



Exercising with eczema

Every move counts

Move more and reduce your sedentary time each day by incorporating different types of movement. It is never too late to start, some is always better than none!

How to get started

Regular exercise helps improve your immune system, improves sleep quality, reduces stress, improves depression and anxiety and improves your overall health. It also significantly prevents the risk of heart disease, obesity, some cancers, hypertension, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and helps maintain bone and muscle health.

Sweat and heat from exercise may make your eczema more itchy or sore. However, by trial and error and some simple precautions, you can find an enjoyable and beneficial exercise plan that does not affect your eczema.

Follow these simple tips to protect your skin during and after exercise:

- Dab away sweat rather than wipe it away to minimise irritation.
- Avoid exercising in extremes of temperature. Avoid exercising on days when the pollen count is high. If pollen triggers your eczema, consider an antihistamine or ask your doctor for advice.
- If you also have asthma, use your reliever inhaler as directed by your doctor.
- Use sunblock or a high protection sunscreen suitable for your skin for protection when exercising outdoors.
- Wear cool, comfortable clothing that isn't tight or rubs or irritate the skin. Wear suitable gloves if gardening to avoid contact with pollen or plants that may cause symptoms.
- Shower after exercise, pat your skin dry and use suitable emollients to rehydrate and soothe the skin. Apply emollient cream (moisturizing and protective cream) before, during and after showering. (Take care to avoid slipping on any wet surfaces after applying.)

If you find that outdoors activities affect your eczema, try swimming. If chlorine affects your eczema, use an emollient and follow the advice noted above to reduce a flare up.

Take all medicines as recommended by your doctor or pharmacist.

Warm up and cool down

Always start your exercise session with a 10–15-minute warm up to loosen up the muscles and raise the heart rate safely. Warm-up exercises include dynamic stretches, range-of-motion activities and low intensity movements. This can be done standing up, walking around, marching on the spot or seated.

Always end your exercise session with a 10–15-minute cool-down to ensure your heart rate and breathing rate return to normal safely. Cool down exercises include slowly decreasing the intensity of your activity and simple stretches.

Be active

Some is good, more is better

How much:	Aim for at least 150 – 300 minutes a week of moderate intensity or at least 75–150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity physical activity. Start moving more each day increasing to regular movement every day and add sessions as your strength and stamina improve.
How hard:	Any movement helps. Aim for moderate to vigorous intensity—aim to get slightly breathless. Take frequent breaks, if necessary Increase the intensity when you are comfortable exercising at this level.
How long:	Aim to spread out your session throughout the week. If your fitness level is low, start with 5–10-minute sessions and add 10-minute intervals until you can comfortably exercise for longer.
What type:	All physical activity counts. Try activities within your abilities: walking, cycling, jogging, dancing, swimming, water aerobics, hiking—choose something you enjoy! Recreational team sports such as soccer, tennis, or volleyball are great social activities too! Household activities such as cleaning, gardening, vacuuming or walking your dog are great activities for your health. Ensure you follow the safety tips for managing your eczema. Enjoy trying a variety of activities to find one that suits you and is manageable with your eczema.

What will it do for me?

Maintaining an active lifestyle is important for both physical and mental health. Eczema is not a reason to avoid exercise. You should be able to enjoy the health benefits of an exercise plan without experiencing eczema symptoms.

Build strength

How much:	At least twice a week.
How hard:	Start with light muscle strengthening exercises and progress to moderate or greater intensities over time.
How long:	Choose a variety of 8–10 exercises targeting the upper and lower body and repeat each exercise 10–15 times. Aim for 1–3 sets of each exercise.
What type:	A variety of strength exercises using free weights, resistance machines or household items such as a can of beans or a weighted water bottle as a weight.

What will it do for me?

Strength exercises help to keep your muscles, bones and joints strong and healthy.



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Improve balance

How much:	At least three days a week.
How hard:	Try 2–3 balance exercises and repeat each exercise 10-15 times.
How long:	Hold each balance for 10-30 seconds. Do 3-4 sets.
What type:	Try yoga, Tai Chi or simple balance exercises for the home environment. Exercise safely when doing balance exercises. Balance exercise can be done standing up, using a chair, against a wall or sitting down.

What will it do for me?

Practising balance exercises helps to train your body to react more quickly to a loss of balance and can help reduce the risk of falls, fractures and injuries.

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

Ask your doctor for more information about how to exercise safely and how to maintain an exercise plan. 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 wear comfortable clothing and shoes that give good support. Take frequent breaks if necessary, and drink water before, during and after exercise.

Ensure you exercise safely during all exercises and ask for assistance if you are unsure about any exercises.

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.

