



Exercise Program Screening In Long Term Care

Long term care Residents require careful evaluation before participating in walking and exercise programs due to their frailty and end stage health conditions.

Cognitive conditions make residents especially vulnerable as they may not be able to communicate intolerance for an activity or any negative symptoms they may be experiencing.

It is very important that the chart is screened thoroughly, nursing staff has provided input on their condition and that the resident is assessed and monitored while doing the activity to determine that it is safe for that person to participate.

Some common issues that physiotherapists provide screening for are outlined below.

Cardiovascular Conditions:

- Oxygen desaturation below 90% (hypoxia) and the need for supplemental oxygen and titration of oxygen during activity
- High blood pressure > 180/100
- An aortic aneurysm over 5 cm is at risk of rupture
- End-stage heart disease especially with an ejection fraction less than 20%
- Hemoglobin below 80 will caused poor vascularization of organs
- Angina/arrhythmias that can be triggered by exercise
- Severe COPD, dyspnea, asthma

Orthopedic Conditions:

- Non-weight bearing or partial weight bearing orders and precautions
- Contractures that may be adversely affected by an activity
- Hardware failure of orthopaedic components may be painful and may worsen with exercise
- Stages of fracture/surgical healing
- Fracture non-union
- Dislocations/joint instability
- Osteomyelitis
- Severe osteopenia/Idiopathic fractures
- Severe OA
- Neck and back conditions

Neurological Conditions:

- Traumatic Brain Injury/Subdural Hematoma
- Spasticity/Tone/Ataxia from ALS/MS/Other neurodegenerative Disorders
- Spinal Cord injuries
- Neuropathy
- Dizziness, vertigo, loss of proprioception
- Seizure disorders that may be triggered by exertion
- Aggression/Violent behaviour

Palliative/Other Serious Conditions :

- Metastatic cancer causing bone frailty (The WRHA regional Physio guidelines are required to be filled out prior to resident with metastatic cancer participating in any program)
- Pressure ulcers that may worsen (buttock, heel)
- Exercise may spread Infections/sepsis
- Poor intake/hydration
- End Stage Kidney Failure
- Metabolic conditions e.g. hypo/hypercalcemia

*These guidelines are not exhaustive. There are many conditions that may impact exercise tolerance, always use clinical judgment.