



Interior Health

Strength (Resistance) Training

- ♥ Consult your family doctor or cardiac rehab program prior to starting strength training.
- ♥ Strength training enhances overall fitness when combined with aerobic exercise.
- ♥ Strength exercises use free weights, weight machines, elastic tubing or your own body weight as a resistance to strengthen muscles.

Stretching

- ♥ Stretching daily helps keep you flexible & functional. Stretches should be done once your muscles are warmed up; an ideal time is after you have done aerobic exercise.
- ♥ Stretches are most effective when held for 15–30 sec with no breath holding or bouncing.

Tips for Exercising Safely & More Effectively

- ♥ If you experience chest pain (angina), stop exercising and sit down. This will often relieve symptoms. If pain persists, Nitroglycerin spray may be taken if prescribed. Take Nitroglycerin spray every 5 minutes until the pain is relieved. If you still have pain after a total of 3 sprays—Call 911. Do not drive yourself to hospital.
- ♥ Consult your doctor if you have new chest pain or a changing pattern.
- ♥ Warm up & cool down: To prevent injury and get the most out of your workout, start and end your workout at a slower pace for about 5 minutes to help get used to the change in activity level.
- ♥ Wait about 1 hour after a meal before exercising.

Daily Activities After Cardiac Event

- ♥ **BATHING:** Avoid extremes in temperature and prolonged exposure in the tub. Do not use a hot tub directly after exercise.
- ♥ **DRIVING:** Do not drive for 4 weeks after a heart attack, then build up slowly.
- ♥ **LIFTING:** Do not lift more than 5 lbs in the first 2 weeks after your heart attack.
- ♥ **WORK/LEISURE: STOP SMOKING.** www.quitnow.ca. Limit caffeine and alcohol. Minimize excitement & stress. Consult your doctor before returning to work.
- ♥ **SEXUAL ACTIVITY:** Wait 2–3 weeks after your heart attack and when you can climb 2 flights of stairs comfortably.
- ♥ **SHOVELING SNOW, LAWN MOWING:** Wait until 3 months after your heart attack. Avoid lifting heavy snow and over-exertion. **(Perform Talk Test).**

Helpful Resources

www.heartandstroke.bc.ca—
RECOVERY ROAD BOOKLET
www.actnowbc.ca
www.physicalactivityline.com

- ♥ Developed by Central Okanagan Association for Cardiac Health in conjunction with the KGH Cardiac Patient Education Committee

ACSM Guidelines for Exercise Testing & Prescription, 8th edition 2010 (www.acsm.org)



Fitness for Heart Health

- ♥ A guide to exercising safely for a healthy heart.

Why Exercise?

- ♥ It is important to remember the latest technologies and treatments like angioplasty & open heart surgery open up blocked coronary arteries but are not a cure for coronary artery disease. They effectively relieve symptoms (angina) and may preserve heart muscle function but future blockages can continue to develop especially if your risk remains high.
- ♥ Prevention is very important when it comes to treating heart disease. Positive health behaviours like exercising regularly can significantly lower the risk of future plaque growth in the coronary arteries.
- ♥ Being active helps reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke by helping you maintain a healthy weight, and manage stress. It also lowers blood pressure, improves blood cholesterol levels, and improves sugar control for diabetics.
- ♥ Regular **aerobic** exercise improves your exercise capacity. Over time less effort is required to do physical work and you will feel better when active.

What is Aerobic Exercise?

- ♥ **Aerobic** exercise is any activity that uses large muscles (arms/legs) rhythmically and repetitively. It raises your breathing & heart rate above a resting state for longer than 10 minutes. Moderate, steady and **continuous** effort is all that is required to provide benefit. Examples include: walking outside or on a treadmill, biking, hiking, swimming, cross country skiing, rowing, jogging, circuit training.

- ♥ Leisure activities such as golf, house cleaning, & gardening help to maintain strength & flexibility but usually do not provide enough **continuous** effort to keep the heart rate raised to a moderate steady state for heart healthy benefits. Incorporating **aerobic** exercise along with these other activities is most beneficial.



Getting Started

- ♥ Start slowly and gradually. Build physical activity into your daily routine. Find activities you enjoy and build on these. Minutes count, even 10 minutes is beneficial.
- ♥ Example of a walking program
 - Weeks 1–2: Stay on level ground and walk at a slow/moderate pace for 10 min 1–3 x daily.
 - Weeks 3–4: Continue on level ground walking at a moderate pace for 15–25 min once daily.
 - Weeks 5–6: Progress to walking 30 min daily & consider adding a small incline/hill.
- ♥ Remember, an exercise program should improve your overall energy. If you find you are overly tired and require more rest in the day you may be overdoing it. Cut back a little and progress more slowly.

F.I.T.T. Principle

- ♥ **Frequency–How often should I exercise?**
 - Current Canadian guidelines suggest exercising at a moderate pace 5–7 days per week. Aim for a total of 3 hours of activity per week.
 - Blood sugar control for Diabetics can be greatly enhanced by daily exercise (7 days).
 - Rest days are important if you are feeling flu-like symptoms or are unusually fatigued.
- ♥ **Intensity–How hard should I exercise?**
 - The intensity of any activity should gradually increase to a peak of moderate effort which you can sustain comfortably.
 - Heart rate, breathing rate and body temperature should increase with exercise. You should be able to carry on a conversation without having to gasp for air. (**Talk Test**).
 - Certain medications can have a heart rate lowering effect at rest and during exercise. It is best to gauge how hard you are working by using the **talk test**.
- ♥ **Time–How long should I exercise?**
 - Work towards 30–45 min per day.
 - If you are not used to physical activity, begin by exercising 5–10 minutes at a time, several times during the day. This will still be beneficial.
- ♥ **Type–What kind of exercise is best?**
 - Any aerobic exercise that you enjoy.
 - Consider some strength and stretching exercises to enhance your overall fitness.