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## HOW TO SAFELY EXERCISE AFTER HEART ATTACK



HEART ATTACK CENTER

It is a well-known fact that physical activity helps to keep your heart strong, and this is especially true in people who exercise after having a heart attack. Regular exercise after a heart attack, along with smoking cessation and healthy diet, have been shown to reduce the likelihood of further heart related issues and increase life expectancy, according to the American Heart Association.

Being active every day is key to a healthy heart. Aerobic exercise, walking, jogging, swimming or biking helps keep your heart strong. Strength exercises builds your stamina while stretching increases your flexibility.



## EXERCISE SAFETY TIPS FOR AFTER A HEART ATTACK

Once you have been cleared by your doctor, you'll likely be able to begin gentle exercise after a heart attack. How much exercise and its intensity will depend on how active you were before your cardiac event and how severe the event was. Be sure to follow your doctor's advice.

In general, it's important to start exercising as soon as you can after a heart attack to get your energy and strength back, according to the American Heart Association. Both aerobic and strength exercises are great for your heart, but it is important to take it slowly at the beginning.

- 1- Start with walking. It's the perfect activity during your recovery; it's aerobic, which is great for your heart, but low impact. Aim for a moderate walking pace i.e. Slightly increased breathing but you should be able to comfortably have a conversation with someone. If you feel too short of breath, slow the pace down.
- 2- Start with a flat route, i.e. a level road, indoor walking track or at the mall before moving on to inclines and hills.
- 3- Start slowly and build up gradually. Start by walking for 3-5 minutes at a time for the first week before increasing to 8-10 minutes during the second week until you have built up to 30 minutes after 4-6 weeks.
- 4- Warm up, cool down and stretch. Your walk should be slower at the start and at the end. Once you've completed the workout, be sure to stretch to avoid injuries.

5- Aim to exercise for at least 30 minutes on at least 5 days of the week for maximum benefits. Focus on being physically active every day to have a healthy, happy heart!

6- Avoid high-intensity cardio or heavy lifting initially after a heart attack. Ask your doctor before lifting weights.

7- After 6-8 weeks, you can try to do a little more. With your doctor's permission, you can start adding in new exercise after six weeks, such as swimming or playing golf.



## WATCH FOR CARDIAC WARNING SIGNS

To be safe with exercise after a heart attack, stop physical activity and inform your doctor if you experience any of the symptoms that came on during your heart attack, or if you feel:

- Chest pain, pressure, tightness or heaviness
- Pain or pressure in your arm, neck or jaw
- Extreme shortness of breath
- Uneven or very fast heartbeat
- Lightheaded or near fainting
- Indigestion or gas
- Perspiration and a loss of color
- Numbness in your arms
- Extreme fatigue after exercise

It is important to keep track of your body while implementing the best exercise for heart health into your daily routine. If you have chest discomfort (angina), stop exercising and inform your doctor if your symptoms become worse, occur more often, last longer than usual, begin happening when you're not exercising or don't go away after taking your medication. It may mean your heart disease requires further investigation.