Exercise and Lupus

Because lupus causes joint pain and inflammation, muscle pain, and fatigue, the very thought of exercising can be a challenge. In addition, because lupus is a disease that requires a large amount of rest, you might wonder why exercise is so important. Although rest is important in managing fatigue, too much rest can be harmful to muscles, bones, joints, and overall fitness. Keeping fit through an exercise program planned just for you can help you feel better, both mentally and physically. There are many types of exercises that are appropriate for lupus patients, such as swimming and walking. Regular exercise will

- increase your muscle strength,
- help prevent your joints from getting stiff,
- help prevent osteoporosis,
- help keep your weight under control,
- improve your cardiovascular health, and
- help reduce stress.

GETTING STARTED CAN BE THE HARDEST PART

- Check with your doctor before you start any type of exercise program. He or she can evaluate your overall condition and fitness and recommend a type and level of activity that are right for you.
- Try to find someone to exercise with; it can be a lot more fun.
- Start slowly. Chart your progress so you can see and take pride in your accomplishment.
- Change your exercise activities depending on how you feel. If you're not up to it on one day, that's okay. Try to go back to your program the next day.

For a healthy person, achieving physical fitness can be a lot of hard work. For a person with lupus, such an achievement is really something to be proud of!

ADDITIONAL NOTES

From *LUPUS: A Patient Care Guide for Nurses and Other Health Professionals*
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