

Phase I Cardiac Rehab: The Essentials

Activity and exercise at home

This handout tells how to safely resume activity and start a walking program. The right level of exercise will help you recover from your procedure and prepare for Phase II (outpatient) Cardiac Rehab.

- If this box is checked, your care team has given you precautions to follow. Please follow them as instructed.**

Your Home Exercise Program

- When you get home from the hospital, start walking **at least 3 times a day, for 5 minutes** each time.
- **Increase the total time you exercise by about 3 minutes each week.** To do this, add 1 minute to each of your 3 daily walks at the beginning of each week. Your goal is to be walking **at least 30 to 40 minutes every day** by 6 weeks after your procedure. (See the sample walking program below.)
- **Warm up before you walk and cool down afterward.** Stretch or do gentle exercises for at least 5 minutes before and after you walk.
- Think about taking **slow, deep breaths** while you exercise.

Sample Walking Program

Week #	Warm-up Exercises	Walk	Cool-down Exercises	Total Exercise Time	Goal Met?
1	5 min.	3 x 5 min.	5 min.	25 min.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		3 x 6 min.		28 min.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		3 x 7 min.		31 min.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		3 x 8 min.		34 min.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		3 x 9 min.		37 min.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		3 x 10 min.		40 min.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: If you cannot walk for exercise, talk with your physical therapist about the type of exercise that will work best for you. Follow the sample program above, but do your type of exercise instead of walking.



Scan for a
digital copy of
this handout.

Monitor Your Body

- **For 6 weeks after your procedure:** Pace yourself. Slow down or rest if you are breathless, dizzy, or are perspiring. When exercising, you should not be so out of breath that you cannot talk with someone.
- **Using the 0 to 10 scale in the table below, monitor how hard you are working.** This is called your *rate of perceived exertion* (RPE). **Your goal is to exercise at a low to moderate level.** If you are working between levels 2 and 4, you are exercising at a low to moderate level.

Effort Level (RPE)

RPE	Work Load	Talk Test
0	Very, very light	At rest
1	Very light	Gentle walking or strolling
2	Fairly light	Steady pace, not breathless
3		
4	Somewhat hard	Brisk walking, can hold a conversation
5	Hard	Very brisk walking, must take a breath every 4 to 5 words
6		
7	Very hard	Cannot talk and keep pace
8		
9	Very, very hard	
10		

Table adapted from Avers, D., & Brown, M. (2009). *White Paper Strength Training for the Older Adult. Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy*, 32(4), 148-152.

- **Stop exercising** and talk with your doctor before starting again if you:
 - Have an abnormal heart rhythm
 - Have new or ongoing pain or pressure in your chest, back, arms, or throat
 - Feel dizzy, light-headed, or faint
 - Lose coordination or become confused
 - Have changes in your vision

When at home, if you need medical care right away, call 911.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.