

# Lower 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's 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 if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

## 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

### Warm up

Remember – Spend 5 minutes warming up to reduce the risk of injury.

Sit up comfortably in a chair:

1. Look over your left shoulder, then look forwards again 5 times
2. Look over your right shoulder, then look forwards again 5 times
3. Roll your shoulders forwards 5 times
4. Roll your shoulders backwards 5 times
5. Bend both elbows and then straighten them 5 times
6. Circle both wrists 5 times
7. Lift your left knee towards the ceiling and then lower it 5 times
8. Lift your right knee towards then ceiling and the lower it 5 times
9. Straighten your left knee and then bend it again 5 times
10. Straighten your right knee and then bend it again 5 times
11. Tap both feet on the floor 5 times

## Main Exercise

Start by sitting on an upright chair:

### Knee March

Lift up your knees and lower again as if you are marching on the spot. Repeat 10 times each leg

### Straight Leg Raise

Straighten your leg out in front and pull your foot towards you. Hold for 3 seconds and then lower. Repeat 10 times each leg

### Sit to stand

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

**Do these exercises standing up, with your hands supported on a secure surface:**

### Hamstring Curls

Bend your knee bringing your foot towards your bottom. Lower again. Repeat 10 times each leg.

### Side Legs

Keeping your leg straight, lift it out to the side and lower again. Repeat with both legs 10 times.

### Wall Press Ups

Stand facing the wall with your feet at shoulder width apart.  
Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height.

Keep your body straight, push up from the wall until your arms are straight and then lower your body towards the wall again.

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

**These exercises include walking or marching on the spot:**

### Marching

March on the spot for the count of 20 steps.

If you feel able you can continue for up to one minute.

### Bicep Curls

March on the spot and at the same time bend and straighten your elbows ten times.

\* If you are able to you may add small weights, e.g. holding a small bottle of water in each hand during 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 10 lengths of this room at a slow speed.

### 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 ten 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.

### Leg Stretch

Sitting on a chair, straighten right leg in front of you and pull your toes up towards you, feeling the stretch down the back of your leg.

Hold this for 10 seconds then lower. Repeat this stretch with the other leg.

If you have any queries about exercise,  
please contact

**Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurses on  
0151 529 2727**

### **Remember...**

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 require a special edition of this leaflet**

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