

Increasing Activity and Exercise

When recovering from COVID, it is important to slowly increase your activity level. One approach is called the **Rule of 10's**. This technique is easy to remember and implement. You will increase the time you exercise and the intensity of exercise by **10%** every **10 days**.

To start, you need to find an activity you enjoy and learn how to rate your effort while you are involved in it. If you are using an exercise machine, such as a treadmill, your progress can be guided based on the machine settings like speed or incline. For other activities, we recommend tracking using your heart rate or the RPE Scale (described on next page).

Heart Rate: How many times your heart beats per minute (BPM)

- You can count the number of times you feel your heartbeat, using 2 fingers placed lightly on either your neck (just under end of your jaw bone) or wrist (in the small space under your thumb).
- If you wear a smart watch or activity tracker (FitBit) you can check the rate it records.
- Monitor your heart rate at rest. Then check the heart rate with daily activities or with exercise. Initially try to keep within 15 BPM of the resting heart rate, slowly advancing per the Rule of 10's.

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Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale: How hard you feel you are pushing yourself during activity or exercise. Your provider will tell you where to start depending on your current activity level.

10	Max Effort Activity: Feels almost impossible to keep going. Completely out of breath, unable to talk. Cannot maintain for more than a very short time.
9	Very Hard Activity: Very difficult to maintain exercise intensity. Can barely breathe and speak only a few words.
7-8	Vigorous Activity: Borderline uncomfortable. Short of breath but can speak a sentence.
4-6	Moderate Activity: Breathing heavily but can hold a short conversation. Activity is becoming noticeably more challenging.
2-3	Light Activity: Feels like you can maintain for hours. Easy to breathe and carry on a conversation.
1	Very Light Activity: Hardly any exertion, but more than lying/sitting.