Introduction to Exercise
A PHA Classroom Video Resource Guide

Objectives: The goal of the PHA Classroom Exercise Series is to provide people with pulmonary hypertension (PH) information on improving endurance, muscle strength and quality of life through three broad fitness categories: flexibility, strength and cardio. This video series by the Pulmonary Hypertension Association is designed to give you information you need to work with your doctor and pulmonary rehabilitation program to tailor an exercise routine that is right for you.

Regular exercise can improve exercise capacity, muscle function and quality of life for patients with various types of pulmonary hypertension (PH).

The Introduction to Exercise video is the first in a series on exercises that can be appropriate for people with PH. This video includes information on PH and how the heart, lungs and muscles can benefit from exercise. It gives an overview of three types of exercise for you to discuss with your doctor:

1. Yoga to improve flexibility and confidence.
2. Strength training with light weights, resistance bands and small household objects.
3. Aerobic exercise to improve cardiovascular health.

The exercises in the PHA Classroom Exercise Series are examples of workouts that are appropriate for some people. Always talk with your PH doctor before beginning an exercise routine. He or she might be able to suggest a pulmonary rehabilitation program where you can learn more in a safe setting.

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• Is it safe for me to exercise? If not, why?
• What exercises would you recommend for me? Is yoga safe to improve my flexibility? Is strength training safe to improve stability and strength? Is aerobic exercise safe to improve my cardiovascular health?
• If any of these changes are not safe for me, can you tell me why?
• Is there anything I should avoid?
• Is there a pulmonary or cardiac rehabilitation program where I could safely learn about and try new exercise routines?
• What equipment do you recommend I use or avoid? The PHA Classroom Exercise Series videos say some people use treadmills, exercise bikes, light hand weights and resistance bands.
• Should I monitor my heart rate when I exercise? What should be my maximum heart rate? The video says some people use 70% of their age-adjusted max. Is this appropriate for me?

(220 – Age) x 70% = ___ max BPM

• How should I check my heart rate? Do I need a heart rate monitor? How do I check my pulse? Is it safe to check my pulse on my neck? Should I monitor my blood pressure?
• The video suggested I discuss the following recommendations with my PH doctor. Are these exercise frequencies and durations safe for me?

Beginner and Intermediate
Three to five days a week.
Thirty minutes total (including warmup, peak exercise and cool-down) per day.

Advanced
Four to six days a week.
Forty minutes total (including warmup, peak exercise and cool-down) per day.

• Should I plan to exercise around the time I take my PH meds? The video suggests that some people exercise an hour after taking their PH meds. Is this right for me? What about my diuretics?
• Is it safe for me to drink 8-12 ounces of water when I exercise? If not, what is appropriate for me?
• Should I monitor my oxygen levels when I exercise? Continuously, or just every once in a while? Is there an oxygen saturation level I should always be above? The video said many people use 88%. Is that right for me? What do I do if my oxygen saturation goes below that level?
• Should I change anything about my supplemental oxygen when I exercise?