

Living Well With Lupus – Appropriate Exercise

©2014 Cathy Ferren RHN, Ferren Consulting healthy4life.ca

Are you crazy? I can't exercise! This is the most common response I get to recommending someone add or increase their exercise.

In fact you can exercise. Exercise does not mean you have to go to the gym and put yourself into pain and muscle spasms that leave you unable to walk or function. With lupus you need a personalized exercise plan. Most people can start with stand up or sit up and stretch for 10 seconds once every 10 minutes throughout the day. This changes your static body posture while sitting or lying down. It is enough to start your lymphatic system and blood circulating better.

I will share with you how I started. I began with standing, stretching arms, and chin tucks and also doing alphabet circles with my ankles while seated. I then added a 10 minute walk twice per day and after I reached 30 minutes, I cut back to walking once every 3 days for 1 hour. Then I added gentle resistance exercises with body weight and exercise tubing for 10 minutes 3 days per week gradually increasing it to 30 minutes 3 days per week on alternate days to walking. This looked something like: Monday, Wednesday and Friday walk 1 hour (3 miles at the speed I now walk); Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday resistance exercises for 30 minutes. Saturday was reserved for housework, home repairs and yard work. I also aimed for 10,000 steps per day on my pedometer and after 6 months was able to use the treadmill at slope 3.8% and speed 3.5 mph. All this from someone who has been unable to get out of bed for 2 years, 3 separate times over the years during severe flares.

Resources I used included: a registered kinesiologist (OHIP covered) and books. Stretching by Bob Anderson ISBN 978-0-936070-46-9 Black Creek Community Health Centre Exercise Manual 2013 pdf or hardcopy



Ask your doctor before starting or increasing your daily exercise.

A kinesiologist or physiotherapist can help design a program individualized to you and your abilities. There is a level of exercise for everyone. You can learn to exercise within your limitations. Do it for yourself and your health, not for anyone else. Just commit to yourself and DO IT!

Reprinted with permission given to Lupus Ontario 2014-11-12