

Exercise and Therapies on Shabbat

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Introduction

Medical research over the past few decades has indicated the importance of exercise for a person's well-being and long term health, and there has been a resultant focus on creating a lifestyle that includes an exercise routine. Medical advances in treatment of injuries and diseases have similarly placed great importance on the use of therapy techniques to help patients recover from health issues or to maintain their current state of health. This essay will address the issues that may arise when these activities coincide with Shabbat, as well as the principles of *hilchot* Shabbat that must be applied in such situations.

Source and Definition of the Prohibition

The Mishnah¹ writes that one may not be *mit-amel* on Shabbat. There is a dispute among the Rishonim as to what the Mishnah is referring to in this prohibition. Rashi² explains that one may not rub his body vigorously (*le-shafshef ba-*

1 *Shabbat* 22:6 (147a).

2 *Shabbat* 147a s.v. *aval*. See also Ran, *Shabbat* 62b in the *dapei Ha-Rif*; Rabbeinu Ovadya Bertenu *Shabbat* 22:6, s.v. *aval*.

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ko'ach); it would seem that according to Rashi, the *issur* refers to something akin to a massage. Rambam,³ however, maintains that the prohibition forbids exercise in order to sweat.⁴

Reason for the Prohibition

Rashi⁵ maintains that *hit-amlut* is an *uvda de-chol*, weekday activity, which *Chazal* prohibited. If the reason for the prohibition is *uvdin de-chol*, as Rashi suggests, there are certain instances in which the prohibition would not apply. In cases of *tza'ar* (pain), *mitzvah*,⁶ and great loss⁷ many *poskim* assume that there is no *issur* of *uvdin de-chol*.⁸

Rambam⁹ assumes that it is forbidden because exertion in order to sweat is a form of *refuah*, which *Chazal* forbade lest we come to *shechikat samimonim*, grinding spices to create medications (thus violating the *melacha* of *tochein*).¹⁰ If the reason for the prohibition is *shechikat samimonim*, as Rambam suggests, then there are also certain instances in which the *gezeira* does not apply. *Chazal* only applied

3 *Hilchot Shabbat* 21:28. See also Rabbeinu Chananel, *Shabbat* 147b; Aruch, *erech amel*; Maggid Mishnah, *Hilchot Shabbat* 21:28; Tur, *Orach Chaim* 328.

4 The Tosefta (*Shabbat* 17:16) seems to clearly endorse Rambam's opinion, as it states that one may not run on Shabbat in order to be *mit-amel*. In context, sweating and physical exertion fit better than massage.

5 *Shabbat* 147a, s.v. *ve-lo*; Tosafot Yom Tov, *Shabbat* 22:6. *Chemdat Zvi* 22:17 suggests that Rashi maintained that *mit-amel* is prohibited because of *uvdin de-chol* because the cases immediately preceding and following in the Mishnah are prohibited because of *uvdin de-chol*. It is difficult to assume that in between two cases of *uv-din de-chol* the Mishnah brought a case that was forbidden because of *refuah*.

6 See Bach 333; Bi'ur Halacha 333:1, s.v. *ve-chol shevut*; Mishnah Berura 254:35 and Machazeh Eliyahu 72:1.

7 Shu"t Bach (*Yeshanot*) 146 and Machazeh Eliyahu 72:2.

8 Magen Avraham 328:48; Mishnah Berura 328:136.

9 *Hilchot Shabbat* 21:28; Rabbeinu Chananel 147b; Aruch, *erech amel*.

10 *Shabbat* 53b and *Rashi*, s.v. *gezeira*.

the prohibition of *refuah* to someone with a mild ailment, not in cases of a *bari*,¹¹ one who is completely healthy, or a *choleh*, one who is truly ill.¹²

Shulchan Aruch's Opinion

Shulchan Aruch¹³ quotes the opinions of both Rashi and Rambam. In 327:2 Shulchan Aruch writes, “He should not rub himself vigorously (with oil) but should do it gently.” This follows the view of Rashi. In 328:42,¹⁴ Shulchan Aruch writes, “One may not be *mit-amel*, which is to strain his body vigorously in order to tire himself and perspire.” In this halacha, Shulchan Aruch follows the view of Rambam.

