

# EXERCISING

WITH

## MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY



*A safe and effective exercise program can have a positive effect on the symptoms of muscular dystrophy by increasing muscle strength and endurance, enhancing mobility and reducing the risk of falling. Regular physical activity can also help improve your balance and coordination, and enhance your overall quality of life. The key is to determine what type of exercise is best for you and to follow a program that accommodates your individual needs and concerns.*

### IN THE SERIES:

- > Cardiovascular Diseases
- > Pulmonary Diseases
- > Metabolic Diseases
- > Immunological/ Hematological Disorders
- > Orthopedic Diseases and Disabilities
- > Neuromuscular Disorders

## Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program and ask for specific programming recommendations.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- The goals of your program should be to improve your functional capacity and ability to perform activities of daily living, increase muscle strength and endurance, improve range of motion, and reduce your risk of injury.
- Choose activities that you enjoy and will do regularly. If walking is too difficult, cycling, rowing, swimming and chair activities are good alternatives.
- If your fitness level is low, start with shorter sessions (10 minutes) and gradually build up to 20 minutes or more, four to six days per week.
- Perform moderate-to-low resistance training three days per week. Do three sets of 10 or more repetitions. Wait ~ 48 h between work-outs of the same muscle group.
- Do range-of-motion stretching exercises on a daily basis to prevent contractures and to maintain overall flexibility.
- Pay attention to how you are feeling during exercise and take frequent breaks during if needed. Your workouts should be comfortable and not strained.

## Exercise Cautions

- If you have myotonic MD, myotonia congenita or paramyotonia congenita, avoid exercising in cold water.
- Cardiac issues accompany some forms of muscular dystrophy, which may limit your exercise capacity.
- Avoid exercising alone, drink plenty of fluids and avoid strenuous exercise in hot and humid conditions.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional\* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

\*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org).

For more information, visit [www.exerciseismedicine.org](http://www.exerciseismedicine.org) or e-mail [eim@acsm.org](mailto:eim@acsm.org).



### Founding Partners:



### Advocate Partners:

