

Healthier Communities,  
Outstanding Care



Sherwood Forest Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise booklet

Information for patients



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# What type of exercise is safe to do at home?

The key to continuing your exercise is to find an activity which you enjoy and can fit easily into your lifestyle. The type of exercise needs to be right for you. Aerobic exercise is recommended for people who have had a heart attack/heart surgery or a cardiac procedure. Aerobic exercise works your whole body, makes you feel warm, breathe slightly faster and you should finish feeling as though you could have continued.

Examples of aerobic exercise are walking, cycling, swimming, gentle jogging, golf and dancing, to name a few. Hopefully you are already following a walking programme and for most of you this will be the most convenient type of exercise to take. At this stage you may now try some of the exercises previously mentioned or the home exercise programme in this booklet.

Whatever type of exercise you choose, you must always build up gradually and exercise sensibly.

## **Consideration for sensible exercise:**

- Do not exercise if you are unwell or have an infection. It is wise to rest when you feel unwell and gradually build back up to your previous level of activity when you are recovered.
- Stop exercising if you experience severe shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, nausea, faintness or dizziness. Use your GTN spray as you have been taught if you are having chest pain or tightness. Consult a doctor if you are experiencing problems.
- Do wear flat shoes such as trainers and loose breathable clothing.
- Do carry your GTN medication with you.
- Do not exercise immediately after a meal. Wait for 1-2 hours after eating to allow time for digestion.
- Remember that on a cold and windy day, taking exercise outside may prove more tiring. On such days either reduce your pace and distance or perform the indoor exercise programme in this booklet.
- Do warm up and cool down.

# How much should I do?

Ideally, you should exercise for a total of at least 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate intensity activity. You can do 150 minutes in bouts of 10 minutes or more. One way to achieve the 150 minutes is to do 30 minutes activity/exercise five days a week. If you have mobility problems or difficulty exercising for 150 minutes, try to be as active as possible.

# How hard should I work?

The activity/exercise should make you feel warmer, breathe harder and make your heart beat faster. It is important for you to monitor the intensity of your exercise (how hard you feel you are working), so that you exercise at the right level in order to increase your fitness. One way to monitor your intensity levels is to use the BORG scale, rate of perceived exertion (RPE). There is a rate of perceived exertion scale included in this booklet for easy reference, for while you are exercising.

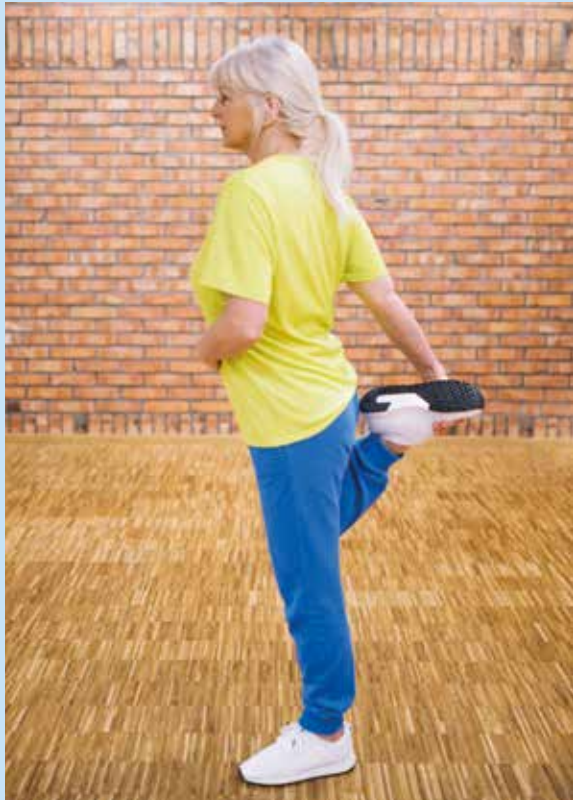
## Two important points to remember about the scale:

- 6 equals no effort or exertion, i.e. sitting in a chair.
- 19 equals an extremely strong effort, the maximum you have ever done, where you feel you could do no more.

To score your effort, listen to your whole body, your muscles, how warm you are and how hard you are breathing.

**You should aim to work at about level 12/13 on the scale.**

While exercising you should be breathing more quickly, but you should always feel comfortable and be able to talk in a sentence.



# Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

## The BORG'S RPE 6 – 20 scale

<b>6</b>	No exertion at all
<b>7</b>	Extremely light Whistle
<b>8</b>	Sing
<b>9</b>	Very light
<b>10</b>	
<b>11</b>	Light Talk
<b>12</b>	
<b>13</b>	Somewhat hard
<b>14</b>	
<b>15</b>	Hard (heavy)
<b>16</b>	
<b>17</b>	Very hard
<b>18</b>	
<b>19</b>	Extremely hard
<b>20</b>	Maximal exertion

## The home exercise programme

The home circuit is very similar to the one you do at the hospital exercise programme. The only differences are that where equipment, such as the trampete or exercise bike would be used, an alternative exercise has been given.

## Warm up and cool down

It is essential that you warm up before you begin to exercise and cool down immediately after you have finished. This allows your heart and body to gradually adjust to the change in activity. When walking or cycling, warming up may be as simple as starting off slowly and gradually building up. Cooling down would be slowing down gradually before you stop. The home exercise programme uses many different muscles, so the warm up and cooling down needs to move and stretch the areas of your body which will be exercised.

