

Graded Exercise Therapy - Walking

This leaflet should be used in conjunction with advice from your CFS/ME Clinician

Step 1

Begin walking at a slow, steady and consistent pace, without stopping, for a set amount of time every day. This set baseline time will have been established during your review. Initially the walk should not increase your heart rate or make you feel breathless.

Step 2

Increase this by up to a maximum of 25% when you can complete every day, without feeling that your symptoms are triggered. For example, if you are walking for 4 minutes every day you could increase this to 5 minutes after 3-7 days. Check that you are not experiencing an increase in symptoms or a fluctuation in daily activity levels before you increase the time of your walk.

Step 3

Once you are able to walk at a slow pace for 30 minutes every day, you can start increasing the intensity of the walk. You can do this by interval training. Start by continuing to walk for a total of 30 minutes, but walk at a slow pace for 4 minutes and then at a fast pace for 1 minute. You may experience a small increase in heart rate and your breathing may be a little heavier. Repeat this pattern over the 30 minutes.

Step 4

Again increase the time you spend doing a faster walk every 3-7 days. Once you are able to walk at the faster pace for 30 minutes every day you can reduce this to 5 days a week. For progression beyond this stage discuss with the Physio team.

Things to note

If you become unwell or have a flare up **reduce** the amount/intensity you are walking. You may need to stop completely if feeling very unwell. Re-start the process with the walk at a reduced time when you have recovered from the acute illness or flare.

You may have some aching after increasing the amount of exercise you do – this is a normal response by your body and should last no more than 2 days. The stretches which you have been shown in clinic can help to ease this. If the aching persists, reduce the time you walk for. If you have any questions regarding this information please do not hesitate to contact the Physio team on 01225 821340.

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or phone 01225 825656.