



TIPS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN HEART FAILURE

WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT?

Heart Failure can limit the supply of blood and oxygen to working muscles, leading to fatigue and muscle wasting. Exercise prescribed by a health professional is safe, beneficial and may help to improve some of the physical symptoms of Heart Failure.

Benefits of regular physical activity:

- Improved quality of life and wellbeing
- Improved exercise tolerance and endurance
- Reduced symptoms such as fatigue
- Reduced hospital admissions
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Improved muscle strength and efficiency
- Improved sleep quality

All these benefits can help you to manage tasks with greater ease and make you feel better.

How to exercise:

- Warm up 5 - 10 minutes before each session.
This prepares your heart to meet the demands of exercise.
- Progress your exercise program when you can comfortably achieve your prescribed amount of exercise on 3 consecutive sessions.
- Cool down 5 - 10 minutes after each session.
This returns your heart to resting level and helps your recovery.
- Stretch your major muscle groups to reduce muscle tightness.
- Where able, follow your exercise program as prescribed, but we suggest you do not exercise on days that you are unwell.

STOP and REST immediately if you have any of these symptoms during exercise:

- Severe shortness of breath
- Chest / neck / jaw / back / shoulder pain or discomfort
- Palpitations / racing heart beat
- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Excessive sweating / clamminess
- Nausea and vomiting

Contact the Heart of Melbourne Specialist Heart Failure Clinic or dial 000 if these symptoms persist.

How often should I exercise?

- Start slowly and build up gradually
- Aim for most days of the week
- A little activity more often is better than a lot now and then

How hard should I exercise?

- Light to moderate exercise
- A good guide is the Talk Test - you should be able to speak in sentences while performing the activity
- Add gentle slopes / stairs with caution

What sort of activity?

- Aerobic activities e.g. walking, cycling and dancing
- Strengthening exercises to target specific muscle groups
- Strength training is performed with lighter weight and more increased repetitions to reduce straining on the heart

For how long or how far?

- Everyone is different so this will vary for each individual
- You should aim for 30 minutes of light to moderate activity
- Your 30 minute session can be broken up into shorter sessions



THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF EXERCISE

DO:

- **LISTEN TO YOUR BODY**

- Tell someone if you are in pain or experiencing symptoms
- Set specific, achievable goals
- Take all medications as prescribed
- Make physical activity fun e.g. walk with family / friends / pet
- Monitor your weight
- Drink water before, during and after (remember fluid restrictions). You can drink one extra glass of water if exercising on a warm day.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing and supportive shoes

DON'Ts:

- Do not hold your breath during any form of physical activity
- Do not perform physical activity during the hottest part of the day
- Do not exercise after a heavy meal
- Do not perform any activity that causes you pain
- Do not exercise if you are more tired than normal or if you are unwell

If you have any queries regarding any of this information or your exercise program, please contact the Heart of Melbourne Specialist Heart Failure Clinic on:

Phone: 1300 122 888

Email: contact@hom.com.au

Website: www.hom.com.au



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SPECIALIST HEART FAILURE CLINIC