



# **Aerobic Conditioning**

*How to start an aerobic conditioning program*

## **What is aerobic conditioning?**

*Aerobic conditioning* refers to exercising at a level that raises your heart rate and breathing rate through the continuous motion of large muscle group for 20 to 30 minutes. Examples of aerobic activities include walking, cycling, swimming, jumping rope, running, and aerobic dancing.

## **Why should I include aerobic conditioning in my exercise program?**

Aerobic conditioning improves your heart and lung fitness. It can protect against the start of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. It also improves the ability of the heart and blood vessels to deliver oxygen to working muscles. Participating in an aerobic exercise program can increase your energy reserves and endurance, so that you are not so tired after a busy day.

## **How can I increase my level of aerobic conditioning?**

Your physical therapist will work with you to find the right aerobic activity for you. Your therapist will show you how to find your target heart rate or use a self-rating scale to make sure you are exercising at the right intensity. Aerobic exercise should be done 5 times a week for 20 to 30 minutes. It is OK to do 10 minutes at a time, 2 to 3 times a day, 5 days a week.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

For appointments, call between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday:

8-East Physical Therapy:  
206-598-4830

Roosevelt Exercise Training Center:  
206-598-2888

Appointments are scheduled daily between 8:15 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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Many people choose walking as their aerobic activity. Here is a table that shows how to begin and progress a walking program:

Week #	Minutes Walking
1	10
2	12
3	15
4	18

Week #	Minutes Walking
5	20
6	25
7	30

## Tips for Walking

- Warm up and cool down.
  - A *warm-up* is the phase of an exercise program that is done before the workout to increase the heart rate slightly.
  - A *cool-down* is a phase of an exercise program that follows the workout and allows the heart rate to decrease slowly.
- By week 3, check to see if you are reaching 3 to 4 on the Borg scale of perceived exertion (see scale below). This means that you are exercising at a moderate level, whatever that means for you.
- Wear comfortable and supportive shoes.
- Drink plenty of water before and after exercising.
- Schedule your walk into your day so you don't miss it!

## Borg CR10 Scale of Perceived Exertion

<b>0</b> ▶ Nothing at all	<b>4</b> ▶ Somewhat strong
<b>1</b> ▶ Very weak	<b>5</b> ▶ Strong (heavy)
<b>2</b> ▶ Weak (light)	<b>6 or 7</b> ▶ Very strong
<b>3</b> ▶ Moderate	<b>8, 9, or 10</b> ▶ Extremely strong (almost maximal)

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