There is a dispute among the *acharonim* as to how to understand the opinion of Shulchan Aruch. Tehilla Le-Dovid¹⁵ suggests two possibilities. One is that Shulchan Aruch strictly follows both opinions. Therefore, Shulchan Aruch does not allow a vigorous rub of the body (like Rashi's view) or exercise in order to sweat (like Rambam's view). The oth-

11 Shulchan Aruch 328:37.

12 Ramo 328:37; Mishnah Berura 328:121.

13 Tur likewise quotes both opinions.

14 Shulchan Aruch (328:42) follows Rambam's view and forbids exercise as a form of *refuah*. Later (328:43) he notes that certain therapeutic actions are permitted because they have no connection to the grinding of *samimonim*. Why is exercise different, given that it has nothing to do with the making of medicine? Taz (328:28) explains that *samimonim* are sometimes used to induce a *choleh* to sweat. Exercise, which serves the same purpose, is therefore connected in some way to medicine and we are still concerned about *shechikat samimonim*. R. Yisroel Pinchas Bodner (*Halachos of Refuah on Shabbos* Feldheim Publishers, p. 27 nt. 70) notes that nowadays we do not have medications that induce sweat, thus exercise should be permitted. He writes, however, that no contemporary *poskim* seem to have permitted such activities based on this reasoning.

15 328:70*. Beit Yosef 328:42, Bach 328:18 and Machatzit Hashekel 328:46 note that Tur and Shulchan Aruch seem to have accepted both opinions. See also Shevet Halevi 8:84.

er possibility is that Shulchan Aruch believes that Rashi and Rambam agree regarding the halacha¹⁶ and disagree merely regarding the explanation of the Mishnah.¹⁷ According to these two explanations, Shulchan Aruch's view is to accept both opinions regarding the final halacha.

Be'ur Halacha¹⁸ writes that Shulchan Aruch contradicted himself by quoting both opinions, which are opposing views. He notes that many *poskim*¹⁹ seem to follow the opinion of Rambam. Thus, in commenting on *siman* 327 (when talking about rubbing the body vigorously),²⁰ Mishna Berura notes that Shulchan Aruch's view is following Rashi (whom, as he mentions in his Be'ur Halacha is not the followed opinion in this matter), whereas Rambam, (whose opinion is followed) would allow a vigorous rub of the body. According to this view, only the opinion of Rambam is accepted as final halacha.

Exercising for Pleasure

The permissibility of or prohibition against exercise on Shabbat must take into account the reason for the exercise. Many people exercise because even though they are cur-

16 Shiltei Gibborim (62b in *dapei Ha-Rif* #2 quoted by Magen Avraham 328:46) understands that Rashi and Rambam disagree regarding the halacha. He writes that while Rashi and Tur are of the opinion that one may only rub the body softly, according to Rambam, one may even rub the body vigorously.

17 It seems that Shulchan Aruch agreed with Rambam regarding the explanation of the Mishnah because in 328:42, Shulchan Aruch writes that it is forbidden to be *mit-amel*, and then proceeds to define it. In 327:2, Shulchan Aruch merely states the law without mentioning *hit-amlut*.

18 328:42, s.v. *kedei* based on Be'ur Ha-Gra 327:2.

19 Rabbeinu Chananel, *Shabbat* 147b and Maggid Mishnah, *Hilchot Shabbat* 21:28, as well as Eliya Rabba 328:48, 327:3. Aruch Ha-Shulchan 328:52 and Kaf Ha-Chaim 328:235 also follow this view.

