

The Importance of Exercise and Oxygen in IPF

Jessica R. Garton, PT, DPT, OCS, CLT

Abby Folger, PT, DPT, CCS

Nancy Davis, RRT, AE-C

Fiona Gibbons, MD

Exercise: Physician Perspective



- Being “out of shape” makes people breathless
- Deconditioning is a lower than expected physical limit to exercise
- This can lower cardiac function and oxygen consumption with exercise
- Getting in better shape may improve the sensation of shortness of breath

Dysfunctional Breathing Pattern



- As fibrosis advances, patients have higher perceived breathlessness
- In general, as disease advances, patients with pulmonary fibrosis demonstrate a rapid, shallow breathing pattern at rest and with exertion
- Recognition of this breathing pattern and coaching about pacing can be helpful

Why is Adequate Oxygen Important?



- The muscles and heart need energy and oxygen during exercise
- When you exercise, the muscles increase extraction of oxygen from the blood for optimal function
- For optimal heart function, oxygen supply should equal demand
- Lung arteries constrict in response to low oxygen levels
- The right side of the heart works harder to pump blood into a high resistance system
- Over time, the right heart can tire and fail

Exercise: Patient Perspective



- Aerobic exercise has been shown to reduce anxiety and depression
- Exercise leads to increased levels of endorphins and other natural chemicals
- Endorphins are endogenous opioids similar to morphine, which make you feel good and cause euphoria
- Pulmonary rehab helps you gain confidence
- Exercise is a healthy coping strategy
- Exercise increases social interaction and bonding with people like you