

Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation Meeting 2013

Activity and Exercise Recommendations for Individuals with Myotonic Dystrophy

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Over the past decade, the benefits of Physical Activity have been well documented.

In response to these findings, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed Physical Activity Guidelines which are available at www.health.gov/paguidelines.

The Guidelines recommend the following for ADULTS:

- 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of **moderate intensity aerobic activity** every week
- You may spread your activity out during the week , for example: 30 minutes x 5 days
- You may even break your activities into smaller sessions of 10 minutes each 3 times/day.
- Moderate intensity activities are activities where you can still carry on a conversation such as brisk walking, raking, mowing, cycling, line dancing etc.
- 2 or more days a week of muscle strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, abdomen, back, shoulders and arms).
- You can use body weight, free weights, elastic bands, aquatherapy or equipment for resistance.
- Individuals who cannot meet these guidelines because of current medical conditions, disability or impairments secondary to a chronic condition, should do the best they can to remain as active as possible.

Recent research also suggests that prolonged sitting is not good for your health.

Hence it is essential that individuals get up and move as frequently as possible.

Current Recommendations for Individuals with DM include:

- Aerobic/cardiovascular exercise
- Resistance/strength training
- Flexibility/range of motion
- Balance training
- Weight bearing

Current recommendations are based on Research evidence as well as Expert consensus.

Work with your individual providers (Neuromuscular specialist or Rehab Specialist or Physical therapist) to develop a plan that is suited to your individual needs based on:

- Age (pediatric/adult)
- Clinical profile /Current status/Co-morbidities
- Personal profile – employment, family role and responsibilities, interests, financial/environmental/social barriers and facilitators.

Pick activities that you enjoy, work with a partner – spouse, parent, child, friend, co-worker if you can.

Start with short sessions 1-2 days/week and gradually build up to 30minute sessions 5 days/week.

Give the routine a try for at least 3 months ---- it takes that long to see benefits! Do not get discouraged.

References:

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National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability : www.nchpad.org