20 S"n 7.

rently healthy they want to stay in shape, lose weight and improve their physical appearance or because they enjoy the movement.²¹ It would seem that this type of exercise would be comparable to *ma'achal beri'im*, foods eaten by healthy people, which may be consumed by a healthy person.²² Thus, a healthy person would be permitted to exercise.

Exercising for Health Reasons

If the person is a *choleh she-ein bo sakana* (one who is ill but not dangerously so), exercise is permitted because the decree of *shechikat samimonim* was not instituted in a case of *choleh*. If however one is exercising in order to alleviate aches or pains this could be prohibited due to the decree of *shechikat samimonim*.

R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach maintains that the exercise that was forbidden by Shulchan Aruch is not comparable to exercise which is performed nowadays.²³ Shulchan Aruch speaks of difficult exercise, such as strenuous workouts for patients who need to remove fluid from their

21 There are two *girsot* of Rambam (*Hilchot Shabbat* 21:28). In one, he writes that it is forbidden for a *choleh* to exercise, implying that it would be permitted for a *bari* (healthy person). In the second *girsat*, the reference to a *choleh* does not appear, perhaps indicating that exercise would be forbidden even for a *bari*. *Levush* writes that this *issur* applies to a *choleh*, and Eliya Rabba (328:48) infers from this that exercise would be permitted for a *bari* (healthy person), although his *girsat* of the Rambam did not limit it to a *choleh*. Tur quotes Rambam with the *girsat* of *choleh* and thus limits the prohibition to one who is ill. *Hagahot Ve-He-arot* #74 (*Arba Turim Ha-Shalem*, Mosdot Shirat Devora Edition, Machon Yerushalayim) notes that most old texts have a *girsat* of Rambam that includes the word *choleh*. The difference between the various manuscripts of Rambam has obvious implications for the permissibility of exercise for a *bari* on Shabbat.

22 Shulchan Aruch 328:37.

23 *Shulchan Shlomo*, *Hilchot Shabbat*, *siman* 328 nt. 110. R. Nissim Karelitz, *Chut Shani* vol. 4, p. 221 #2, assumes that our exercise, which is meant to strengthen muscles and not to sweat, could be considered similar to rubbing with vigor, Rashi's definition of *hit-amlut*, and is therefore still forbidden.

lungs. Today, many people enjoy exercise because it allows them to move around and stretch, similar to the case of young men who are permitted to run and jump on Shabbat provided that they enjoy it.²⁴

Even in instances where exercise would be prohibited because of its healing element, there still may be an exception. R. Shlomo Kluger²⁵ permits a person to continue taking medicine on Shabbat if it was prescribed for consecutive days and the regiment was begun beforehand. We are not concerned about *shechikat samimonim* if a person knows in advance that he will need medicine, as he can prepare before Shabbat. We are only concerned if he finds out on Shabbat itself that he needs the medicine because in that case he might become distressed and forget that it is forbidden to grind the spices. According to this opinion, any exercise that is performed for health reasons and was started on a daily basis before Shabbat would be permitted to continue on Shabbat. It should be noted that many *poskim* disagree with the opinion of R. Kluger.²⁶

24 See Shulchan Aruch 301:2.

25 Sefer Ha-Chaim 328:37; Kuntres Chayei Nefesh, ch. 6; Sh"ut Shenot Chaim 152:4 and addition at the end of the *teshuva*. R. Kluger cites this as a "*margela be-fumei de-inshi*," a common saying. Many *poskim* follow R. Kluger's opinion. See *Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata* 34:19 and nt. 76 (see also the emendation of R. Auerbach in vol. 3 of *Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata*); *Chazon Ish* (quoted in *Imrei Yosher, Mo'ed* 97, *Orchot Rabbeinu* vol. 1, #214 p. 155 and *Dinim Ve-Hanhagot* 15:1); R. Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, *Kovetz Teshuvot* 1:40:2; and R. Eliezer Waldenburg, *Tzitz Eliezer* 8:15:15:15-17, 12:45:5-6. *Az Nidberu* 1:31:5 considers this opinion of R. Shlomo Kluger as a possible leniency to be used in combination with other possible leniencies.

