Stroke survivors experience loss of muscle tone and endurance. A physical activity program can help you improve your physical fitness. Immediately after a stroke, the first goals in rehabilitation related to exercise and physical activity are to:

- Regain voluntary movement
- Prevent complications caused by a long period of inactivity
- Perform activities of daily living
- Prevent pneumonia
- Promote mental well-being

Continued exercise training improves overall endurance, quality of life, and reduces the risk for future strokes.

Your Physical Therapist (PT) and Occupational Therapist (OT) will assist you in developing a personalized program for physical activity using recommendations from the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association.

**Recommendations for exercise therapy during your hospital stay and early acute phase (convalescence)**

- Walking retraining activity
- Self-care activities
- Sitting and standing activity for balance and coordination
- Range of motion exercises and neuro muscular re-education
Recommendations for inpatient and outpatient exercise therapy or “rehabilitation”

- **Aerobic** (walking, stationary bike, arm ergometry, functional activities)
  - Goal is 3-5 days per week
  - 20-60 min/session or multiple 10 minute sessions
  - RPE Borg scale target zone 11-14 (see Borg handout)

- **Strength/Endurance** (functional mobility, resistance bands, weight bearing activity, weights)
  - 2-3 days per week
  - 1-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions of 8-10 exercises
  - As tolerated with avoidance of breath holding during exercises

- **Flexibility** (stretching arms, legs, and trunk)
  - 2-3 days per week before or after aerobic or strength training
  - Hold stretches 10-30 seconds

- **Neuromuscular** (activities relating to nerves and muscles)
  - Will be integrated into your program to include balance and coordination activities in both sitting and standing.

Your PT and OT will work with you to tailor a program that works best your specific needs. It is important to develop an active lifestyle, one day at a time for continued progress!