



A Guide to Exercise

 Total Cardiology® | Rehabilitation

This guide will help you safely start exercising at home in three simple steps:

STEP 1:
MOVE MORE +
SIT LESS

This section will teach you ways to add in light activity throughout the day

STEP 2:
ADD IN STRUCTURED
EXERCISE

This section will help you add in structured exercise and teach you how to monitor your intensity.

STEP 3:
MAKE EXERCISE SAFE
FOR YOU

This section outlines important safety information.

Always speak with your clinical exercise physiologist if to have any questions or concerns.

A Guide To Exercise – Step 1

Move More, Sit Less

1 REPLACE SITTING TIME WITH LIGHT LEVEL ACTIVITY

Decrease the amount of time you spend sitting and replace this time with light-level activities. Some examples of such activities are listed in the tables below.

Physical activity is different from structured exercise in that it does not have to be a long, continuous session at a moderate/somewhat hard intensity. Physical activity can be any bodily movement throughout the day.

AT HOME / WHILE SHOPPING

- Stand up and walk around the house during commercials.
- Do light household chores such as folding clothes or ironing, washing dishes while watching television.
- Stand to read the morning newspaper.
- Practice your balance before breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Pick up some resistance tubing and do strength training during commercials.

AT WORK

- Stand and take a break from the computer every 20 minutes.
- Stand at the back of the room during presentations.
- Use the stairs.
- Drink more water – going to water cooler and washroom will break up sit time.
- Walk or stand while on the phone.
- Have standing or walking meetings.
- Use headsets or speakerphone during teleconference calls so you can stand.

2 START WALKING

When you are feeling comfortable with the additional activity you have built into your daily routine, the next step is to include more structured and continuous activity.

Walking is a great place to start!

- Start by keeping track of all the walking you currently do throughout a normal day.
- Try to make your goal to accumulate at least 30 minutes of walking throughout the day for most, if not all, days.

This could look like:

- One 30-minute walk = 30 minutes total
- *Or* Two 15-minute walks = 30 minutes total
- *Or* Three 10-minute walks = 30 minutes total

A Guide To Exercise – Step 2

Add In Structured Exercise

ADD IN STRUCTURED EXERCISE

How often should you exercise?

- Your goal is to eventually accumulate **150 minutes or more each week at a moderate/somewhat hard intensity**, in addition to the activity you do at lower intensities.
- Aerobic exercise will provide the most benefit if you do it 3-5 days a week.

If aerobic exercise is new to your routine, follow these guidelines

- Start with a goal of spending 20 minutes at a moderate/somewhat hard intensity on 3 days each week. The next pages provide more information on how to monitor your intensity.
- Include a 5-minute warm-up and 5-minute cool-down.
- If you find 20 minutes to be too challenging, you can break this up into two 10-minute sessions, just make sure to warm-up and cool-down each time.



IMPORTANT TRAINING TIP

- The key is to start at a level that is comfortable for you.
- Starting too high – either training beyond the recommended amount of time or too many days a week – can leave you feeling overly fatigued after exercise, unable to recover and gain the benefits from exercise, and can decrease your motivation.

MONITORING INTENSITY

- It is important to monitor how hard you are working during a structured exercise session.
- For some people that might mean working at a moderate/somewhat hard intensity while others might be asked to work at a light intensity. Your intensity depends on your medical history, medications, exercise experience, and symptoms.
- Training above a moderate/somewhat hard intensity may not be safe and does not add to the benefit of exercise for heart health.

There are three different ways to monitor your intensity with exercise:

- 1 Talk Test
- 2 Rating of Perceived Exertion
- 3 Heart Rate monitor

1 THE TALK TEST

- The easiest way to monitor your exercise intensity and is based on your body's physiology!
- Your ability to talk comfortably during exercise can help you gauge if you are working too hard or too light → the harder we exercise the more difficult it is to speak comfortably due to increased breathing rate.
- It works well for patients with heart disease.