26 See Maharsham (*Da'at Torah* 328:37), R. Moshe Feinstein (*Iggerot Moshe, Orach Chaim* 3:53), and R. Moshe Stern (*Be'er Moshe* 1:33:7). See also *Avnei Yashfeh* 1:90:3; *Shraga Ha-Me'ir* 2:40; *Emek Halacha* 24; *Ohr Le-Tzion* 2:36:9; and *Be-Yitzchak Yikarei* 321:18, who all take stringent views.

Running

At this point, it would seem that running for health reasons would be forbidden unless one accepts the view of R. Kluger (which many do not) or the view of R. Aurbach (limited to those light exercises which he permitted), whereas running for pleasure or to improve appearance (by losing weight) would be permitted. There is, however, another issue related to running on Shabbat. Shulchan Aruch²⁷ prohibits running on Shabbat unless it is for the purpose of a *mitzvah*, such as running to shul. The reason is based on *Shabbat* 113a, which states that a person's traveling during Shabbat should not be like his travel on weekday. Shulchan Aruch also writes,²⁸ however, that people who enjoy jumping and running may do so on Shabbat.²⁹

The *poskim* write that one may also run to escape the rain or other inclement weather.³⁰

27 301:1.

28 301:2.

29 *Magen Avraham* (301:3) writes that the Shulchan Aruch's opinion is *lechatchila* (ideal), although he notes that Bach maintains that it is *be-dieved* and ideally should not be relied upon. Mishna Berura (301:5) quotes the opinion of Magen Avraham. See *Sh"ut Maharshag* 2:93, who writes about a situation where school teachers wanted students to come to school on Shabbat and run. His response was that the leniency of Shulchan Aruch regarding running was only in a case where the person enjoys running, not when they are forced to run.

Sha'ar Ha-Tziyun (301:9) notes that there is a dispute between Taz and Magen Avraham regarding whether or not it would be permissible to run in order to develop an appetite. Taz (301:1) is strict while Magen Avraham (301:5) would seem to be lenient. Sha'ar Ha-Tziyun remains in doubt as to whom the *halacha* follows.

30 *Minchat Shabbat* 301:3; *Shevet Ha-Levi* 1:58; Be-Yitzchak Yikareh (R. Avigdor Nevenzal) 301:6. R. Nevenzal questions whether it is permitted to run in order to prevent one's clothing from getting wet.

Walking

Ramo³¹ writes that it is permitted to take walks on Shabbat. Magen Avraham³² notes that this is permissible even if the intent is for exercise and warming up for *refuah*, whereas running (in a case that would otherwise be permitted), is prohibited if the intent is such.³³ Mishna Berura,³⁴ however, quotes Eliya Rabba, who maintains that if the intent were to exercise for *refuah* then even walking would be prohibited.³⁵

Massage

R. Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg³⁶ writes that whether or not massage should be permissible on Shabbat should de-

31 Ibid. See *Tosefta, Shabbat* 17:16. The *Tosefta* writes that one may not run on Shabbat in order to be *mit-amel*, but one may walk normally all day and need not worry. Chasdei Dovid interprets the *Tosefta* to be speaking of a case of running to do a *mitzvah*, reasoning that had it not been a case of *mitzvah*, running would be prohibited based on *Shabbat* 113a, which states that a person's traveling on Shabbat should not be like their traveling during the week. The *Tosefta* must therefore be discussing a case in which running would have otherwise been permitted (such as running to do a *mitzvah*) and is only prohibited because of the intention to be *mit-amel*. *Minchas Bikkurim* assumes that the reason running was prohibited in the *Tosefta* was only because there was intention to sweat, which is considered *refuah*. However, running for pleasure is permitted. *Minchas Bikkurim* must thus explain the *gemara* in *Shabbat* differently or not *paskin* according to it.

