

# Cardiac Rehab at Home: Guidelines to Improve your Heart Health

If you're recovering from cardiac surgery or treatment for a heart issue, such as a heart attack, physiotherapy is an important part of rehabilitation.

Typically deep breathing, a graduated walking or cycling program, diet changes and lifestyle modifications that include reducing stress are essential components of a cardiac rehabilitation program. When exercising, there are important symptoms to pay attention to.



## Stop and rest right away if you feel

- ✓ Chest pain, pressure, or tightness
- ✓ Unusual or worsening shortness of breath
- ✓ Dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting
- ✓ Heart racing or irregular beats that feel new or scary
- ✓ Nausea, cold sweats, or anything that doesn't feel "right"

If any of these don't settle quickly, seek medical help.

## Need more support with cardiac rehab or want a personalized plan?

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## 3 Rules for Exercising

- 1 **Always warm up and cool down.** Take 3 to 5 minutes before and after exercising to gradually increase and decrease your heart rate.
- 2 **Use the “Talk Test” to gauge exercise intensity:** You should be able to speak in short sentences while moving.
- 3 **Progress slowly.** Increase the length of time that you’re exercising by a few minutes each day before you increase the speed or intensity of the exercises.

## Types of Exercises



**Aerobic:** Walk, ride a stationary bike, or use an elliptical or step trainer. Start with 5 to 10 minutes per day at an easy pace, and gradually increase by 1 to 2 minutes every few days.



**Strength:** Do squats, lift weights or use resistance bands.



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