

Exercise Instructions: Peripheral Vascular Disease (PWD)

Always follow the advice of your provider (doctor/nurse practitioner/physician assistant). The instructions below are general and should only be done with their approval.

General Guidelines

Warm-up	10 minutes
Aerobic	30-60 minutes continuous exercise (use Rating of Perceived Exertion - see next page)
Cool Down	5 minutes
Stretching	Up to 5 minutes of light stretching

Warm Up

Easy/light movement that prepares muscles for aerobic and/or weight training exercise.

Aerobic

- Done most days of the week.
- Uses large muscle groups working together.
- This should cause an increase in heart rate (HR) and breathing rate, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.
- Walking is the preferred mode of exercise for patients with PVD, but any weight bearing exercise can be used.
- Base the intensity of exercise on your pain/claudication level:
 - At first, exercise at +1/4 (light) on the claudication scale below, and
 - Slowly increase your intensity so that you can walk 8-10 minutes without reaching a moderate level (+2/4) on the claudication scale.

- If you can walk 8-10 minutes without reaching a moderate pain level, increase the intensity by raising either the treadmill incline or speed. If you are already walking at a speed of 2.2-2.5 mph, increase the incline.
- **DO NOT STOP** exercise until you have reached **SEVERE (+3-4/4)** pain on the claudication scale. Once you have reached severe pain (+3-4/4), stop exercise and rest until pain is gone.
- Repeat your exercise until you have done 30-60 minutes of aerobic exercise.

Use this scale to the right to help determine the severity of claudication.

Claudication Scale	
Grade 1	Definite discomfort or pain, but only of initial or modest levels (established, but minimal).
Grade 2	Moderate discomfort or pain which the patient's attention can be diverted.
Grade 3	Intense pain (short of grade 4) from which patient's attention cannot be diverted.
Grade 4	Excruciating and unbearable pain.

Cool Down

Similar to the warm up; light movement to help bring your heart rate (HR) back to its resting level.

Stretching

- Decreases muscle soreness and increases flexibility.
- Done after every workout session.
- Hold stretch up to 30 seconds (as tolerated) without moving, and be sure to keep breathing.

PRECAUTIONS

- Your physician should clear you before you start an exercise program.
- Exercise may result in fluid loss (dehydration) so drink fluids to prevent low blood pressure after exercise. Patients on fluid restriction should ask for more specific advice from their physician.

WHEN TO CALL & WHO TO CALL

If you have any of these symptoms before or during exercise, stop exercise immediately and contact your physician:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Lightheadedness, or
- Anything that feels different than usual.

For questions about exercise, call the exercise consultants at:

Cardiovascular Center **734-936-5627**

Cardiovascular Medicine at Domino's Farms **734-998-5666 or 998-7400**

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Developed by Preventive Cardiology

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

Last Revised 4/2018