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Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

After being asked for post DVT exercise advice I begun researching and found very little information was available and the information that was available was vague.

What are the deep vein thrombosis symptoms?

A DVT most commonly develops in a deep vein below the knee in the calf, but can occur in any extremity below the waste. Typical DVT symptoms include:

- Pain and tenderness of the calf (or extremity lower then the waist)
- Swelling of the calf (or leg lower then the waist).
- Colour and temperature changes of the calf (or leg lower then the waist). Blood that would normally go through the blocked vein is diverted to outer veins. The calf (or leg lower then the waist) may then become warm and red.

Sometimes there are no symptoms and a DVT is only diagnosed if a complication occurs, such as a pulmonary embolus.

If any of these symptoms occur or feel there could be a possibility of a DVT go straight to A&E. If diagnosed and deemed as a risk the medical professionals will begin treatment with medication, rest, compression and elevation (potentially introduced on a daily basis for the rest of your life). They may also discuss the possibility of an operation to remove the clot.

Post DVT Exercise Referral – (Before you begin exercise first consult your medical professional)

Step 1 – Assessing your gait

If you have the stability walk without any walking aid, helping regain any muscular atrophy and loss of bone density through balanced weight bearing. If your unable to go without a walking aid consider what is needed.

- If you need a walking aid for stability use two (crutches, walking sticks or hiking poles) rather than one. This will encourage gait, provide stimulation to your affected leg and reduce the chance of secondary injury i.e. muscular imbalances caused by poor gait due to using one walking aid and leaning to one side.

Step 2 – Cardio Exercise (while wearing a compression stocking to help prevent further swelling and drink plenty of fluid for continuous hydration)

- Low intensity – Initially averaging 65% of your maximum HR or 6/10 on the Borg scale (warmth and in full control of your breathing)

For safety I always recommend exercising to your specific heart rate target: - (Simple Math and a calculator can work this out)

If you are on medication (i.e. blood thinners) that can effect your heart rate and blood pressure work out-

Men 200/Woman 206 – age = Max

Max / 100 x 65 = ? (65% of your maximum heart rate)


If after your first session you feel this target is to lower level and not reaching the Borg scale 6/10 and feeling of warmth, work out-

Men 220/Woman 226 – age = Max

Max / 100 x 65 = ? (65% of your maximum heart rate)

Exercise	HR/Borg	Programme	Time	Resistance	RPM
Recumbent Bike	65% 6/10	Quickstart	5-10 Minutes Bursts	1-4	40-80

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Step 3 – Weights and Core Exercises

Begin with low intense, body weight exercises. Aim for slow and controlled good form, avoid heavy compound or lifting weights above your shoulder line (preventing blood pressure increase).

- Sets 1-2
- Reps 10-15
- Recovery 30-60 seconds
- HR 65% Max
- Borg Scale 6/10 Max

<p>1. Bent Knee Sit-Ups: Lie on back, on a rolled up towel under the small of your back. Feet parallel, hip width apart and knees at a right angle. Tummy tucked in, with your hands supporting your head, giving yourself a double chin, keeping your neck straight, looking to the ceiling at all times. Breath out through mouth when lifting head and shoulder blades off the ground, hold at raised position and breath in through nose, breath out through mouth when moving back down. Only coming 4-6 inches off the ground. Utilising your abdominals.</p>		<p>2. Hip Raises: Same body position as bent knee sit-ups, with out the towel and arms making a cross on your chest. Keeping your tummy tucked in and tail bone pointing up. Raise your hips to the sky while breathing out through mouth, hold position and breath in through nose, bring hip to the floor while breathing out through mouth again. Utilising your glutes (bum) on every movement.</p>	
<p>3. Knee Press-Ups: On your hands and knees, your knees hip width apart and your hands slightly further then shoulder width apart. Tummy tucked in, keeping a straight back and neck with your tail bone pointing to the ground. Lowering your upper body to the ground till your elbows are at a right angle and inline with your shoulder blades while breathing out through your mouth, hold this position and breath in through your nose. Then rise to your first position breathing out through your mouth. Utilising your pectorals (chest).</p>		<p>Squats: In the same first postural position as bicep curls, cupping your hands in front of your chest. Lower your body to a squat position, keeping your feet parallel, hip width apart, knees inline with toes, tail bone pointing to the ground at all times, tummy tucked in, back and neck straight while breathing out through mouth, hold this position and breath in through nose. Rise to first position while breathing out through mouth again. Distributing your body weight through your whole foot. Utilising quad group and hamstrings.</p>	

Please don't forget every injury, its occurrence and path to optimum health is unique.

Regards Andrew Buller - Sport Massage Therapist

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