This leaflet explains more about how exercising can help you when you are on dialysis.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

**Introduction**

Everyone knows that exercise is good for you. It can help to:

- Control your blood pressure
- Strengthen your heart
- Make you more independent
- Lift your mood and increase well-being
- Increase your energy levels and endurance
- Loose or control your weight
- Strengthen your muscles.
**Additional benefits of exercising during dialysis**

**Exercising during dialysis = more effective dialysis**

Exercise is as important for your treatment as your medication. It can improve the efficiency of your dialysis by aiding the removal of toxins from the blood. It also helps to remove substances such as urea and creatinine, which are waste products from the liver and muscles. This is especially important when you are on dialysis because your kidneys are unable to remove these effectively on their own.

Kidney disease makes muscles weak so it is important to maintain muscle strength and exercise tolerance. Exercise will help you carry out your everyday activities such as walking and housework, and stay as independent as possible.

We recommend that you exercise for at least 30 minutes, at moderate intensity, five times a week. Exercising during your dialysis treatment is a good use of your time to achieve this.

**Ways to enjoy your exercise**

The main type of exercise we promote in the dialysis units is cycling – you can do this while you are receiving dialysis. Studies have shown this is the most effective form of exercise to help improve your dialysis and exercise tolerance. If you wish to start exercising on the unit, please speak to your nurse or doctor who can bring this to the attention of the physiotherapy team.

In each dialysis unit there are bikes that can be attached to the dialysis chairs, as well as dumbbells and ankle weights that you can use individually while you are receiving your treatment. The physiotherapist can visit you on the unit to assess and start you on an exercise programme, and to review your progress. Nursing staff in the dialysis units are fully trained to assist you with any equipment and help you may need.

**Motivation is the key.** Your physiotherapist will help you find an exercise programme that you like and together you can set a goal you would like to achieve.

There are also plenty of options available outside of the unit that will enable you to continue your exercise plan. You can:

- join a physiotherapy-led renal rehabilitation programme at Guy’s Hospital, which runs for 10 weeks on a weekly basis
- speak to a physiotherapist or GP about any exercise-on-referral schemes in your local borough, which can give you access to local gyms, classes and walking groups
- include an exercise plan at home to help increase your activity levels.

Please ask your physiotherapist for more information about any of the options above.

**Useful sources of information**

- [www.britishrenal.org](http://www.britishrenal.org)
  British Renal Society promotes patient-centred, multi-professional care, education and research in kidney disease and its management.

- [www.gsttkpa.org](http://www.gsttkpa.org)
  The Guy's and St Thomas’ Kidney Patients’ Association (KPA) aims to raise funds to support research, improve the patient experience and help kidney patients, their families and carers achieve a good quality of life.
www.kidney.org
The National Kidney Foundation provides patient services, education and research to prevent kidney disease, and promotes organ donation.

www.kidneyresearchuk.org
Kidney Research UK funds life-saving research into kidney disease to improve the quality of life of those with kidney disorders and to increase public awareness of kidney health.

www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk
The Kidney Patient Guide is an experiment in online patient information – for kidney patients and those who care for them.

www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk/patient-info
The British Kidney Patient Association (BKPA) offers support, advice, respite care, and financial help to kidney patients on dialysis. Also campaigns and lobbies on behalf of this group of patients.

Appointments at King's
We have teamed up with King's College Hospital in a partnership known as King’s Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at King’s. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Contact us
If you have any questions about your exercise programme, please contact the renal physiotherapy team:
Basement Gym, Tower Wing, Guy’s Hospital, Great Maze Pond, London SE1 9RT
t: 020 7188 5106
e: renalrehab@gstt.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust’s services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:
t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas’ t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy’s e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)
For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas’ Hospital.
t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.
t: 020 7188 8815 fax: 020 7188 5953

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