How it works:

| INTENSITY LEVEL | TALK TEST | WHAT IT MEANS |
|--|---|---|
| Light | You can sing a song, such as our national anthem, 'Oh Canada'. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great for warm-up intensity• Can be an exercise training phase for beginners |
| Moderate/ somewhat hard | You can speak four or five words at a time without gasping for air. You should be able to say the words from a line of 'Oh Canada'. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the exercise training target for most individuals who do not have symptoms or limitations |
| High | You are gasping for air, unable to speak more than one or two words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is too intense training and you need to slow down! |

2 RATINGS OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE)

RPE is a chart that ranges from 6-20 that reflects how hard **you** feel like you're working. For example, a **6** = sitting on the couch (too easy) and **20** = being chased by a grizzly bear (too hard).

| RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE) + TALK TEST GUIDE FOR MONITORING EXERCISE INTENSITY | |
|--|--|
| 20 | Maximal exertion |
| 19 | Extremely hard |
| 18 | Unable to speak; gasping for air |
| 17 | Very hard |
| 16 | |
| 15 | Hard (heavy) |
| 14 | |
| 13 | Somewhat hard |
| 12 | Able to speak short sentences, approximately 4-5 words |
| 11 | Fairly light |
| 10 | |
| 9 | Very light |
| 8 | Extremely light |
| 7 | |
| 6 | No exertion at all |

How it works:

High intensity:
17 (very hard) to 20 (maximum)

- This is too intense → you need to **slow down!**

Moderate intensity:
11 (fairly light) to 16 (hard)

- Level of target for most individuals who do not have symptoms or limitations

Light intensity:
6 (no activity) to 10 (very light)

- Great for warm-up intensity
- Can be used as an exercise training phase for beginners

3 HEART RATE MONITOR

- For individuals who are prescribed a target heart rate range from a clinical exercise physiologist as part of your exercise prescription
- This monitor tells you how fast your heart is beating. Must be able to accurately monitor heart rate (e.g. using chest strap and/or watch; exercise equipment).

How it works:

The target heart rate* prescribed to you is your ideal training zone based on your:

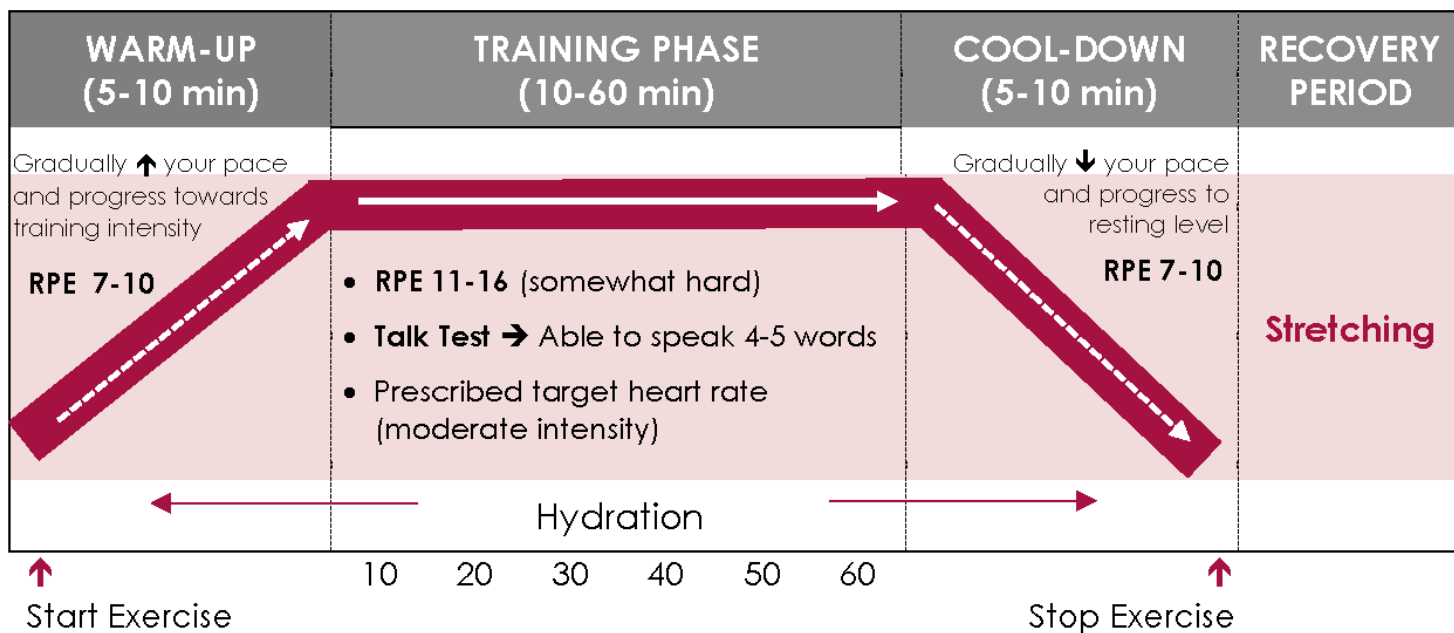
- Exercise stress test
- Medical history
- Medications
- Previous exercise history and goals

