

# A Guide to Exercise

 Total Cardiology® | Rehabilitation



This guide will help you safely start exercising at home. The guide is divided into three sections – move more and sit less; add in structured exercise, anxiety and anger; and making exercise safe for you.

**SECTION 1:  
MOVE MORE,  
SIT LESS**

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

**SECTION 2:  
ADD IN STRUCTURED  
EXERCISE**

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

**SECTION 3:  
MAKE EXERCISE SAFE  
FOR YOU**

This section outlines important safety information.

**If you have any questions or concerns, speak to a member of your rehab team.**

A Guide To Exercise – Section 1

# Move More, Sit Less

## STEP 1: REPLACE SITTING TIME WITH LIGHT ACTIVITY

**The first step to becoming more active is to decrease the amount of time you spend sitting and replace this time with light-level activities. Some examples of light activities are listed in the tables below.**

Physical activity can be anything that gets your body moving throughout the day – standing, light household chores and walking are simple ways to you break up your sitting time at home or at work. Some movement is better than none!

### 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.

## STEP 2: ACCUMULATE 30 MINUTES OF DAILY LIGHT ACTIVITY

**When you are feeling comfortable with the replacing some sitting time with movement and light daily activity, it is time to add in the next step → 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.
- Your walking pace should feel fairly light. The goal is to increase the amount of time you are walking, rather than pushing yourself by walking faster.
- Remember, as you move to this step continue with breaking up sitting time throughout the day!

### 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

Once you are comfortable with replacing sitting time with light activity and walking for 30 minutes most days, it's time to add in the next step – structured exercise.

A Guide To Exercise – Section 2

# Add In Structured Exercise

## ADD IN STRUCTURED EXERCISE

**Once you can comfortably complete 30 minutes of light activity most days of the week, you can begin adding in structured exercise.**

Structured aerobic exercise is a type of activity shown to improve your overall fitness levels and heart health. 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 to 30 minutes exercising at a moderate/somewhat hard intensity on 3 days each week. Be sure to include a 5-minute warm-up and 5-minute cool-down each time you exercise.
- Try different activities to find one you enjoy, like biking or swimming, walking, or dancing. There is no right or wrong type of exercise. More information on how to monitor your intensity is outlined on the next few pages.
- If you find 20 minutes to be too challenging, you can break this up into smaller sessions, just make sure to warm-up and cool-down each time.
- Your goal is to eventually accumulate **150 minutes or more each week** at a **moderate/somewhat hard intensity**. This is in addition to the light activity and walking you have built into you day.



### **IMPORTANT TRAINING TIP**

Start at a level that is comfortable for you.

Starting too high – either training for a longer time than recommended 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 is to pay attention to how hard you are breathing!
- 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
<b>Light</b>	You can <b>sing</b> a song, such as our national anthem, 'Oh Canada'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Great for warm-up intensity</li><li>• Can be an exercise training phase for beginners</li></ul>
<b>Moderate/ somewhat hard</b>	You can <b>speak</b> 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"><li>• This is the exercise training target for most individuals who do not have symptoms or limitations</li></ul>
<b>High</b>	You are gasping for air, unable to speak more than one or two words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>This is too intense training and you need to slow down!</b></li></ul>

## 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).

Ratings of Perceived Exertion Scale (RPE) + Talk Test Guide for Monitoring Intensity	
20	Maximal exertion
19	Extremely hard
18	
17	Very hard
<b>High Intensity:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At these levels, you are unable to speak + gasping for air</li> <li>This is <b>too intense</b> → you need to <b>slow down</b></li> <li>For most people, 19 feels like the most strenuous exercise they have experienced. Even 17 feels very hard and a healthy person must really push themselves to continue. It feels very heavy and the person is very tired.</li> </ul>	
16	
15	Hard (heavy)
14	
13	Somewhat hard
12	
11	Fairly light
<b>Moderate Intensity:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An 11-16 feels somewhat hard but still feel ok to continue.</li> <li>At this level, your breathing should be faster, but you are still able to speak short sentences (about 4-5 words).</li> <li>This is the intensity range you should aim for during your structured exercise sessions.</li> </ul>	
10	
9	Very light
8	Extremely light
7	
6	No exertion at all
<b>Light Intensity:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For most people, a 7-9 is like walking slowly at your own pace.</li> <li>You can sing a song and still carry on with your activity in this range.</li> <li>Your <b>warm-up</b> and <b>cool-down</b> should fall in this range.</li> <li>Can be used as an exercise training phase for beginners.</li> </ul>	

### 3 HEART RATE MONITOR

- If you have completed an exercise stress test, you may have been prescribed a target heart rate range for exercise.
- You can monitor your heart rate using a chest strap monitor and/or watch, or exercise equipment. This monitor tells you how fast your heart is beating.