**It is very important that you follow the warm up and cool down given in this booklet and never start or finish abruptly.**

**When warming up** gradually increase the height and speed of movements as you do at the hospital programme.

**When cooling down** gradually reduce the height and speed of movements to finish at a slow walking pace.

**When doing the stretches** for your arms, keep your feet moving.

**Warm ups and cool downs should take 15 minutes.**

## Warm up

Exercise	Time	Description of stretches
March on the spot	2 minutes	
Side step / side arm raise	1 minute	
Walk forward for 4 steps and then back 4	1 minute	
Heel digs / bicep (arm) curl	1 minute	
Toe taps forward and back on left and right leg	1 minute on each leg = 2 minutes.	
Side tap left and right / raise arms in front	1 minute	
Touch each door knob down stairs	1 minute, repeat twice in the other direction = 2 minutes	
March with shoulder shrugs up and down	March for 1 minute, shoulder shrugs 10 repetitions – repeat twice	
Heel digs into hamstring stretch	Heel digs for 1 minute, taking into a stretch – holding for 15 seconds	Place your leg out in front of you, toe up and keep the standing leg soft
March on the spot with shoulder stretch	March 30 seconds, hold stretch for 15 seconds – repeat on both arms	Take your right arm across the body, pull the arm into the chest with other hand – repeat on both arms

## Warm up (continued)

Exercise	Time	Description of stretches
March on the spot with triceps stretch	March for 30 seconds, hold stretch for 15 seconds – repeat on both arms.	Take your arm above your head, bend through the elbow to place your hand behind your neck – support you're your opposite arm and keep your arm close to your head.
Push backs into calf stretch	Push back for 30 seconds taking it into a calf stretch for 15 seconds – repeat on both legs.	Step your right leg out, keep your feet facing forward, heels down and lean into your bent leg.
Quadriceps stretch	Hold for 15 seconds.	Hold on to a support, take hold of your foot or trouser leg with your hand and pull the heel towards your bottom. Keep standing with your leg soft and body upright.

## Exercises

Exercise	Time	Description of stretches
March on the spot	2 minutes	
Push up against the wall	1 minute	Arms shoulder width apart, bend through your elbows taking the body forwards then back. Ensure you wiggle your toes.
Knee lifts	2 minutes	Lift your knees waist height, touching the knees with your hand, opposite arm to leg.
Arm raise with baked bean tins	1 minute	Keep feet moving, lift your arm shoulder height, keep your elbow soft, repeat on other arm.
Sit to stand from chair (height approximately 18")	2 minutes	Sitting down into the chair then pushing back up off your feet into a standing position without locking the knees out.

## Exercises (continued)

Exercise	Time	Description of stretches
Bicep curl holding a tin of beans in each hand	1 minute	March on the spot, elbows into the side, bend through the elbow lifting the can up into a full curl.
Stair steps	2 minutes	Keeping your knees soft, step your whole foot on to the step and back again. Alternate which leg you lift with.
Hip extension holding on to the chair	1 minute	Both knees soft to start with, then lift one leg backwards while keeping your back straight. Repeat on both legs.
Gentle jog on spot for 10 counts then march for 10 counts	2 minutes	Upright posture and knees soft.
Upright row with a horizontal broom handle	1 minute	Keep your feet moving, lift the handle with both hands up to the chin, elbows leading, and then lower.
Side stair step	2 minutes – 1 minute left side, then 1 minute right side.	Holding onto the banister, step up the step sideways, one foot then the other, then step back down.



**To cool down, repeat the warm up but at a slower pace**

# A guide to relaxation

## Learn to relax

There are many approaches to learning to relax. Not all of them suit everyone and so it's a matter of finding an approach that makes sense and works for you. Learning to relax takes time and practice in order for you to get the best results.

## Why relaxation is so important

Modern day lives are busy and full of undone jobs, decisions and things that need to be organised. However, research has shown that stress can be as harmful to your health as not exercising or smoking. By learning a few simple techniques and using them in everyday life, you could drastically reduce the possibility of any future health problems.

## How do I relax?

### Start with simple relaxing techniques:

- **Deep breathing**

This means taking a long slow breath in, and very slowly breathe out. If you do this a few times and concentrate fully on breathing, you may find it quite relaxing.

- **Muscular tensing and stretching**

Try twisting your neck around each way as far as it is comfortable, and then relax. Try fully tensing your shoulders and back muscles for several seconds and then relax completely.

- **Imagination**

Turn your mind away from stressful thoughts and situations, and instead think about something pleasant. This is a form of day-dreaming, which can turn to your advantage.

## Take time to stop:

- Try to allow several times a day to stop. For example, getting up 15-20 minutes earlier than you need to be is a good start. You can use this time to think about the coming day, and to prepare for the day's events. This will prevent you from becoming rushed and constantly having to catch-up all day.
- Take a regular and proper lunch break, preferably away from work. Don't work over lunch. If work is busy, instead try to take 5 or 10 minutes away every few hours to relax.
- Once or twice a week, try to plan some time to be alone and unobtainable. For example, a gentle stroll or a sit in the park often helps to break out of life's hustle and bustle.



There are many approaches to learning to relax. Not all of them suit everyone and so it is a matter of finding an approach that makes sense and works for you. Learning to relax takes time and practice in order for you to get the best results.

**Remember – relaxation is something you do, not something you get.**

## Where should I relax?

When a desert island or an idyllic lake isn't available, this doesn't mean you can't relax. Go to wherever you will be undisturbed and can concentrate on becoming completely oblivious to the sounds and objects around you. However, this does not include the muscular tensing exercises as these can be performed at our desk or in the car. As long as you are at ease, comfortable and able to focus on the relaxation process, the techniques can be performed almost anywhere.

**Always remember that relaxing is not the same as sleeping. Many people sleep without being very relaxed, and although relaxing can lead you to yawn or feel sleepy, it need not to lead to sleep.**

## Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

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