

Higher Level Home Exercise Plan

This leaflet gives exercise advice, and an exercise programme that you can follow at home without equipment. The exercise times should be prescribed by an experienced Physiotherapist.

It is also important to continue to exercise after you finish Cardiac Rehab to maintain the benefits in the long term.

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.

What are the components of an exercise session?

Warm up

- Prepares the body for exercise by warming up muscles and increasing your heart rate
- Allow 5-10 mins for your heart to warm up
- Should mimic the exercise you are doing
- Shouldn't be too hard!

* Those exercising at a moderate level should allow **15 minutes** to warm up

Main Exercise

30 mins of moderate exercise, most days of the week

Cool Down

- Cools your muscles, joints and heart down after exercise
- Stops any sudden drop in blood pressure by keeping you moving
- Allow 5-10 mins

What is Moderate Exercise?

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

Be guided by the BORG scale when monitoring the intensity of the exercise you are doing.

6 = no exertion e.g. sitting resting

20 = maximal exertion e.g. a strenuous, one of activity that couldn't be repeated

Aim to exercise to the 'somewhat hard' level on the BORG scale.

When exercising you expect to feel mildly short of breath and mildly sweaty, with your heart beating more quickly. You should feel that you can continue with the exercise.

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

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

All of these exercises are at a lower intensity but you should still be guided by the BORG scale when trying them.

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.

The Exercise Programme

This exercise programme consists of three elements:

- Warm up
- Main exercise (circuits)
- Cool down

The main exercise consists of a set of 'stations' with two exercises each:

- Cardiovascular (CV) – exercises to get your heart pumping
- Active Recovery (AR) – exercises to maintain your heart rate

As your stamina improves, you can increase the amount of time in CV exercise and decrease the amount of time in AR exercise.

Level 1: 1 minute CV + 2 minutes AR

Level 2: 2 minutes CV + 1 minute AR

Level 3: 3 minutes CV

Warm up

Spend 10 minutes warming up to reduce the risk of injury. March for a count of 10 between each exercise.

- Toe taps x 15
- Heel digs x 15
- High knees x 15
- Step backs x 15
- Side legs x 15

Now: Walk around slowly until you've rolled your shoulders forwards x 8 and backwards x 8

- Toe taps x 15 and bend one elbow
- Heel digs x 15 and bend one elbow
- High knees x 15 bringing hand across to knee
- Step backs bringing one arm in front x 15
- Side legs whilst lifting one arm x 15

Now: Walk around slowly
Take your right arm straight across your chest, bring your left hand behind your elbow and stretch for 10 secs. Repeat with left

Take your right arm up in the air, drop your hand down behind your back and add a gentle stretch. Repeat with left.

- Toe taps x 30 and bend both elbows
- Heel digs x 30 and bend both elbows
- High knees x 30 bringing hand across to knee
- Step backs bringing both arms in front x 30
- Side legs adding in both arms x 30

Main Exercise

High Knees (CV)

Lift up your left knee and lower again, then your right knee, as if marching on the spot.

Work harder – Reach your hand across to tap your opposite knee as it raises.

Bicep curls (AR)

March throughout this exercise. Start with your arms at your sides. Now bend both elbows taking your hands towards your shoulders for a count of 2, and down again for a count of 2.

Work harder – Hold a small hand weight in one or both hands while doing this exercise.

Sit to stand (CV)

Stand up from the chair and then sit down, slowly and with control. Try to do this without using your hands. If this is too difficult it is ok to push on the chair arms.

Work harder – Try not to sit down completely, but to squat instead.

Forward arms (AR)

March throughout this exercise. Start with your arms at your sides. Lift both arms straight up in front of you to shoulder height for a count of 2, and down again for a count of 2.

Work harder – Hold a small hand weight in one or both hands while doing this exercise.

Hamstring Curls (CV)

Stand with your feet together and hands supported by a chair if needed. Lift your left heel behind you towards your bottom, then lower again and change legs.

Side arms (AR)

March throughout this exercise. Start with your arms at your sides. Lift your arms out to the side, to shoulder height for a count of 2 and down again for a count of 2.

Work harder – Add a small hand weight to each hand

Step ups (CV)

Stand by your bottom step. Step up one foot at a time so that both feet are on the step. Step down again.

Work harder – Increase the speed or add in one arm bend with each step.

Wall Press Ups (AR)

Stand arm distance from the wall with your feet at shoulder width apart. Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height.

Keeping your body straight, bend your elbows and lower your body towards the wall, then straighten your arms again returning to start position.

Side Steps (CV)

Step out to the side with one leg, bring your feet together, step out with the other leg, bring your feet together.

Work harder – raise your arms out to the side, you could also use small weights

Upright Row (AR)

March throughout this exercise. Start with your hands together down in front of you. Bring them up to your chest for a count of 2, and down again for a count of 2.

Work harder – Hold a small hand weight in one or both hands while doing this exercise.

Cool Down

Remember: Use this time to allow your breathing and heart rate slow down.

Walk

Choose a room in your house where you can walk 5-10 yards, perhaps the hallway. Walk at a slow speed 10 lengths of this room.

Shoulder stretch

Reach your right arm across your chest. Stretch your right shoulder by putting gentle pressure with your left hand on your right elbow. Hold this for fifteen seconds.

Repeat with the other arm.

Triceps stretch

Take your right arm straight up in the air, drop your hand down behind your back and stretch your arm in this position for fifteen seconds.

Repeat with the other arm.

Calf Stretch

Take a step forwards with your right leg, keep your left leg heel on the floor. Bend your right knee forwards until you feel a stretch in your left calf. Hold for fifteen seconds

Repeat with the other leg.

Hamstring stretch

Tap your right heel a small distance in front of you and keep it there. Keep this leg straight.

Now bend your left knee and take your weight over it. You should feel a stretch at the back of your thigh on the straight leg, hold this for 15 seconds.

Repeat with the other leg.

Quads stretch

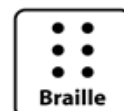
Find something secure to hold on to. Bring your heel to your bottom and hold on to your foot or your trouser leg - hold for 15 seconds.

Keep your back straight, knees together and push your hips forwards to increase the stretch.

Repeat with other leg.

If you have any concerns with any aspect of your exercise programme, please contact

**Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurses on
0151 529 2727**



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:

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