

Should you exercise when you're sick?

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You just worked out all of the kinks in your workout routine and now...you're sick. What do you do? Do you sweat through it or forsake the gym for a much-needed nap? Follow these tips for working out when you're sick.

Listen to your body

If your symptoms are mild such as sniffles, sneezing or light coughing, you're probably okay to continue your normal routine. Listen to your body, and use your best judgment based on the severity of your symptoms.

If you begin to experience more severe symptoms such as fever, nausea, headaches or diarrhea, the gym is a definite no-no. Exercising can often make matters worse and cause complications. Consult your [healthcare provider](#) about your symptoms, and allow time for your symptoms to improve.

Still debating whether or not you should [exercise](#)? Follow this simple rule of thumb: Only do as much as you're up for. You may feel well enough for a yoga session, but the treadmill makes you queasy. Or perhaps you aren't feeling up for the gym at all, and that's okay. Your body will thank you for squeezing in a couple of extra rest days.

Change up your workout

If your illness is manageable and you still plan to exercise, consider switching up your [workout](#). Low-intensity activities such as walking, swimming, biking and yoga are great ways to exercise without throwing your system into overdrive. High-intensity training such as powerlifting, sprints, [team sports](#) and exercising in [extreme temperatures](#) can push your [body](#) to the limits, and may cause more harm in the long run. For this reason, try to keep your workouts short, ideally no more than 30 to 45 minutes, and focus on lower-impact options.

Be patient

If you're experiencing a cold or the flu, chances are your symptoms will be sticking around for a while. Complete recovery can take up to 10 days, sometimes longer. For the best recovery and minimal disruption to your routine, we recommend avoiding exercise when your symptoms are at their worst. Once your symptoms begin to improve you can slowly work up to your normal routine. Start slow, keep your workouts short and give yourself ample time to get back into the swing of things.

Provided by University of Colorado at Boulder

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