

Working out when under the weather

October 5 2018, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Every now and then you might not feel well enough to exercise and decide to skip a workout. But if you have a cold that could last a full week, you probably won't want to find yourself facing a fitness

setback once you've recovered.

Here's how to stay in the game.

The general guideline is that you should be able to work out if your symptoms are from the neck up, like a stuffy nose from a cold, but not when you have the whole-[body](#) achiness of the flu. Easy or [moderate exercise](#), such as walking rather than running, should be fine. Some experts say it could even be beneficial.

But you don't want to spread germs at the gym, so work out at home to avoid infecting others. And remember to cut back on the intensity and length of your usual [workout](#) as needed to avoid further taxing your body and risking injury.

If you're sick enough that you need to significantly scale back your usual workout, a call to your doctor's office is warranted—beyond whether it's safe to exercise with your particular illness, ask whether you need an office visit. Even if you get the go-ahead to exercise, tread lightly so you can see how your body responds. Stop if necessary—pay attention to any clues that you just can't handle the physical exertion you're attempting.

If you have the full gamut of flu symptoms, like fever, fatigue and body aches, even moderate exercise is out. You might need to wait 2 to 4 weeks after recovery before you get back to high-level workouts. Return at a slow pace and gradually build up to avoid stressing your system.

What about exercise when you have a chronic condition?

Health experts say exercise may help you better manage it, especially if the illness is characterized by inflammation, such as an inflammatory bowel or rheumatic disease, because exercise engenders an *anti-inflammatory* response in the body. But you may need to sit out a severe

flare, such as a rheumatoid arthritis attack.

And always follow your doctor's advice if you need to take any medications that make it unsafe to [exercise](#).

More information: The Mayo Clinic has more on how to tell if you're [too sick to exercise](#).

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