

Business Standard

Cycling in bed aids quick recovery of ICU patients: Study

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In-bed bicycle exercise during a patient's stay in an [intensive care unit](#) (ICU) of hospital might help him recover more quickly, suggests a study.

The research was published in the journal of PLOS ONE.

Researchers at McMaster University and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton have demonstrated that physiotherapists can safely start in-bed cycling sessions with critically ill, mechanically ventilated patients early on in their ICU stay.

The treatment in the ICU was 30 minutes of supine cycling using a motorised stationary bicycle affixed to the bed, six days a week.

"People may think that ICU patients are too sick for physical activity, but we know that if patients start in-bed cycling two weeks into their ICU stay, they will walk farther at hospital discharge," says the study's lead author Michelle Kho from McMaster University.

"Our TryCYCLE study builds on this previous work and finds it is safe and feasible to systematically start in-bed cycling within the first four days of mechanical ventilation and continue throughout a patient's ICU stay," Kho added.

The patients, who survive their ICU stay are at high risk for muscle weakness and disability and muscle atrophy and weakness starts within days of a patient's admission to the ICU.

The team conducted a study of 33 patients in the ICU at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and provided them with special in-bed cycling equipment.

The patients were 18 years of age or older, receiving mechanical ventilation and walking independently prior to admission to the ICU.

The findings indicated that early cycling within the first four days of mechanical ventilation among patients with stable blood flow is safe and feasible.

Patients started cycling within the first three days of ICU admission and cycled about 9 km on average during their ICU stay.

Cycling targets the legs, especially the hip flexors, which are most vulnerable to these effects during bed rest.

By strengthening their muscles and overall health, patients may go home sooner, stronger and happier.

"Patients' abilities to cycle during critical illness exceeded our expectations," Kho concluded.

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