

# Pulmonary Rehabilitation Toolkit Checklist



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when you can't breathe... nothing else matters®

This summary card and checklist highlights the key features of a pulmonary rehabilitation program. Comprehensive, evidence-based information on how to establish a pulmonary rehabilitation program is available at the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Toolkit website: [www.pulmonaryrehab.com.au](http://www.pulmonaryrehab.com.au)

A pulmonary rehabilitation program should be considered for any patient who has chronic lung disease and who is limited by dyspnoea. Pulmonary rehabilitation programs require a health professional who has the expertise to conduct an exercise program and who is trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. For the educational component of the program, a multidisciplinary team of health professionals may be involved.

## Implementing the Program

### STEP 1 Patient assessment

- Obtain medical history**
- Assess smoking and nutritional status**
- Perform spirometry or have access to spirometry results**

- Assess exercise capacity**

Does the program have access to a qualified Exercise Professional (ie, Accredited Exercise Physiologist or Physiotherapist) to test, prescribe and supervise exercise training?

**Six-Minute Walk Test**

Perform two baseline 6MWTs with at least 30 minutes rest between tests.

OR

**Incremental Shuttle Walk Test**

Perform two baseline ISWTs with at least 30 minutes rest between tests.

- Assess quality of life**

**Chronic Respiratory Disease Questionnaire**

OR

**St George's Respiratory Questionnaire**

OR

**COPD Assessment Tool (CAT)**

- Assess breathlessness**

**Modified Medical Research Council Dyspnoea Scale**

OR

**Modified Borg Dyspnoea Scale during exercise assessment**

- Assess patient's goals**

*Patients should be evaluated for contraindications and precautions to exercise.*

*Supervisory staff should be aware of the criteria for termination of a test, and other important safety issues.*

*A primary goal of pulmonary rehabilitation is to reduce the patient's perception of shortness of breath.*

*Helping patients to identify their most salient 'problems' can help patients to establish achievable and motivating 'goals'.*



## STEP 2 Patient exercise training

### □ Design an exercise program

- Can a structured exercise program be developed based on the exercise testing results?
- Lower limb endurance (walking, cycling)  
The following can also be included in a comprehensive program:
- Upper limb endurance (low weight, high repetition)
- Lower limb strength (high weight, low repetition)
- Upper limb strength (high weight, low repetition)
- Flexibility, stretching, balance

*An improvement in exercise capacity is one of the main benefits that can be obtained from a pulmonary rehabilitation program.*

*Lower limb endurance training is the most important component of the exercise training program.*

*Program length should ideally be 6-8 weeks.*

### □ Determine appropriate exercise

- Frequency
- Intensity
- Type
- Time/duration

## STEP 3 Patient education

### □ Conduct educational sessions on

- The role and correct use of medications
- Breathing techniques / managing breathlessness
- Goal setting
- Physical exercise
- Nutrition / healthy eating
- Information on diseases (e.g. what the lungs do)
- Management of depression, anxiety and panic attacks
- Coping with chronic lung disease and developing self-management plan

*Through education, patients can become more skilled at collaborative self-management and more adherent to their treatment plan.*

*Education can be given in groups, individually or in the form of handouts.*

*Other educational topics may include:*

- Sputum clearance
- Energy conservation techniques
- Continence
- Sexuality issues
- Swallowing
- Home oxygen
- Community resources
- Legal issues and palliative care

## STEP 4 Program evaluation

### □ Evaluate the effectiveness of the program on:

- Patient outcomes (exercise capacity, quality of life, breathlessness)
- Patient feedback (using a patient satisfaction questionnaire)

### □ Communicate with patient's GP / physician

- Patient initial assessment
- Patient final assessment

## STEP 5 Maintenance

### □ Continue to provide one supervised session a week for maintenance (if possible) or refer to community-based program or regular reassessment (every 6 months)

*Encourage patients to join a Lungs in Action class if suitable*

### □ Encourage patients to undertake a home exercise program

- Start home training during supervised training program
- Encourage three home training sessions per week

Further information on setting up and implementing a pulmonary rehabilitation program is available at [www.pulmonaryrehab.com.au](http://www.pulmonaryrehab.com.au).  
For further information on available pulmonary rehabilitation programs call Lung Foundation Australia at 1800 654 301.

