

Lupus and staying active

Staying active is an important part of being healthy. Staying active when you have lupus is more challenging. But it's not impossible! You can build a stronger body, improve your health, and have more energy—no gear required!

Why exercise?

Exercising may be the last thing on your to-do list when you have lupus. But done correctly, exercise has many health benefits. It can:

- Decrease your fatigue.
- Improve your mood.
- Decrease joint stiffness and help your joints move more easily and widely.
- Help you keep a healthy weight and strengthen your muscles and bones.

How do I get started?

When you start to exercise, start slowly. Be patient with yourself. Finding the right balance is the key. Not too much; not too little. Listen to your body and let it be your guide.

If you're working with an instructor, tell them you have lupus. Allow time for rest between exercise sets (groups of repetitions), too. If possible, exercise with a friend. It makes exercising more fun!

What exercise is right for me?

Everyone is different. You need to find the right exercise for you. It should be fun, improve how you feel, and not make your lupus worse.

Low impact exercises are best:

- Walking, swimming, bicycling, Pilates, or stretching are good choices.

- Yoga is also good, but you need to choose the right style.
 - ✓ Look for restorative, Iyengar, or Hatha yoga.
 - ✓ Use caution with Vinyasa or Ashtanga yoga. If the class moves along too quickly, your symptoms might get worse.
 - ✓ Avoid different forms of hot yoga, like Bikram.

Limit high-impact activities (where both feet leave the ground at the same time) and workouts that put too much stress on your joints. Depending on how active your lupus is, you may need to avoid them altogether for a while. Some examples are:

- Jogging and running
- Weightlifting
- Basketball, soccer, and baseball
- High-impact aerobics

Remember, exercise should make you feel better, not worse. It may take a few tries to find the exercise that is right for you. Gradually increase the length and intensity of your workout. Add new exercises when you're ready.

Begin slowly. If all you can do is lift your arms or legs at first, do that for a couple of minutes at a time. Then add light weights.

You don't need to buy weights or dumbbells like they have in the gym. Use cans of soup or beans as light weights. Or fill a plastic soda bottle with water for something a little heavier. Be creative!

What's the doctor's phone number? (585) 486-0901