

Kidney disease



What is kidney disease?

The main functions of the kidneys are to remove waste products and excess water from the body. They also produce important hormones that help to form red blood cells. People with kidney disease have difficulty performing these functions. Many factors can lead to developing kidney disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, blood vessel disease, and kidney inflammation. Physical inactivity, or lack of exercise, is a risk factor for obesity, which can contribute to the development and progression of kidney disease.

How does exercise help with kidney disease?

Studies have found that exercise:

- Improves health related quality of life
- Increases exercise capacity (the ability to perform daily tasks)
- Increases muscle mass and strength/function, and reduces falls
- Decreases blood pressure
- Reduces diabetes risk and improves glucose control in people with diabetes
- Aids weight loss and managing body weight
- Reduces anxiety and depression

Things to remember

People with kidney disease can exercise safely, provided that:

- The exercise program begins slowly and progresses gradually
- All exercises are performed using the correct technique

People with kidney disease may also have other associated conditions that require further special considerations (e.g. heart disease, aches and pains). Consult an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to get started.

What type of exercise is best for kidney disease?

Australian guidelines recommend performing a combination of **aerobic (endurance)**, **resistance (strength)** and **flexibility (stretching)** training for 30 minutes, 5-7 days per week. However, something is better than nothing. Start off small and build your way up at your own pace.

- Warm-up exercise before the main exercise phase, with approximately 10 minutes of light aerobic and stretching exercises. This might include a walk and relaxing muscle stretches.
- Main exercise phase should involve activities you enjoy. This can be either aerobic exercise, such as: walking, jogging, stair stepping, cycling or swimming; and/or resistance training that includes strengthening major muscle groups like those in the legs and arms. Resistance training can include 1 set of 8-12 different exercises (12-15 repetitions of each exercise). You can even mix these exercises up into a program unique to you, or even attend a class where all the thinking and planning has been done for you!

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Always seek professional advice from an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Find one here: www.essa.org.au/find-aep