

## Post-transplant home exercise programme

As you continue to recover from your transplant, it is important to try to build up your strength and fitness levels. This will help to keep you and your new kidney working well for as long as possible.

Having a transplant can be a great motivator to make changes to your lifestyle. This can include stopping smoking, eating a healthy diet and increasing your activity levels. Before starting any exercise programme, you should discuss this with your kidney transplant team.

The following guide provides you with some advice and tips on how to start exercising safely after a kidney transplant. It includes examples of simple exercises that are safe to do. It's best to start small and slowly increase your levels of activity as you are able. Ask your transplant team or GP about other services available in your area.

### Remember

- It is important to complete a **warm up** and **cool down** with each session.
- Avoid abdominal exercises and heavy lifting for around 6 months post-transplant.
- Ensure you drink plenty of water before and after exercising.
- Eat lightly prior to exercise and wait for an hour after food before starting any activity.
- If anything changes with your health, discuss this with your transplant team.

**STOP exercise and seek medical attention if you experience any of the following:**



- Dizziness or nausea
- Feeling very cold and clammy
- Chest pain or chest tightness
- Wheeziness
- You feel excessively tired

## Measuring your level of intensity with exercise

Exercise should make you feel breathless, this is good! You may feel slightly warmer, or that your heart rate has increased, this is normal.

### A simple guide to the level of intensity to aim for

Rating	Exertion Level
6	
7	Very, very light
8	
9	Very light
10	
11	
12	
13	Fairly hard
14	
15	Hard
16	
17	Very hard
18	
19	
20	Maximal effort

**INCREASE LEVEL**  
You are able to talk freely and easily in full sentences.

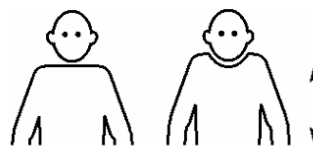
**AIM HERE**  
You can still talk but this may be paused once or twice.

**SLOW DOWN**  
You are unable to say more than one word without catching your breath

## Warm Up exercises (10 minutes)

### Shoulder Shrugs

Lift your shoulders up towards your ears, release back down. Repeat.



### Shoulder Rolls

Shrug and roll your shoulders forwards, then roll them back to the start.



### Head Turns

Turn your head to look over one shoulder, then back to the middle. Repeat the other side.



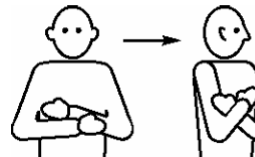
### Side Bends

Bring your hand down one leg, come back to the middle. Repeat the other side.



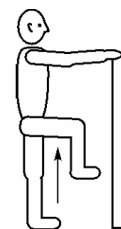
### Trunk Twists

Hands across your chest. Move and look over one shoulder, back to middle. Repeat the other side.



### High Knees

March on the spot, alternating legs. Aim to drive your knee high towards the sky.



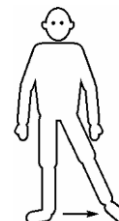
### Heel Digs

Dig one heel out in front of you, then back. Repeat the other side.



### Side Steps

Tap one toe out to the side, then back to the middle. Repeat on the other side.

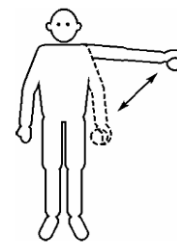


## Strengthening exercises (10 minutes)

### Upper Body

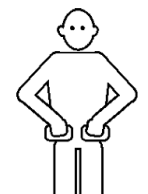
#### Arm Raises

Add a weight in your hand, slowly lift your arm straight out to the side to shoulder height.  
Slowly bring arm back down.



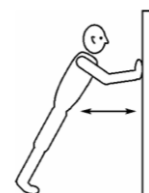
#### Upright Row

Holding a weight in each hand, palms facing your body, lift your hands up towards your chest. Slowly release.



#### Wall Push-Offs

Keep your body in a straight line, feet hip width apart. Hands against the wall at shoulder height. Dip into the wall bending at your elbows.



#### Bicep Curls

Weight in each hand, palms facing out. Bend hands up to your shoulders, keeping your wrists firm. Slowly straighten your elbow again.



### Lower Body

#### Sit to Stand

Sit in a chair, back straight. Stand from the chair, without using your arms if you can. Slowly sit back down again, and repeat.



#### Knee Extension

Sitting in a chair, legs bent. Straighten one leg, toes up to the sky. Hold for 5 seconds then release. Repeat with the other leg.



#### Calf Raises

Standing, holding onto a fixed object. Slowly raise onto the balls of your feet, then release slowly back down. Repeat.



## Aerobic Exercises

Remember to think about your level of exertion, and aim to work towards a moderate level (slightly breathless).

You could always time yourself and aim for 30-60 seconds of an exercise, repeating it two or three times.

As you feel fitter and less breathless you could either increase the time or the number of times you repeat the exercise to progress.

Home options include:

- Marching on the spot
- High knees
- Star jacks/ star jumps
- Side stepping
- Heel and toe taps
- Step ups on a bottom step

## Cool Down (10 minutes)

### Knee Raises

Slowly lift your knee up to the sky and back down. Repeat the other side



### Heel Digs

Dig one heel out in front of you, then back. Repeat the other side.



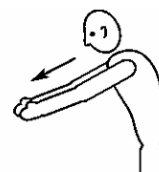
### Side Steps

Tap one toe out to the side, then back to the middle. Repeat on the other side.



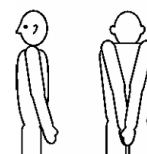
### Back Stretch

Clasp your hands together, reach your arms forward arching your back. You should feel a slight stretch in the muscles between your shoulder blades.



### Chest Stretch

Clasp your hands behind your back. Pull your shoulders back and your elbows together.



## **Cool Down continued..... (10 minutes)**

### **Side Bend**

Reach your hand down the side of your leg, hold it gently.  
Return to the middle and repeat the other side.



### **Calf Stretch**

Stand with feet hip width apart, holding onto something sturdy. Put one foot in front of the other with both feet facing forwards. Bend the front knee and keep the back knee straight.



### **Hamstring Stretch**

Sit on the edge of a chair. Have one leg bent and the other straight in front of you.  
Hands on the bent knee, sit up tall with a good posture, bend at the waist and move your upper body slightly forwards. Swap legs around and repeat.



### **Further Resources:**

#### **Kidney Beam**

<https://beamfeelgood.com/kidney-disease>

#### **NHS resources:**

Active 10- walking programme

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health/>

Couch to 5K

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/>

How to: strength and flexibility exercises

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan-how-to-videos/>

#### **GP Exercise Referrals:**

You can ask the GP to refer you to your local 'Exercise on Referral' service if this is available in your local area. This will give you access to a supportive programme to induct you into your local gym and provide you with tailored support

#### **Local Groups:**

Look out for exercise and walking groups in your local area