32 301:5.

33 Magen Avraham's comment is based on the *Tosefta, Shabbat* 17:16 (see note 32 above). Magen Avraham questions why running is evaluated differently in a case in which one enjoys running. He suggests that perhaps the case of running under discussion is one in which the person has intent for *refuah*, in which case it would be prohibited. It would seem that according to Magen Avraham, running for pleasure with no intention of *refuah* would be permitted.

34 Mishna Berura 301:7. It would seem that a brisk walk for pleasure, which does not induce sweat, would therefore be *muttar* even according to this opinion.

35 R. Binyamin Zilber (*Az Nidberu* 4:38:2) suggests that taking a walk after a meal to let food digest would be considered part of the eating process rather than exercise and would therefore be permitted even according to Eliya Rabba.

36 *Seridei Aish* 2:30; *Nishmat Shabbat* vol. 5, #216.

pend on the dispute between Rashi and Rambam regarding the prohibition of *hit-amlut*. As noted above, Rashi and other *Rishonim* interpret the prohibition of being *mitamel* as referring to vigorously rubbing the body. Presumably, this is a reference to a massage. It would seem that a soft rub would not be considered halachically problematic (although it remains unclear what is defined as “soft” and “vigorous”). However, Rambam, Rabbeinu Chananel, and the other *Rishonim*, who explain the Mishnah as referring to forms of exercise, do not have a source that prohibits massages on Shabbat (See above for a discussion of whom the *halacha* follows).

Because of the opinion of Rashi that such rubbing is considered an *uvda de-chol*, some *poskim* assume that massage is forbidden.³⁷ In cases of pain or discomfort, however, many *poskim*³⁸ assume that the prohibition of *uvdin de-chol* does not apply. Thus, if a person is very sore and a massage would help alleviate some pain, it would no longer be considered a forbidden *uvda de-chol*.³⁹

However, even if the massage is not *uvda de-chol*, there might be concern for the *gezeira* of *refuah*; since alleviating pain can be accomplished through pain relief medication, we are therefore concerned about *shechikat samimonim*.⁴⁰ R. Ben-Tzion Abba Shaul permits massages on Shabbat for someone who has aches as long as there is no intent to

37 Ketzot Hashulchan 138:10; Seridei Aish 2:30; Rivevot Efraim 1:222:1; Nishmat Avraham Orach Chaim 328:95. See also Shulchan Aruch 327:2.

38 Magen Avraham 328:48; Mishnah Berura 328:136. According to Mishnah Berura mentioned earlier, we follow the view of Rambam and therefore this would not be problematic.

39 See Yesodei Yeshurun vol. 5, p. 388.

40 See Taz 328:28.

sweat.⁴¹ His reasoning is based on a statement of Mishna Berura⁴² that any *refuah* that does not have substance (*ein bo mamash*) like food or drink is not included in the *gezeira* of *shechikat samimonim* and is therefore permitted. Thus, massage would not be included in the *gezeira* of *refuah*.⁴³

Physical Therapy

Now that we have established the halachic issues regarding exercise on Shabbat, we will apply these principles to performing physical therapy on Shabbat. Physical therapy may be required for numerous reasons, and it is necessary to determine the reason that the physical therapy is needed in order to understand the various opinions regarding the halachic status of such an act on Shabbat.

Physical therapy is often prescribed after a stroke or some form of paralysis. In such a case, the goal of therapy is to retrain the body to perform certain basic functions. In other cases, physical therapy is administered when muscle strengthening is necessary, such as following surgery or an accident.