#### How it works:

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

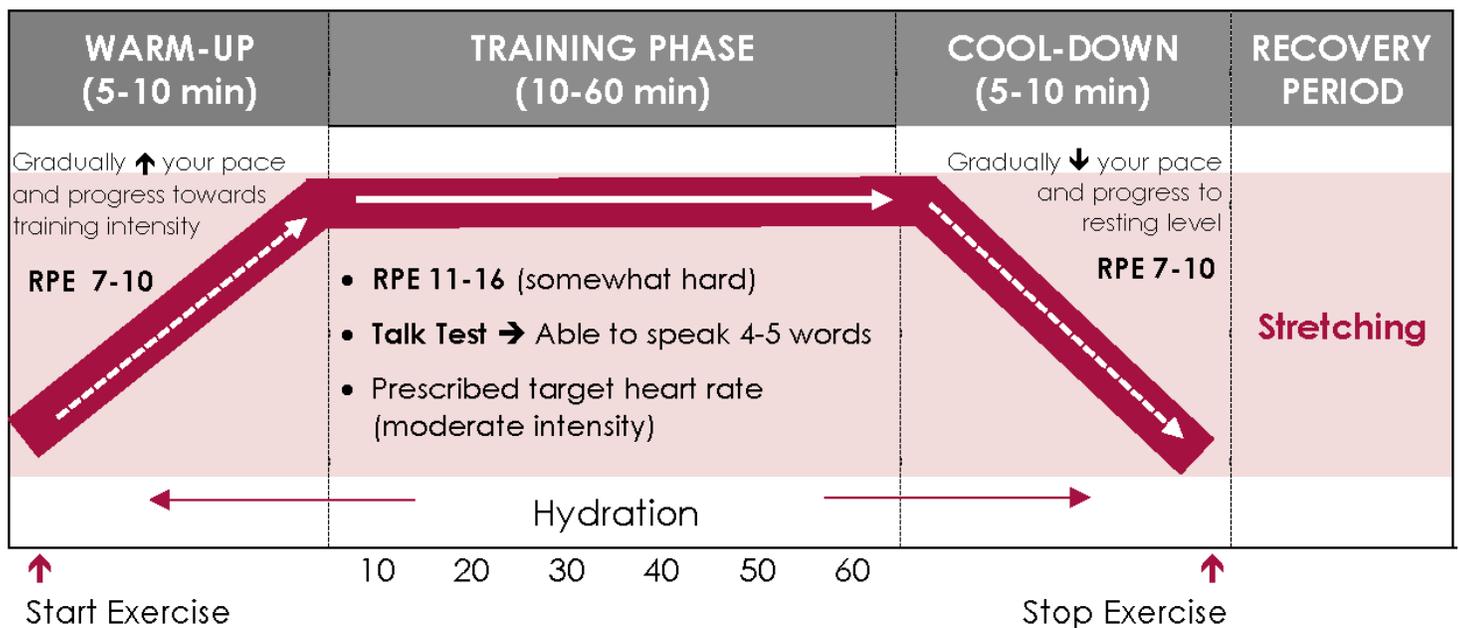
- Exercise stress test
- Medical history
- Medications
- Previous exercise history and goals

**\*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.



## STEPS TO BECOMING ACTIVE

### 1 Sit less and move more during the day

Break up your sitting time by standing, walking around the house or office or doing light chores.



**Balance exercises** are a great way to break up sit time

As you move to step 2, continue with step 1.

### 2 Accumulate at least 30 minutes of light activity each day.

Walking is a simple way to achieve this.



Continue with steps 1 + 2 as you move to the next step.

### 3 Add in structured exercise 3 to 5 days a week.

Work towards a goal of 150 minutes per week. Use talk test to monitor intensity.

Try different activities to find one you enjoy.



## NEXT STEPS

You will work with your rehab team to see if strength resistance training are right for you.



They will also help you to progress your aerobic exercise routine.

A Guide To Exercise – Section 3

# Make Exercise Safe for You

## IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR EXERCISE

**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 a member of your rehab team.

## 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 tablet 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 tablet or 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 TAKING 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.