



# Physical activity

Reumatiker  
förbundet

# Get moving!

Physical activity and exercise is one of the best opportunities you have to influence your own health. Recommendations for physical activity and exercise apply to everyone, regardless of whether or not you have a rheumatic disease. However, with a rheumatic disease, it can be a slightly greater challenge to learn how to ‘dose’ your activity in the best way, based on the disease's activity and your daily form. Current research shows that it's not **what** you do, i.e. what activity you choose, but that you simply do **something**, ideally often and regularly.

## Physical activity for health

In order to gain health effects, such as reduced blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, you should ideally be physically active for 150 minutes per week. The activity should be intense enough for you to be sweating slightly and out of breath (Borg scale 13, somewhat hard).

If you find it difficult to be physically active for long periods of time, you can divide up your ‘activity session’ throughout the day. This might be raking leaves for 10 minutes and taking the dog for a 15 minute walk in the morning, then vacuuming the house for 10 minutes in the afternoon. You can choose to

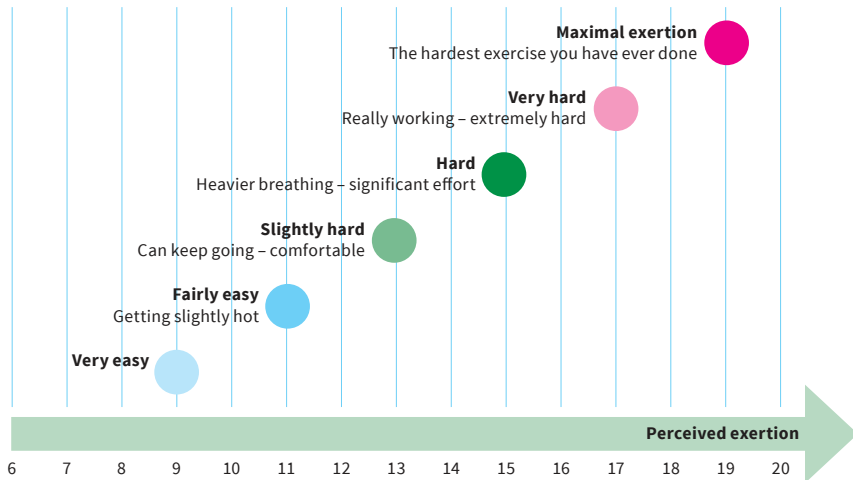
‘Imagine you have a medicine tablet in front of you. It is the most advanced medicine that the world has ever created. Well these pills do actually exist – it’s called physical activity!’ From the book *Hälsa på recept*, 2014. [Health on prescription]



‘Keeping an exercise diary is an excellent way to follow your levels over time. A diary allows you to clearly see how you’re exercising.’

‘Planning for recovery and relaxation is just as important as setting aside time for exercise.’

## Borg scale



swap the 150 minutes of moderate activity for 75 minutes of cardio per week. If you choose this option, the intensity of your chosen activity should be high (Borg scale 15, hard). This means you should be unable to hold a conversation, and will be significantly sweating and out of breath.

Physical activity for better health should also ideally include weight training twice per week. If you are over 65 and have a rheumatic disease, we also recommend movement and balance training as necessary.

## Get up, stand up!

Simply standing up will positively affect your body's energy usage, and will give you good health benefits. There are currently no specific guidelines for the maximum length of time sitting still/being inactive versus how often/how long you should be moving about. But a good rule of thumb is to stand up and move around every 30 minutes.

## 24 hour rule

This rule means that any increase in pain or swelling from exercise should have returned to normal levels within 24 hours. If it does not, it is important that you adapt your exercise routine and don't give up.

## Set goals!

One of the most important self-help principles is to set goals. A goal should be something you want to achieve within the next three to six months, such as to walk 5 km, take the stairs instead of the lift, or to take a trip. Goals are usually too high to be achieved immediately. It is therefore important to break them down into smaller, more manageable chunks. By making a structured plan with clear goals, it is easier to follow your results over time, but also to establish if some aspect isn't working. What is your personal exercise plan?

### SMART model

Everyone can benefit from making a plan for physical activity and exercise.

- **S Specific** What exactly are you going to exercise?
- **M Measurable** How much will you exercise?
- **A Accepted** Is your goal accepted by those who will be impacted by it? Exercise takes time.
- **R Realistic** Is this a realistic level for you?
- **T Time-bound** When will you have achieved this (sub)goal?

### Learn more!

On our website, [reumatiker.se](http://reumatiker.se), you can read more about physical activity and exercise.

Text: Reumatikerförbundet, 2018.

Fact checker: Elin Löfberg, physiotherapist. Translation: Semantix

# Knowledge, energy and community

Reumatikerförbundet, the Swedish Rheumatism Association, is a member organisation working to safeguard the interests of those with rheumatism. Our vision is to achieve a good quality of life for all those with rheumatism and to find solutions to halt the progress of the disease. In order to achieve this, we work to raise awareness, spread knowledge, carry out advocacy work, finance research and provide other forms of support to those affected by a rheumatic disease.



## Become a member

As a member of the Swedish Rheumatism Association you will be part of a society with others in similar situations. Membership also includes many different benefits, including activities and lectures, as well as our member magazine, *Reumatikervärlden*, direct to your door. Become a member at [reumatiker.se](https://reumatiker.se). Welcome to our society!



## Support us – give a gift

Support our vision for a good quality of life for all those suffering from rheumatism and solutions to halt the progress of the disease. Read more about our fundraising on our website. Your gift makes a difference!

BG 900-3195

PG 90 03 19-5

Swish 123 900 31 95

[reumatiker.se](https://reumatiker.se)

**Reumatiker  
förbundet**