

Cardiac Rehabilitation – Exercise Information Booklet

Aintree University Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Cardiac Rehabilitation
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Please read the following exercise safety advice points and ensure you follow these rules prior to exercising.

Why exercise?

1. To reduce your risk of having a future cardiac event
2. To make your body more efficient
3. To reduce heart rate at rest
4. To reduce blood pressure
5. To increase stamina i.e. the amount of activity you can do
6. To aid weight loss
7. To decrease the 'fear' around exercise
8. For the feel good factor/pick up a good habit

These benefits only last a couple of days, so regular exercise is needed to maintain them.

When shouldn't I exercise?

Do not exercise if you are experiencing the following symptoms:

1. Chest pain
2. Chest tightness
3. Increased shortness of breath
4. Sickness, nausea
5. Dizziness
6. Palpitations
7. Excessive sweating

Please seek advice from your GP before you continue.

If during exercise you experience any of these symptoms for feel unwell, please stop. If these symptoms to not resolve, seek emergency medical help.

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Wear sensible footwear e.g. flat shoes or trainers
- Always take your medications prior to exercise
- Wear layers of loose clothing
- Work within your own limits – don't try and keep up with other people
- Enjoy yourself!

Don't

- Exercise if you have not taken your medications
- Eat large meals before exercising
- Exercise if you are unwell
- Expect to be able to exercise as hard if the weather is very hot or cold
- **Don't give up**

Which exercises can I do?

- Walking
- Home exercise booklet
- Stretching – yoga/Tai Chi
- Housework
- Gardening
- Cycling

Which exercises should I avoid?

- Weight lifting
- Swimming
- Vigorous aerobics

These exercises put a lot of strain on the heart due to their high intensity nature. Heavy weightlifting requires the heart to do too much in one go.

When swimming the pressure of the water creates pressure on your chest and body, adding to the work the heart has to do, therefore vigorous swimming should be avoided.

Monitoring exercise

During exercise we want you to use the BOG rating of perceived exertion scale. This scale is used to rate your perception of exertion e.g. how difficult the exercise feels to you and how tired you are feeling.

There is an attached guide on the BORG scale in more depth, please familiarise yourself with this and keep a copy of it with you whilst exercising.

RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE)

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	

Gunnar BORG 1970, 1985, 1994, 1998

How much should I exercise?

UK guidelines recommend that we are active for 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) per week at a moderate intensity. This can be split across multiple days and into a few sessions per day, if required.

Components of an Exercise Programme

Warm up

Strenuous exercise without warming up can cause heart arrhythmias even in healthy adults.

A warm up should last between 10-15 minutes to allow your heart rate to slowly increase and to warm your muscles and joints up in preparation for exercise.

If you are going to engage in an activity such as walking or cycling, begin at a relatively slow pace and progress over 10-15 minutes.

Main Exercise

Following your warm up, you should feel warm and your joints prepared for exercise.

Your main exercise should last between 20-30 minutes and involve both cardiovascular (CV) exercise and resistance training. This should be slightly more difficult than your warm up.

Spend approximately 1 minute completing an exercises followed by a 15 second rest (keeping your feet moving) and then repeat for a different exercise.

Try and target different muscle groups to avoid overworking any one group.

You may choose to perform a few exercises provided by your Physiotherapist for 10 minutes followed by a 10 minute brisk walk outdoors.

Cool Down

The cool down period following exercise is just as important as the warm up. Cool down will allow your heart to return to its normal resting level, help to avoid a drop in blood pressure and stop heart arrhythmias.

Cool down should last around 5-10 minutes and should involve gentle cardiovascular exercises such as slowly marching on the spot or walking slowly. Following this, complete stretches for each muscle group. These should be held for 15-20 seconds.

Finish off your cool down with some deep breathing exercises. Feel your stomach rise as you breathe in and gently exhale out fully. Repeat 5 times.

Final Reminders

If you have not exercised for a while, it is common to experience muscle aches for a few days following exercise. This is a normal response, allow your body a few days to recover and resume exercise when possible. These aches will stop if you keep up with regular exercise. **Do not push through pain.**

It is important following exercising to allow your body optimum recovery. Aim to have 6-8 hours of sleep per night, stay well hydrated and ensure a healthy, balanced diet.

If joint pain is aggravated by certain exercises, choose less intense exercises which do not cause pain.

Small changes to your activity levels soon mount up throughout the day, making a big difference. So why not try:

- Taking the stairs and not the lift
- Park a little further away than normal
- Walk to the local shops or post box
- Walk up and down your stairs a little more often
- Reduce the amount of time you sit on your bottom

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact

Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurses
0151 529 2727 (9.00-16.00)



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

Tel No: 0151 529 2906

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