***A target heart rate zone is not ideal for everyone.
The talk test and RPE chart are great ways to monitor intensity.**

WHAT YOUR TRAINING SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Your exercise training should follow the diagram below.

Remember to use the talk test or RPE scale (or target heart rate if one was prescribed) to monitor your intensity.



A Guide To Exercise – Step 3

Make Exercise Safe for You

IMPORTANT:

Below are some general safety guidelines to keep in mind to ensure you are exercising safely:

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine (patch, inhaler or cigarettes) and cannabis products 3 hours before and 1 hour after activity or exercise.
- Medications should be taken at least 1.5 to 2 hours **before** exercise. If you have questions about the timing of your medications, please speak to a member of the health coaching team.
- Avoid saunas, hot tubs, or hot showers after activity or exercise.
- Avoid activity/exercise during illness or infection.
- Try to eat a well-balanced meal at least 2 hours before activity. If this is not possible, eat a small snack or avoid activity or exercise when you have not eaten (or not eaten enough).
- Avoid exercising in temperature extremes (cold or hot). Extreme weather makes your heart work harder.



If you are taking **nitroglycerin** to manage angina and experience chest pain during exercise, follow the steps outlined on the next page.

If you have been told to take your nitroglycerin **BEFORE** exercise, please discuss with your clinical exercise physiologist or nurse.

STEPS FOR TAKING NITROGLYCERIN:

Stop what you are doing. Sit or lie down and rest for 5 minutes.



If chest pain remains, take 1 nitroglycerin tablet or spray under your tongue.



Wait 5 minutes. If any chest pain or discomfort remains, take a second nitroglycerin table or spray under your tongue.



Wait 5 minutes. If chest pain/discomfort remains, call 911 and take a third nitroglycerin tablet or spray under your tongue.



If chest pain/discomfort remains after 911 has been called, continue taking 1 nitroglycerin table/spray every 5 minutes.

Discontinue taking the nitroglycerin if your chest pain goes away or you are feeling unwell from it (e.g., severe dizziness)

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR THOSE TAKNG ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION MEDICATIONS

Nitroglycerin needs to be used with extreme caution when taking medications such as Viagra, Levitra and Cialis as it may cause a large drop in blood pressure.

- Do not take nitroglycerin within 24 hours of taking Viagra or Levitra
- Do not take nitroglycerin within 48 hours of taking Cialis
- If you have chest pain or angina and it is not safe to take nitroglycerin based on the above guidelines, call 911.

➔ **Tip:** Print off this sheet for quick reference.