

EXERCISE PROGRAM

WHY DO I NEED TO EXERCISE?

Physical inactivity has been established as a major risk factor for the development of coronary artery disease and other forms of vascular (blood vessel) disease. Inactivity also contributes to other risk factors including obesity, high blood pressure and a low level of HDL (the "good") cholesterol. Even modest levels of physical activity are beneficial.

Regular aerobic physical activity increases your capacity for exercise. It also plays a role in preventing recurrent heart attacks and stroke. There is a relationship between physical inactivity and the risk of dying due to heart disease.

Exercise can help control blood lipid abnormalities, diabetes, and obesity. The results of studies show that persons who modify their behavior after heart attack to include regular exercise have better rates of survival.

WHAT IS MEANT BY AEROBIC EXERCISE?

Aerobic exercise involves using the large muscles in your arms or legs for a continuous period of time. Aerobic exercise specifically benefits your heart because it makes your heart beat faster and work more efficiently. Brisk walking, jumping rope, jogging, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and dancing are examples of aerobic exercises that can increase your endurance capacity.

WHAT ARE OTHER BENEFITS OF EXERCISE?

Physical activity builds healthy bones, muscles and joints. Exercise may also help lower the risk of certain cancers such as colon cancer and breast cancer. In fact, there are a number of illnesses that can be prevented or improved through regular physical activity. Physical activity also brings psychological benefits. Exercise can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, improves mood and promotes a feeling of well being. Exercise can reduce insomnia.

HOW MUCH EXERCISE DO I NEED TO DO?

Once approved by your doctor, you should begin a regular physical activity program. In general you should aim for exercising for a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes 3 to 4 times

general you should aim for exercising for a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes 3 to 4 times weekly, supplemented by an increase in daily activities. Good ways for you to get exercise include walking, jogging, cycling, or other aerobic activity. You should also try things such as walking during breaks at work, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and parking your car a little farther away from your destination.

After a heart attack or bypass surgery you may benefit from supervised exercise in a cardiac rehabilitation program. Talk to your doctor about what would be best for you to do.

WHAT IS A HOME WALKING PROGRAM?

When you are discharged from the hospital it is important that you begin a program to increase your physical activity, as soon as recommended. There are a number of different options that can improve your health. One choice that is frequently recommended is to begin a progressive home walking program? Walking briskly is a good form of exercise. Walking keeps both the heart muscle and the rest of the body's muscles in good condition.

Start to walk!

The following guidelines are to help you plan a walking program that is right for you. Don't overestimate your ability -- rather, start off slowly and build up. **Depending on how you feel, you may only be able to stay at one level; OR you may progress up to two miles or more especially if you were exercising before.** Remember to warm up and cool down with stretches for five to seven minutes and to walk at least 3 to 4 times each week.

General instructions

- Walking should be done on level ground. Stair climbing is limited to two flights at the time of hospital discharge.
- Do not walk immediately after eating. Wait at least 1/2 to 1 hour.
- Avoid walking outside during extreme temperatures or on windy days.
- Walking should be continuous and rhythmical. Do not hurry.
- Warm up and cool down with stretches for five to seven minutes. Walk 3 to 4 times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes to 60 minutes.
- Follow the "Home Walking Program" listed below. If you have special limitations, use the individual guidelines on the opposite page.
- Your exercise intensity should be strong enough to make you breath more deeply, but shouldn't make you breathless. You should be able to hold a normal conversation while you exercise.
- Check with your doctor (at your first visit) about increasing your walking distance and/or entering a cardiac rehabilitation program.

Home Walking Program Schedule

| <u>Week after Discharge</u> | <u>Distance</u> | <u>Time</u> |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | 200-400 feet walking slowly around the house and yard Progress to ¼ mile by end of week 1 | Slowly 2 to 3 times a day |
| 2 | ½ mile | 15 minutes once a day |
| 3 | 1 | 30 minutes once a day |
| 4 | 1-½ mile | 30 minutes once a day |
| 5 | 2 miles | 40 minutes once a day |

HOW CAN I GET INTO A SUPERVISED PROGRAM?

With your doctor's approval, this may be the optimal time to enter an outpatient cardiac rehabilitation program. Besides supervised and monitored exercise sessions you will learn more specific guidelines concerning safe activities and other beneficial lifestyle modifications. Call the UCLA Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at (310) 825-0014 for further information.

HOW CAN I KEEP MOTIVATED?

Add variety. Try not to rely too much on one activity, but develop a repertoire of several that you can enjoy. That way, exercise will never seem boring or routine. Wear comfortable, properly fitted footwear and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that is appropriate for the weather and the activity.

Find a convenient time and place to do activities. Try to make it a habit, but be flexible. If you miss an exercise opportunity, work activity into your day another way. Use music to keep you entertained. Find friends that want to exercise with you.

WHEN SHOULD I CONSULT MY DOCTOR?

If you have heart or lung disease you should consult with your physician before starting

an exercise program. After you have been hospitalized for heart disease, your doctor should give you clear instructions as to what you can and cannot do. Your doctor may advise you to wait a few days before beginning to exercise or may recommend a cardiac rehabilitation program.

Discuss with your doctor the options for starting a regular exercise and activity program.

You should immediately notify your doctor if you develop any of the following during exercise:

- Pain or discomfort of the mid-chest area, left neck, shoulder or arm.
- Shortness of breath that does not rapidly resolve when you stop exercising.
- You lose consciousness or fall over due to dizziness.