

Oxygen Titration Tips



- You must have an order from a physician to titrate oxygen (O₂) either up or down, as it is seen as a DRUG (it's true!) through the FDA.
 - Not all patients will be able to achieve this nor is it medically sound
- Most patients that are on oxygen get a general order stating something like "o₂ > or at 92%."
- If you are in skilled nursing facility, typically it is the responsibility of the registered nurse (RN), but OT practitioners are the ones working with them on endurance goals and have a lot of input into current status with exertion.
- Some facilities have standard protocols on this and some don't.
- If physician prescribes an specific oxygen saturation (SpO₂) target level during rest and activity, OT practitioners may titrate the oxygen flow to maintain patients at or above this target saturation value.
 - **Example:** "maintain SpO₂ > ____ %"
- If a patient can maintain the saturation, but their heart rate starts going up, this indicates their cardiopulmonary status may be working harder and oxygen may be required to keep both saturation levels and heart rate within normal limits.
- Use the oximeter ALL the time during treatment with these types of patients.
 - Sometimes the patient will present within normal oxygen limits (> 92% or what the physician's prescription states it should be), and you may be able to titrate (reduce oxygen) at rest, but if they start moving or performing functional tasks, the levels drop.
- If the oxygen levels are dropping during activity or stay stable for a few minutes and then drop, the patient is not ready to permanently titrate down to lower oxygen level.
- You may make recommendations to MD or RN regarding your findings.
 - **Example:** Notify them that a patient can maintain above 92% on room air (RA) at rest, but needs 2 liters of oxygen with activity to stay above 92%.
- If having O₂ is going to be long term, an option may be to work with an oxygen supply company to come out and test to see if the patient qualifies for an O₂ "on demand tank."
 - On demand oxygen tanks are smaller, more portable and last A LOT longer to be able for the patient to get out in the community.
- Do not write goals for o₂ titration as this is MD prescription.
- Writing O₂ management or functional endurance goals is appropriate
 - **Example:** Pt will demonstrate ability to perform 15 minutes of continuous activity to complete laundry task within 12 weeks.