

COVID-19: Exercise when ill; what's OK and what's not

March 25 2020, by From Mayo Clinic News Network



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Exercise is important for a healthy body and mind, but if you're feeling under the weather, you may wonder what's OK to tackle or if you should hang up your sneakers. Dr. Daniel Montero, a Mayo Clinic sports

medicine physician, offers some advice for when to exercise.

"Exercise is medicine. If you have symptoms above the neck, things like [runny nose](#), sneezing, of the common cold, such as [nasal congestion](#) or runny nose, or minor sore throat, you're OK to exercise," says Dr. Montero. "Exercise may even help you feel better by opening up your nasal passages, for instance. But you may want to reduce the intensity and length of your workout, and limit group activities," he says. Instead of running, for instance, go for a walk.

"Any amount of exercise has benefits," says Dr. Montero.

If you have a fever; body aches; fatigue; or other symptoms, such as a stomachache or hacking cough, Dr. Montero says it's best to stick with bed rest for a few days until your symptoms subside.

"We recommend you postpone exercise if you have symptoms 'below the neck,' such as chest congestion, hacking cough and upset stomach. And if you have a fever, it's best to give your body a few days to rest and recovery," he says. "A fever is your body's way of telling you slow down and it's important to listen to your body."

As you recover, go a bit slower when returning to exercise.

With current recommendations for social distancing around COVID19, you may want consider skipping the gym and taking your workout outdoors. Regardless of where you exercise—at a gym or at home—don't forget to wipe off equipment, including bikes, weights, benches and yoga mats.

And make sure you are staying attuned to your body's need for fluid. "Drink to thirst, but be aware if it's warm outside. You may need to take in more fluid," says Dr. Montero. Talk with your [health provider](#) if you

have concerns or experience additional pain or symptoms when you exercise. Exercise guidelines call for 150 minutes of [exercise](#) a week.

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Citation: COVID-19: Exercise when ill; what's OK and what's not (2020, March 25) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-covid-ill.html>

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