

Patient Information Leaflet:

Using an Exercise Bike in the Emergency Department (ED)

Why Am I Using an Exercise Bike in the Emergency Department?

Your healthcare provider has recommended the use of an exercise bike to support your recovery, improve mobility, and manage symptoms such as pain or stiffness. Using an exercise bike can help improve blood circulation, strengthen muscles, aid deep breathing and boost overall well-being even while in the ED.

What Are the Benefits of Using an Exercise Bike?

- **Enhanced Mobility and Strength:** Regular, gentle cycling helps strengthen leg muscles, particularly for those who are less mobile, and can aid in recovery following injury or illness
- **Improved Circulation:** Cycling promotes blood flow, which may help reduce pain and prevent complications like blood clots, particularly after surgery or trauma
- **Improve Lung Health:** Cycling promotes taking deeper breaths while you are exercising which helps open up the lungs, improve oxygenation and prevent chest infections
- **Reduced Pain and Stiffness:** Light exercise can alleviate joint stiffness and discomfort, helping with conditions such as arthritis and certain musculoskeletal injuries
- **Mood and Mental Health Support:** Physical activity releases endorphins that can help reduce anxiety and improve mood, which can be beneficial in the stressful ED environment

Guidelines for Using the Exercise Bike

1. **Get Clearance from Your Healthcare Team.** Only use the exercise bike if it has been approved by your healthcare provider. Inform them of any recent injuries, pain, or medical conditions.
2. **Wear Appropriate Footwear.** Use closed, supportive shoes to prevent slips and provide adequate foot support.
3. **Set the Correct Seat Height.** Adjust the bike seat so that there is a slight bend in your knee at the lowest pedal point. This helps avoid strain on your joints.
4. **Start Slowly.** Begin with a gentle pace to warm up, particularly if you are new to cycling or have limited mobility. Aim for a comfortable resistance level, typically low to moderate.
5. **Monitor Your Heart Rate and Breathing.** Slow down if you feel short of breath, dizzy, or if your heart rate increases significantly. This is particularly important for patients with heart or respiratory conditions.
6. **Limit Your Time.** Start with short sessions (5-10 minutes) and take breaks as needed. Increase duration gradually, as directed by your healthcare team.

If you are concerned, please contact the
Emergency Department you first attended:

Mercy University
Hospital
(021) 4271971

M-UCC
(St. Mary's
Health
Campus)
(021) 4926900

CUH
(021) 4920200

Local Injury Unit
Mallow General
Hospital
(022) 58506

Local Injury Unit
Bantry General
Hospital
(027) 52900



Precautions and Safety Tips

- **Pain Management:** Stop if you experience sharp or sudden pain. Inform your healthcare provider of any pain, swelling, or discomfort.
- **Supervision:** If required, a member of the healthcare team may supervise your exercise, especially if you have conditions that affect your balance or strength.
- **Infection Control:** Hand hygiene and disinfecting the bike handlebars and seat before and after use is recommended to maintain cleanliness in the ED.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I use the bike if I have joint pain?

A: Cycling is generally low-impact and suitable for many people with joint pain, but please consult with your healthcare provider. Start at a low resistance level.

Q: How do I know if I am overexerting myself?

A: Signs of overexertion include feeling faint, chest pain, or shortness of breath. Stop immediately and notify a healthcare provider if these occur.

Q: Can exercise help me feel better mentally?

A: Yes, exercise can improve mood and reduce stress, which may help during your stay in the ED (Schuch et al., 2016).

Prepared By [Dr Siobhán Bourke](#) 03 November 2024

References

- Kraemer, R., Knobloch, K., & Zernial, O. (2015). Effects of exercise on blood circulation in patients with venous thromboembolism. *Thrombosis Research*, 135(Suppl 1), S18-S20.
- Juhl, C., Christensen, R., Roos, E. M., Zhang, W., & Lund, H. (2014). Impact of exercise type and dose on pain and disability in knee osteoarthritis. *Arthritis & Rheumatology*, 66(4), 622-636.
- Pedersen, B. K., & Saltin, B. (2015). Exercise as medicine - evidence for prescribing exercise as therapy in 26 different chronic diseases. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 25(Suppl 3), 1-72.
- Schuch, F. B., Vancampfort, D., Richards, J., et al. (2016). Exercise as a treatment for depression: A meta-analysis adjusting for publication bias. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 77, 42-51.

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