



## CARDIAC REHAB INFORMATION

### INTRODUCTION

Cardiac rehabilitation is a program designed to aid patients in their recovery following an event such as a heart attack, angioplasty, stent placement, valve repair or replacement and heart and lung transplant. Cardiac rehabilitation is also beneficial for patients with angina.

**Most insurances** will cover monitored cardiac rehab encompassing 18 - 36 sessions. Ideally these sessions occur three times a week to be most beneficial.

Cardiac rehabilitation programs may include the following staff involved with your care:

- ♥ Registered Nurses
- ♥ Exercise Physiologists
- ♥ Registered Dieticians
- ♥ Physical therapists
- ♥ Pharmacists

Many programs including UVa's program are certified by the **American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation**.

We incorporate the mission statement into our program: to reduce morbidity, mortality, and disability from cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases through education, prevention, rehabilitation, research, and aggressive disease management.

Location: Northridge Building (1/8th mile past the Boar's Head on 250 West)  
2955 Ivy Road  
Charlottesville, Va 22908

To obtain more information, you may contact us at 434-243-4600.

## YOUR HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM . . . WALKING

Exercise is important to your health and one of the best things you can do for yourself during the rehabilitation phase following a cardiac event. The following guidelines will help you establish a safe exercise routine. The chart below is a suggested way to progress your exercise for the first few weeks after you leave the hospital. Everyone will progress at their own rate, so "listen to your body" and don't overdo it.

### HOW TO WALK FOR HEART HEALTH.

**Moderate intensity** walking is good for your heart. A heart rate no higher than 20 beats above your resting heart rate or 120 beats per minute is "fairly light" to "somewhat hard" or moderate intensity.

**Walk** every day if you can, but at least three times per week.

**Warm up** with 5-10 minutes of low intensity walking. This will gradually raise your heart rate and increase the blood flow to your muscles. A gradual warm up will decrease your risk for muscle injury.

**Walk** at a moderate intensity (fairly light to somewhat hard) for 10-15 minutes. Then, increase your time by 1-2 minutes each time you walk (increase your time by about 5 minutes per week) with a goal of 30-45 minutes per session.

**Cool down** with 5-10 minutes of low intensity walking or stretching. The cool down will help prevent low blood pressure and dizziness. The stretching will help to improve your flexibility.

### WHEN MAY I START MY EXERCISE PROGRAM?

**You may begin** your program the day after you come home from the hospital. For the first few weeks, you should preferably walk on a level surface. A track or mall is ideal. If you do not have a level area near your home, walk more slowly as you go up hill.

### WALKING BASICS

**Take your pulse** before, during, and immediately after your walking session. Stop and rest if your heart rate is higher than 20 beats over your resting heart rate or is higher than 120 beats per minute, then continue at a slower pace. **Walk / Sing test** - If you are walking at a pace that allows you to fluidly carry on a conversation, or sing without "gasping" for air, you are working at the appropriate level. Gasping for air signals that you are working too hard. If your program feels "hard" or "difficult" at any time, you are overdoing it and you should decrease your pace or exercise time. This is not beneficial for you heart.

**Stop and rest** if you experience chest pain or pressure, any discomfort similar to what you experienced when you had your heart problem, shortness of breath, dizziness, or palpitations. If needed, take your nitroglycerin as prescribed. It is important to notify your doctor if any of these symptoms occur. Call 911 if your discomfort is not relieved by 3 nitroglycerin.

**Avoid temperature extremes** when you exercise. In the summer, walk early in the morning or later in the evening. Do not walk outdoors if the temperature is higher than 90 F or if it is humid (greater than 70% humidity). Wear loose, light-colored clothes. In the winter, walk in the early to mid afternoon when it is warmest. Do not walk outdoors if the temperature is lower than 40 F. You can wear a hat to retain heat and a face mask/scarf to warm the air some before it enters your lungs. Always wear sturdy, comfortable shoes.

**Avoid exercise** for 1-2 hours after eating except for those with diabetes who should have a light snack prior to walking.

**If you have a cold/virus** or are extremely tired, **don't exercise**.

*Good Luck and Good Fitness!*

## EXERCISE SAFETY TIPS

**Avoid** exercising in extreme temperature (below 40 degrees, above 85 degrees and/or humidity above 75%).

**Wear** light, comfortable clothing and sturdy, comfortable , rubber soled shoes.

**Wait** at least an hour following meals to begin exercise.

**Drink** plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

**Don't** smoke or use tobacco products for at least 3 hours before exercising.

**Avoid** exercise if you have a cold, virus, muscle aches, or if you are more tired than usual.

**Always** exercise in an area where you can get help quickly.

**Quit** exercising if you have angina, chest pain or pressure shortness of breath, dizziness , palpitations, of if you feel ill in any way.

## HEART RATE:

Locate your pulse on the thumb side of your wrist. Do this with your index and middle fingers. Count the number of beats within a 10 second period. Apply to the scale below.

Heart Rate 10 seconds	Heart Rate one minute
8	48
9	54
10	60
11	66
12	72
13	78
14	84

Heart Rate 10 seconds	Heart Rate one minute
15	90
16	96
17	102
18	108
19	114
20	120

**If you experience any of the following symptoms, stop exercising and inform your doctor immediately:**

Chest pain/pressure

Excessive shortness of breath

Nausea or vomiting

Dizziness or lightheadedness

Excessive fatigue

## **BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE**

### **MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM**

- ♥ Increases muscle strength
- ♥ Increases flexibility of muscles and improves range of motion in joints
- ♥ Produces stronger bones, tendons and ligaments
- ♥ Lessens chance of muscle or joint injury
- ♥ Enhances posture, poise and figure or physique
- ♥ Lessens chance of “dependency” in old age

### **HEART AND BLOOD VESSELS**

- ♥ Lowers resting heart rate
- ♥ Lowers blood pressure at rest and after exercise
- ♥ Strengthens heart function
- ♥ Improves oxygen delivery to the body
- ♥ Increases blood supply to the muscles
- ♥ Enlarges the arteries to the heart
- ♥ Improves endurance and energy levels

### **METABOLISM AND BODY FUNCTION**

- ♥ Improves the way the body handles fat
- ♥ Helps lower blood fats (triglycerides, cholesterol)
- ♥ Increases HDL, the “good” cholesterol carrier
- ♥ Helps regulate blood sugar levels
- ♥ Helps prevent osteoporosis
- ♥ Improves general resistance to disease
- ♥ Aids digestion and elimination
- ♥ Increases muscle energy and decreases fatigue

### **MENTAL PROCESSES**

- ♥ Provides natural release from stress
- ♥ Helps reduce tension and anxiety
- ♥ Improves mental outlook and self-esteem
- ♥ Helps relieve mild depression
- ♥ Builds resistance to stress, better able to cope
- ♥ Stimulates mental function
- ♥ Helps relax and improve sleep

### **WEIGHT CONTROL**

- ♥ Speeds up bodily processes, burning more calories
- ♥ Helps maintain lean body mass, important in weight loss
- ♥ Helps control appetite