Some *poskim* assume that physical therapy is permitted on Shabbat regardless of the situation.⁴⁴ They argue that the *issur refuah* on Shabbat only applies to administering medication, as *Chazal* were concerned about *shechikat sa-*

41 Ohr Le-Tzion 2:36:11.

42 Mishna Berura 306:36.

43 See, however, Az Nidberu 2:63 who interprets the Mishna Berura's example of food and drink as natural *refuah* as opposed to homeopathic *refuah*. According to this understanding, if massage therapy were accepted as a form of *refuah* (as he notes that exercise is) it would be prohibited according to Mishna Berura.

44 Or Le-Tzion 2:36:12; Avnei Yashfeh 5:70:4. R. Karelitz, Chut Shani vol. 4, p. 221, writes that therapy would only be permitted in a case of *tza'ar*.

mimonim. In a case where no such concern exists, *refuah* is permitted. Physical therapy does not involve taking any medications (nor can any of the results of physical therapy be produced by medications)⁴⁵ and would therefore be permitted on Shabbat.

Some *poskim* maintain that physical therapy is permitted only for a *choleh she-ein bo sakana*, one who is ill but not dangerously so (and certainly in cases of *sakanat eiver*, threat to a limb, and *choleh she-yesh bo sakana*, dangerous illness).⁴⁶ They argue that even if the *issur refuah* applies to cases in which we are not concerned for *shechikat samimonim*, the *gezeira* does not apply to a *choleh she-ein bo sakana*. Therefore, it is permissible for a person to perform therapy in order to recover from a stroke or surgery or for other necessary strengthening.⁴⁷

Even if physical therapy is not prohibited because of *refuah*, there still is an issue regarding the discomfort it causes. Physical therapy may be recommended for a person recovering from a broken limb. This therapy consists of rotating and flexing the injured limb, which can cause discomfort. Magen Avraham (quoting Rambam and Semag) writes⁴⁸ that on Shabbat, one may not drink something that causes diarrhea, even though it is therapeutic, because

45 See Taz 328:28, Eliya Rabba 328:49 and Mishnah Berura 328:130. See, however, Bach 328:18.

46 R. Shlomo Zalman Aurebach, cited in Nishmat Avraham Orach Chaim 328:93; Shulchan Shlomo Refuah vol. 2, p. 219; Tzitz Eliezer 6:4; Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata 34:23; Yalkut Yosef, *Hilchot Shabbat* 301:8.

47 See Be-Ikvei Hatzon siman 10, where R. Hershel Schachter suggests that the definition of a *choleh she-ein bo sakana* refers to someone who cannot function properly in his or her current state. This definition would seemingly include many instances in which physical therapy is necessary.

48 Magen Avraham 328:49.

it is painful and we are commanded to enjoy Shabbat. Rotating the injured limb causes pain and therefore may be forbidden on Shabbat even if the *refuah* issue is resolved.⁴⁹

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is often administered to help refine fine-motor skills and to train or retrain hand muscles. A handgrip, i.e. a heavy coil spring attached to two handles, is used to strengthen hand muscles. The *poskim* discuss whether using such a device is permissible on Shabbat. A *choleh she-ein bo sakana* who must exercise with this device every day without exception would clearly be permitted to use it. What about someone who is not a *choleh*?

Tzitz Eliezer⁵⁰ is lenient for multiple reasons. Use of a handgrip does not induce sweat, nor does it tire the one who is using it. He argues that its use is not *uvda de-chol* and that it is not *avsha milsah*, an object that is obviously intended for forbidden use (since it is a small device, many or most people would not know why it is being used). Moreover, it is used by healthy people and would therefore be permitted based on the leniency of Shulchan Aruch regarding *ma'achal beri'im*.⁵¹

The reasoning of Tzitz Eliezer is debatable.⁵² It is unclear why using such a piece of equipment is not considered *uvda de-chol*, weekday activity, as it is something that is generally used for strengthening, just like any other piece of

49 See *Assia* 4, p. 49-57 for a discussion of this issue.

50 Tzitz Eliezer 6:4:9.

51 Shulchan Aruch 328:37.

52 See *Avnei Yashfeh* 5:70:3. Chemdat Tzvi 22 disagrees with Tzitz Eliezer as well.

equipment. Avnei Yashfeh⁵³ notes that one needs to squeeze hard in order for the handgrip to be effective. This would be comparable to Rashi's definition of *hit-amlut*, rubbing vigorously, and would thus be classified as *uvda de-chol*.

