

# EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

## Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD)

*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 total exercise (use Claudication Scale below)
- Cool-down: 5-10 minutes
- Stretching: Up to 5 minutes of light stretching

### Warm-up

Easy/light movement that prepares your muscles for aerobic exercise.

### Aerobic

- Done most days of the week.
- Uses large muscle groups working together.
- **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 the 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

