

Six-Week Stationary Cycling Program

Getting Started

This handout provides information about starting a stationary bicycle program.

Talk to your doctor about what type and how much exercise is right for you before starting any exercise program. If you have been inactive for a long while, it will take time to get into shape.

Adjusting your bicycle for best results and comfort

To achieve the greatest benefit and comfort while bicycling, proper adjustment of the seat and handlebars is needed. To adjust your seat height, sit on the bicycle with your feet on the pedals. Your knee should be slightly bent when one foot is at the bottom pedal stroke. Raise the handlebars to a comfortable level. Do not grip the handlebars tightly. Watching television, reading, listening to music and having your bicycle in a convenient location will make your ride more enjoyable.

Warm-Up

It is a good idea to do a warm up before any exercise. Begin your activity **slowly** and **gradually** increase the workload. This allows your body to move comfortably and adjust safely to changing workloads.

Begin pedaling at a **moderate** pace with **little** or **no tension** for at least **2 to 5 minutes**.

Exercise

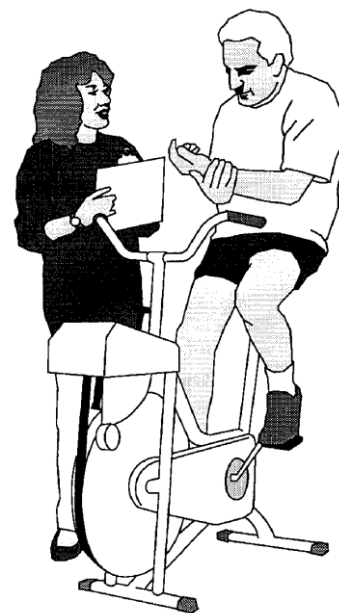
After the warm-up, you may start the stationary bicycle program. Cycle at a pace that does not leave you out of breath. Increase your pedaling rate then add enough tension to create a smooth pedaling motion. Try to maintain this level continuously for the amount of time prescribed. Pause and rest if needed.

Week #	Duration in minutes	Times per day
1	5 to 10	2 to 3
2	10 to 15	2 to 3
3	15 to 20	1 to 2
4	20 to 30	1 to 2
5	20 to 30, increase tension	1
6	30, increase tension	1

Heart Rate

Your heart rate and effort symptoms can be used as a guide for how hard your heart is working. You may find it useful to purchase a heart rate monitor at a sporting goods store.

- Before doing your warm-up exercises, check your heart rate.
- After 5 to 10 minutes of cycling, check your heart rate again. Exercise at 20 to 30 beats per minute above your resting heart rate, or follow guidelines of your healthcare provider. If your heart rate is too high, slow down or decrease the tension on the bike. Recheck your heart rate in 5 minutes.



Cool Down

After exercise, begin to cool down while still seated on your stationary bicycle. Slow your pedaling rate and decrease the tension for 2 to 5 minutes. This helps your body adjust gradually to the change in work that it is doing. At the end of your cycling exercise, stop and check your heart rate. Your heart rate should be within 10 beats of your resting heart rate.

How to Progress

Gradually increase the amount of tension as the workload becomes easier over time. Exercise at a level you can hold a conversation without breathing hard. Pay attention to how your body feels. Always keep your rate of perceived exertion (RPE) between 11 and 14.

To achieve and keep a healthy fitness level, you need to do a minimum of **30 to 60 minutes** of exercise on most if not all days of the week. This can be broken up into a couple of sessions throughout the day.


Suggestions for purchasing an exercise bicycle

Your stationary bicycle should have the following:

- An adjustable seat height
- Tension-resistance should be adjustable and measurable to allow you to obtain a given workload
- A comfortable seat

The best way to judge comfort is to try a bicycle for proper size. Do not buy an exercise bicycle without trying it first.

Adjustable handlebars, toe straps and seat may provide a more comfortable, smooth ride. A bike that keeps track of time, calories burned and distance will help keep you motivated.

 **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**

RPE Scale:	
6	
7	Very, very light
8	
9	Very light
10	
11	Fairly light
12	
13	Somewhat hard
14	
15	Hard
16	
17	Very hard
18	
19	Very, very hard
20	