Speech Therapy

Tzitz Eliezer discusses a person who was told that he would be unable to speak clearly until he performed certain breathing exercises for an extended period of time. His doctor prescribed these exercises to be performed every day without exception. R. Waldenburg permits such exercises on Shabbat.⁵⁴ One reason for R. Waldenburg's leniency is that such an individual should be treated like a *choleh she-ein bo sakana*, as he is unable to function in a regular manner.⁵⁵ As such, the *gezeira of shechikat samimonim* does not apply and there is no reason to forbid such an action. It would seem that such an individual would also be entitled to the status of *sakanat eiver*. R. Chaim Naeh writes that any situation in which a limb is not functioning properly and will not start working until it is treated medically is assigned the status of *sakanat eiver*.⁵⁶ It would seem that an inability to communicate properly without speech therapy would warrant such a status.⁵⁷

53 Avnei Yashfeh *ibid*.

54 Tzitz Eliezer 12:45. See also Nishmat Shabbat vol. 5, #440; Yalkut Yosef vol. 4, p. 172. R. Nissim Karelitz (Chut Shani vol. 4, p. 152) writes that such exercises are neither *refuah* nor *uvdin de-chol*, and there is thus no reason for them to be prohibited.

55 See Be-Ikvei Hatzon siman 10.

56 *Ketzot Ha-Shulchan, Badei Ha-Shulchan* 138:18, quoted in *Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata* 33:1:5*, nt. 8.

57 There is a ramification between the two classifications: a Jew may perform a *shevut* (Rabbinic prohibition) on behalf of a *choleh she-ein bo sakana* only with a *shinui* (variation in behavior), while a *shinui* is not required in a case of *sakanat eiver*. See Shulchan Aruch 328:37 and Mishna Berura 328:57.

R. Waldenburg further writes that there is no intent to sweat in performing such exercises. He also notes that Shulchan Aruch⁵⁸ permits therapeutic activity that cannot be accomplished with medications when a person is in pain or discomfort and argues that this case is comparable. Another reason given by R. Walbenburg to be lenient in this case is based on the *chiddush* of R. Shlomo Kluger mentioned above that if one started medications before Shabbat, they may be continued on Shabbat. Since the patient began speech therapy before Shabbat, he may continue his exercises on Shabbat as well.

R. Waldenburg's final reason to be lenient in this instance is based on a *chiddush* of Kol Sofer⁵⁹ that any *refuah* that will not have an immediate effect but will rather only be noticeable after an extended period of time is permitted on Shabbat. These breathing exercises must be performed for consecutive days and there is no immediate result.

It should be noted that every case of therapy must be evaluated individually in order to determine the necessity of the therapy and the applicable halachic principles. R. Waldenburg's *teshuva* discussed a specific situation, which may not be relevant to every case of speech therapy.

Kedushat Shabbat

Ramban writes⁶⁰ that although the Torah prohibited us from performing certain acts on Shabbat, one would still

58 Shulchan Aruch 328:43.

59 *Shabbat* #68. Divrei Yisroel (R. Weltz) 101, 103 relies on this opinion, although it is unclear what the Kol Sofer's source is. According to this line of reasoning, an argument could be made that many types of therapy are permitted on Shabbat.

60 *Vayikra* 23:24, based on *Mechilta, Parshat Bo* 9.

be able to check his grains, weigh his fruits, and perform other such activities without violating a prohibition. The Torah therefore commands the concept of *shevut*, Rabbinic decrees, which limits our activities so that Shabbat can truly be a day of rest.

