Exercising with Myotonic Dystrophy

Finding Motivation

- Discuss your goals with a physical therapist, personal trainer, friend, or family member. Consider joining a support group or finding an exercise accountability partner.
- Join an exercise class and/or make movement-based plans with friends to keep you motivated.
- Find ways to incorporate exercise into your day-to-day life by creating movement-based routines.

TIP *Try different physical activities until you find something that you enjoy. Start slowly and increase gradually. Don't forget to track your progress and reward yourself!*

Monitoring Exercise

- **FITT Principles:** Track Frequency (how often you exercise), Intensity (how hard you exercise), Time, (how long you exercise) Type (Aerobic/ Flexibility/ Strengthening/Balance) of exercise, and Progression (how you might advance the exercise).

TIP *Find a FITT Based Exercise Calendar on page 12 of MDF's Exercise Guide. Scan the QR Code Below!*

- **Assessing Body Response to Exercise:** Improve understanding of your body's reactions to exercise by monitoring:
  - Rate of perceived exertion (how hard you feel you are working on a scale from 1-10)
  - Talk Test (using your ability to talk with ease during exercise as a gauge for intensity)
  - Heart Rate (how many heart beats per minute)
  - VO2 Max (how much oxygen you take in per minute)

TIP *You can use activity trackers to measure your steps, oxygen levels, and heart rate! Consider a Smartwatch, Apple Watch, Polar, Fitbit, or Garmin. (Features may vary by device).*

More Information

can be found in MDF's Exercise Guide for People Living with Myotonic Dystrophy.
www.myotonic.org/exercise

4 Pillars of Exercise:

Adding Movement to Your Daily Life



Flexibility/Stretching/Range of Motion

Exercises where the muscle & tendon move through the joints full range of motion (ROM). *(Stretching, massage, full contraction and expansion of muscle)*

TIP *For weaker muscles try ROM exercises in different or modified positions, like sitting or laying down.*



Aerobic/Cardiovascular

Exercises that increase heart rate and respiratory rate. *(Walking, biking, swimming, dancing)*



Resistive/Strengthening

Exercises that involve lifting weights or appropriately heavy objects, elastic resistance bands, or bodyweight exercises like squats or push-ups. *(Lifting appropriately heavy objects, elastic resistance bands, body weight)*



Balance Training

Exercises that strengthen the muscles keeping the body upright, including the core, trunk, and leg muscles, which improve stability and help prevent falls. *(Tai-chi, yoga, chair yoga, dual task activities [Performing a primary movement task and a second distracting task at the same time.])*

Studies show that moderate exercise is safe and may help optimize function and maintain strength for individuals with myotonic dystrophy (DM)! This graphic outlines ideas for finding motivation, monitoring your exercise, and adding movement to your daily life. *Please consult your doctor before attempting these activities!*

Myotonic Dystrophy FOUNDATION

Myotonic Dystrophy IN MOTION
www.myotonic.org