



Exercising with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

Flexibility exercises—stretch!

How much:	Once or twice a day.
How hard:	Choose exercises to relax and stretch the different parts of your body.
How long:	Hold each stretch for 10 seconds.
What type:	Try yoga, Tai Chi, martial arts and general stretching. Stretch exercises can be performed at home with clear technique and safety advice and support from your healthcare provider.

What will it do for me

Flexibility exercises help keep your body flexible, maintain and increase your range of motion and give you confidence with movement.

Sedentary living

Reduce the amount of time being sedentary. Move more and break up sedentary time. Sedentary behavior is defined as time spent sitting or lying with low energy expenditure, while awake in the context of occupational, educational, home and community settings, and travel. Higher amounts of sedentary behavior can increase the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

Replace sedentary behavior with more physical activity of any intensity (including light intensity). It is possible to avoid sedentary behaviour and be physically active while sitting or lying, through, for example, upper body led activities, inclusive and/or wheelchair-specific sport and activities. Try seated stretches for those with limited mobility; using active forms of transport; standing while working (within your abilities and environment), and other accessible active options to replace sedentary time.

Your exercise, your way!

Choose activities that are easy to start with, and that you enjoy. Always exercise within your abilities. If mobility is difficult, adapted cycling, swimming and chair-based exercises may be better alternatives. Exercise with friends and family or join a group class. Try exercising both indoors and outdoors and see which you prefer. Most importantly: **some physical activity is better than none!**

Exercise safety

If you start to feel tired, reduce how many exercises you do. Try exercise in 10 minutes slots, with adequate rest in between.

If you become overtired, feel short of breath, experience muscle cramps or are in pain, stop exercising and discuss modifying your exercise plan with your doctor or healthcare provider.

Avoid overuse of and over-fatiguing muscles; always exercise within your ability. Discontinue exercise and talk with your healthcare team if it starts to interfere with your ability to enjoy daily living or if your levels of fatigue prevent you from functioning.

Start with shorter sessions (e.g. 10–15 minutes) and slowly build up to the recommended level.

Aim to get slightly out of breath, but exercise sensibly and stop the activity if you feel unwell.

Always exercise safely with equipment and ask for assistance with technique. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes that give good support. Take frequent breaks if necessary, and drink water before, during and after exercise.

Choose environments that you can access freely and safely. Please ask your healthcare provider or local leisure organizations for advice on the best option for you.

Resources

ALS Canada has tips for people and families affected by ALS on how they can cope with the physical, emotional, financial and legal ramifications of an ALS diagnosis. <https://als.ca/what-is-als/resources/living-with-als/>



can for more physical activity resources

