

## Useful Contacts

This handout is based on the 2017 'Scientific Exercise Guidelines for Adults with Spinal Cord Injury' from Loughborough University & the University of British Columbia.

The full document can be found online at:  
<http://www.ncsem-em.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Spinal-cord-injury-guidelines.pdf>

If you have any questions about aerobic exercises following spinal cord injury, please ask your physiotherapist at any time and they will happily discuss your questions with you.

You can also contact the NRH Health Hub by emailing us at: [SCI.health.hub@nrh.ie](mailto:SCI.health.hub@nrh.ie)



## Contact details:

**The NRH Health Hub**  
**National Rehabilitation Hospital**  
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An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Athshlánúcháin

## Aerobic Exercise following Spinal Cord Injury



**Aerobic Exercise Guidelines**  
**For Adults with**  
**Spinal Cord Injury**

## Aerobic Exercise Guidelines for Adults with Spinal Cord Injury

The aim of this leaflet is to help you understand how much exercise you need to do to keep fit following spinal cord injury.

It highlights the **minimum amount** of exercises you need to do to keep fit.

Aerobic exercises are those that aim to stimulate your heart to help you build your fitness. These exercises can help with fatigue and tiredness over time.

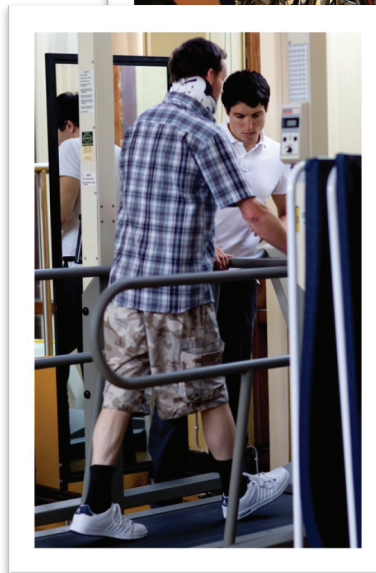
To achieve the minimum amount of aerobic exercise recommended each week, you must:

- ◇ Perform aerobic exercise **at least twice a week**.
- ◇ Exercise for **at least 20 minutes**. This does not include a 5 minute warm-up at the start and 5 minute cool-down at the end. (Total exercise time including 30 minutes).
- ◇ Exercise at 'moderate to vigorous intensity' for the full 20+ minutes. 'Moderate to vigorous intensity' means that you shouldn't be able to hold a conversation while exercising, and should feel tired afterwards).

## What is Aerobic Exercise?

**Aerobic Exercise includes activities such as:**

- ◇ wheeling your wheelchair
- ◇ playing wheelchair sports
- ◇ walking



## 5 Steps To Success

The following are simple steps you can take to help you achieve your aerobic exercise goals:

1. Pick an exercise or activity you enjoy. Aerobic exercises can include wheeling your wheelchair, playing sports, using exercise bicycles or walking.
2. Choose the times and days of the week that you will exercise on. Exercise along with someone else for additional motivation.
3. Use a watch to time how long you exercise for.
4. Make sure you are exercising hard enough (you should be feeling tired by the end of 20 minutes, unable to maintain a conversation throughout your exercise activity).
5. Use an exercise diary or book to record how often you have exercised and how you feel after exercising. This can help you plan ahead and progress your exercises as you get fitter!