

Medical Cardiac Exercise Therapy

Warning Signs & Discharge Program (4 Week)

Warning Signs to Remember

If any of these symptoms occur, notify your physician.

1. Chest pain
2. Excessive weakness
3. Severe shortness of breath.
4. Irregular pulse ("skipped beats" or "palpitations")
5. Nausea or vomiting
6. Dizziness or fainting
7. Increased swelling of legs and ankles
8. Sudden weight gain: 2-3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week

General Guidelines

These guidelines apply to the next four weeks after discharge. Beyond this four week restriction, please consult your doctor regarding the guidelines below.

1. Avoid extremes of temperature:
 - a. No hot showers or hot baths. Check with your physician about saunas and/or whirlpools.
 - b. Avoid prolonged out-of-doors exposure if temperature falls below 45 °F or rises above 85 °F. (Allow for wind chill and/or high humidity).
2. No lifting, straining or pushing anything over ten pounds. This includes pets, small children, stuck jars or windows.
3. You should check your pulse daily, before taking scheduled medications. If your heart rate is ever less than 50 beats per minute, contact your doctor before taking any medications.
4. Check pulse before and after exercise and walking. If your exercise pulse rate is greater than 20 beats per minute above the resting rate, slow down, rest and adjust exercise accordingly.

5. Exercise before meals or at least one to two hours after meals.
6. Avoid becoming overtired while performing any activity.
7. Do not walk up hills, ride an exercise cycle, use a treadmill or jog. You should exercise 5-6 days per week. You may take two days off a week, but not two days in a row.

Specific Guidelines

Week 1 begins the day of discharge, not from the date of cardiac event.

Week 1

Activities generally limited to the house.

1. Shower or bathe, avoiding very cold or very hot water.
2. Rest periods twice a day - approximately one hour each.
3. Walk up the stairs slowly, if applicable.
4. May ride in a car for short distances, for 30-60 minutes. Necessary trips only.
5. No household hobbies.
6. Enjoy simple hobbies.
7. Brief visits with friends or relatives in your home, but avoid becoming overtired. (Suggested time limit initially is 15-30 minutes at a time.)
8. Warm-up exercises twice daily, as outlined on diagram.
9. One fifteen minute continuous walk a day; plus two shorter walks less than 3 minutes in duration.

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Week 2

Gradually increase activities.

1. Accompanied outdoor walking allowed, weather permitting. Increase distance walked each day by an additional minute. Total time walked by the end of the second week should be approximately 20 minutes. As your walking time increased, you may decrease your number of shorter walks.
2. Paperwork allowed at home, but set reasonable limits. (Remember: This is a recuperation period!)
3. Perform light housework, such as dusting, preparing simple meals, washing dishes, doing light repairs. Avoid sweeping, mopping, heavy cleaning or gardening.

Week 3

Continue to steadily increase daily activities and walking.

1. Continue daily walks, increasing each day by an additional minute. By the end of this week, you should be walking about 25-30 minutes continuously.
2. Shopping allowed for short periods (one hour per day), but do not carry heavy bags.
3. May visit briefly at friend or relatives home.
4. Sexual activities may be resumed with modifications as advised by your physician. (Do not be reluctant to discuss this with him or her.)
5. Consult your physician regarding starting to drive again. If allowed, avoid heavy traffic and rush hour initially.
6. May climb stairs as desired.

Week 4

Continue on your course to resuming "normal" activities again.

1. During the 4th week, daily walks should be increased to 35-40 minutes. Try to achieve an increase in heart rate of 20 beats above your resting rate. (This is your "target heart rate". DO NOT EXCEED this rate. You may need to walk a little faster and use your arms. This is not the time to begin jogging.)
2. After four weeks, you may progress daily walks to 45 minutes or approximately 2 miles.
3. Consult your physician regarding returning to work and entry into Cardiac Rehab.

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