Exercise contributes to health and well-being and is beneficial to everyone. It improves strength and muscle endurance, activity tolerance, quality of life, self-esteem and contributes to many other aspects of physical and mental wellness. PH patients can reap the same benefits of exercise but should take special precaution when initiating, changing or maintaining a program. Before beginning an exercise program, talk to your physician about your ideas. It is recommended to work with a health-care professional to design an individualized exercise program and update it as necessary.

While exercising, please keep in mind the following key points...

- Keep a record of your work-out activities and your response (i.e. How hard do you think you are working and how short of breath do you feel?).
- Periods of exercise should be interspersed with brief periods of rest or reduced intensity (typically one to two minutes).
- Do not hold your breath during exertion. When you move into extension (in which your back is straightened), breathe in. When you move into flexion (in which your back is bent), exhale.

Sample Exercise Program:
The following is only a suggestion; it is not a substitute for a thorough evaluation and the development of an individualized program.

Component I: Aerobic Exercise
During aerobic exercise, the body is primarily using oxygen and is most efficient in making energy. Aerobic activity is characterized by an exercise session that uses big muscles and lasts between 20 and 40 minutes.

Try it!
Walk (cycle, swim, garden, etc.) at a comfortable pace. When your symptoms (e.g. shortness of breath) reach a moderate intensity, either stop and take a one- to two-minute rest or slow down your pace. Once you have recovered, resume walking. Your first goal should be to walk for 10 minutes, gradually working up to walking for 20, and then 30, consecutive minutes. Do not be concerned with the speed of walking; at first, just concentrate on time.

Component II: Anaerobic Exercise
For these exercises, the body uses energy that is stored in the muscles and makes additional energy without oxygen. Muscle fatigue is likely to occur and care must be taken when performing these exercises because symptoms can come on rapidly.

Try it!
For strength training, begin with the goal of completing one set of repetitions (you can determine the number) and progress to two or three sets of 15 repetitions while maintaining good form. Remember to move slowly and to breathe. For advanced strength training, add a muscle endurance session, which involves completing as many repetitions as you can in 30 and 60 seconds. Repeat three to five times.

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