R. Avrohom Danzig (author of *Chaye Adam*) writes⁶¹ that it is actually the *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination, who convinces us to be *metayel* on Shabbat, even though it is a permissible form of enjoyment. R. Danzig writes that we should eat, drink, and sleep to some extent on Shabbat, but the greatest enjoyment for one's soul is the learning of Torah and performance of *mitzvot*. He notes that people who spend their week earning a livelihood should be especially vigilant to spend time learning on Shabbat because this is one's true life.

When discussing issues of physical exertion and activity on Shabbat, we must bear this in mind. Shabbat is meant to serve as a day of rest, devoted to holy endeavors and not to the mundane activities of the week. It behooves us to evaluate whether exercise and other such activities are appropriate for Shabbat and conducive to the atmosphere that we wish to create, even in cases where they are technically permissible.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to present the various opinions regarding exercise and therapies on Shabbat as it relates to both healthy and non-healthy people. Besides the technical halachic issues, we must bear in mind the sanctity of Shabbat and the purpose of the holy day. In its merit we should always be able to exercise in a preventative manner, not needing therapies to recover from illness.

61 *Zichru Torat Moshe, siman 10.*

Why would you not exercise on the Sabbath or any other day? The prohibition of work on the Sabbath is part of the Jewish Law, a covenant made between God and the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 20:8-11). If you are not Jewish, it doesn't apply to you. This can be seen in the Bible where the apostles of Jesus had a meeting in Jerusalem to decide which requirements of the Law of Moses the new Gentile converts to Jesus should be required to obey (Acts 15). We don't actually tend to focus a lot on what we CAN'T do on Shabbat, instead we enjoy the things we CAN do on Shabbat: enjoy creation. Read a book. Take a walk with the family. Play with the children. Nap. Is one allowed to do exercises on Shabbos? Are any types allowed? Some examples of different types. One should not, as a rule, perform physical exercises on Shabbat or Yom Tov, whether with or without the use of an instrument designed for strengthening muscles, such as a chest-expander. Likewise, one should not engage in occupational therapy. He then makes exemptions for exercises required for one's health (and recommends to ask a Rav) or for simple, light exercises with one's hand. R Ari Enkin here writes "Exercising or any other bodily exertion is generally forbidden on Shabbat" and further quotes the Mishna Brura 301.7. Share. Improve this answer. Recreational sports and exercise on shabbat. Oreh Hayyim 301:2. Rabbi Jonathan Lubliner. Of course, none of the above would apply to individuals whose physicians, therapists or other health care providers prescribe specific regimens of exercise or physical therapy to treat particular illness or conditions, including joint pain, arthritis, or other skeleto-muscular issues. In these cases, patients who need to follow a prescribed routine of exercise or physical therapy on a daily basis for the sake of mobility or relief from pain should do so because of shemirat ha-guf, even on Shabbat. In sum, shemirat ha-guf does not offer us a sufficient basis to override generally the prohibitions. Feel Good Diary: Shabbat & Self Care For Anxiety. Story from Feel Good Diaries. I Live In Washington D.C., Make \$58K, And Spent \$257.58 On My Fitness Routine This Week. It's designed around principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, and I have it set to send me a notification at a random time of day asking "How are you feeling?" I can rate my mood and get suggestions for different activities, including journaling and guided meditation. It also helps me track my "self-care" activities. Reflection: As someone with anxiety, things like exercising and getting enough rest are incredibly important to me for both physical and mental health. On my mental health journey, I've realized how important it is to practice self-care when you need it, not just when you feel like you "deserve" or have "earned" it. Shabbat, Shabbos, or the Sabbath, is Judaism's day of rest on the seventh day of the week, i.e., Saturday. On this day, religious Jews remember the biblical story describing the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days and look forward to a future Messianic Age. Since the Jewish religious calendar counts days from sunset to sunset, Shabbat begins in the evening of what on the secular calendar is Friday.