

Instructions for Exercising on a Stationary Cycle at Home

Set Up: You will adjust the seat height so that you are comfortable. It is important for your leg to be properly extended and with your knee slightly bent, when the pedal is furthest from your body. If your stroke-side foot is not secure in the pedal you can purchase a specialized pedal or use a band to secure the foot or stabilize the thigh (see documents in this section for guidance).

Warm Up/Cool Down: Always warm-up with at least 3 minutes of easy pedaling with little to no resistance. This allows time for the muscles to warm up and the blood vessels that supply oxygen to your heart and working muscles to gradually open up. At the end of your workout, cool down by cycling for 3 minutes with little to no resistance. This prevents post-exercise symptoms such as dizziness and the blood from pooling in the extremities.

The Exercise:

Pedaling Speed versus Resistance Setting: The amount of exercise/work that you do on the cycle depends on a combination of the pedaling speed and the amount of resistance that you pedal against. If you have joint pain, your therapist will prescribe a faster pedaling speed and lower resistance to reduce pressure on the joints. Otherwise, your therapist will suggest a pedaling speed of about 60 to 80 revolutions per minute.

Setting the Resistance:

- 1) After a warm-up, start pedaling at the speed recommended by your therapist.
- 2) Then gradually increase the resistance on the cycle until you reach a safe and effective level ([see instructions on how to determine aerobic exercise intensity](#)). It takes about 3 minutes for your heart rate to increase to its peak level after a change in work load on the cycle.
- 3) Once the exercise feels like it is “somewhat hard” and you are able to talk comfortably, write down the workload level as the setting that you will use at each exercise session.
- 4) Start at a duration of 7 to 10 minutes and increase by 2 to 5 minutes every week or every other week to a maximum of 30 to 45 minutes.

*If you develop any symptoms on the cycle, discontinue the exercise and contact your therapist or your primary care physician immediately.