

A doctor's guide to exercising when you're ill

As we navigate the challenges of cold and flu season, the decision to exercise when you're feeling under the weather can be a challenging one. Superdrug's Online Doctor General Practitioner, Dr Babak Ashrafi offers practical advice on how individuals can maintain their fitness routine without compromising on their health during illness.

Dr Babak Ashrafi emphasises the importance of listening to your body and adjusting your exercise routine accordingly. "While staying active is crucial for overall well-being, it's equally important to recognise when your body needs rest. Exercising when you're feeling unwell can sometimes do more harm than good, but there are safe alternatives that can still contribute to your fitness goals."

Key tips from Superdrug's Online Doctor GP include:

Assess your symptoms

"By assessing your symptoms and understanding the severity of them, you can tailor your workout routine to your body's capabilities and limitations. If you have symptoms such as fever, body aches or extreme fatigue, it's best to skip intense workouts. Opt for activities like walking or yoga that promote circulation without putting too much strain on your body."

Hydrate and rest

"Dehydration is common during illness, so it's crucial to stay well-hydrated, especially if you choose to engage in light exercise. Water, herbal teas, and electrolyte-rich beverages can help maintain hydration levels. Ensure you get adequate sleep and rest between exercise sessions. This is crucial for your body's healing process."

Modify intensity and duration

"If you're determined to exercise, consider lowering the intensity and duration of your workouts. High-intensity exercise can cause stress to the immune system, so opt for low impact activities where your body benefits from movement until you've fully recovered."

Listen to your body

"Pay attention to how your body responds during and after exercise. If you experience increased fatigue, dizziness, fever, body aches or your symptoms are getting worse, it's a sign to scale back or pause your workout routine. It's often best to allow your body to rest and recover. Mild symptoms, such as a common cold, may not prevent you from exercising, but moderation is key."

Consult with a healthcare professional

"Before resuming your regular exercise routine after illness, you might need to consult with your healthcare provider, especially if you've had a more severe illness or are managing a chronic condition, to ensure it's safe. Healthcare professionals have the expertise to assess your overall health status, identify any risks and provide personalised recommendations that are tailored to you. Your doctor or pharmacist can offer valuable insights into suitable exercise, intensity levels and duration to align with your current health levels. Superdrug has an expert team of nurses and

pharmacists who can give advice on exercising when feeling under the weather and Superdrug Health Clinics offer a range of services to help protect you against common health issues.”

Superdrug Online Doctor provides doctor care whenever you need it, anywhere in the UK. For more information please visit: <https://onlinedoctor.superdrug.com/> or head to a Superdrug store to speak with a pharmacist about your health care needs.

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