roll up a towel and place this under your knee
3. Slowly lift your foot up and place back down again
4. Repeat with the other leg



Exercise 7: Straight leg raise

1. Sit on a chair with your back well supported
2. Straighten your leg
3. Slowly lift your leg up by 30-40° and place back down again
4. Repeat with the other leg

You should end your exercise programme with 5 minutes of cool-down exercises. These can be a low intensity version of the exercises you have just completed, without any weights added.

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www.kidney.org.uk
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