

Power of exercise

Exercise is the #1 most important step you can take to live longer and feel better with peripheral artery disease (PAD). Get started today!

1. Why does exercise help with PAD?

Think of exercise as medicine. Studies show exercise can be as effective as drugs or surgeries for managing PAD and preventing future heart disease. It can also help improve how far you can walk.

Exercise can:

- Improve blood supply in your limbs,
- Help your blood vessels work better, and
- Change the way your muscles use oxygen.

A natural stress buster, physical activity can also help keep other cardiovascular risk factors – high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes – in check.



2. But walking hurts! How can I exercise?

It may seem strange, but working through your pain now can actually reduce your pain in the future.

Regularly exercising to the point of mild to moderate discomfort helps strengthen your muscles and blood vessels. Over time, this will help you walk easier.



SUPERVISED EXERCISE: SAMPLE SESSION

- 5 minutes of warm-up
- Several periods of treadmill walking with and gradually working up to higher intensity
- Frequent check-ins about your level of pain, blood pressure and heart rhythm
- 5 minutes of cool-down



3. How can I be sure it's safe?

Ask your care team before starting an exercise program, as your other health conditions may affect what's safe for you.

Your care team can help you find a supervised exercise program that will teach you proper techniques and help you stay motivated.

Learn to recognize when to work through the pain – and when to stop:

- “Good pain” is mild to moderate discomfort that happens while walking or exercising
- “Bad pain” is severe pain, pain that happens while you rest, or pain in your chest

4. OK, I'm convinced. What do I need to do?

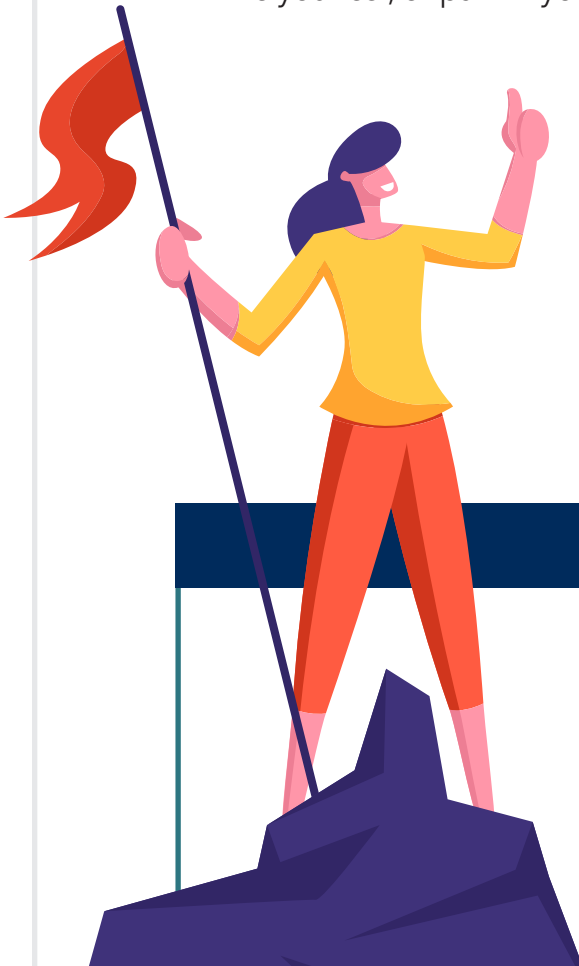
Start a supervised exercise program after a discussion with your care team. They may refer you to cardiac rehabilitation to exercise under the supervision of an exercise physiologist, nurse, physical therapist or trainer who is knowledgeable about PAD.

Your team will design an exercise program to meet your specific needs.

In general, you can expect:

- One-hour sessions, 3 days per week
- Typically held in a cardiovascular rehabilitation facility or wellness center
- Program usually runs for 12-24 weeks

Be sure to stay active even after your supervised exercise program ends. Take control of your PAD by making exercise a regular part of your day. Your legs – and heart – will thank you for it!



GET HELP TO POWER THROUGH

Don't let roadblocks get in the way of your exercise program. Talk to your care team for help with these common concerns:

- Cost and insurance reimbursement
- Transportation to appointments
- Getting time off work
- Fear or anxiety about exercise-related pain