

Exercise Instructions: Atrial Fibrillation

Always follow the advice of your provider (doctor/nurse practitioner/physician assistant). The instructions below are general and should only be done with their approval.

General Guidelines

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Warm-up | 10 minutes |
| Aerobic | 30-60 minutes continuous exercise (use Rating of Perceived Exertion - see next page) |
| Weight Training | 10-20 minutes |
| Cool Down | 5-10 minutes |
| Stretching | Up to 5 minutes of light stretching |

Warm Up

Easy/light movement that prepares muscles for aerobic and/or weight training exercise.

Aerobic

- No restrictions generally apply once you have clearance from your physician.
- Done most days of the week. Goal is exercise time not intensity.
- Uses large muscle groups working together.
- This should cause an increase in heart rate (HR) and breathing rate, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.
- Examples: walking, biking, Nustep® and using an elliptical.

If unable to perform 30 minutes of continuous exercise, try interval training.

- Continuous exercise - exercise at the same pace for the entire time

- Interval training - vary exercise with easier to harder segments, for example:
 - Walk at a comfortable pace for 3 minutes,
 - Then try increasing speed or elevation for up to 1 minute,
 - Then return back to original pace for another 3 minutes,
 - Repeat as tolerated

Weight Training

- Aim for high repetitions (reps) with light weights 2-3 days per week. Do alternating days, not 2 days in a row.
- Start with 1 set of 10 reps per muscle group (legs, back, chest, shoulders, and arms). Progression includes:
 - Increase 2 to 3 sets of 10-15 reps when able to tolerate.
 - Strength training should only be performed after some form of aerobic warm-up.
 - Be sure to breathe while strength training. No breath holding.

Note: It is not safe to do isometric training (pushing or pulling against a fixed object like a wall or bar) at this time.

Cool Down

Similar to the warm up; light movement to help bring your heart rate (HR) back to its resting level.

Stretching

- Decreases muscle soreness and increases flexibility.
- Done after every workout session.
- Hold stretch up to 30 seconds (as tolerated) without moving, and be sure to keep breathing - no breath holding.

PRECAUTIONS

- Your physician should clear you before you start an exercise program. You might ask your physician about an exercise stress test to see heart rate response with exercise.
- Monitoring heart rate may be needed (use of a heart rate monitor or manually taking your heart rate to assure your heart rate is not too high).
- Exercise may result in fluid loss (dehydration) so drink fluids to prevent low blood pressure after exercise. Patients on fluid restriction should ask for more specific advice from their physician.

WHEN TO CALL & WHO TO CALL

If you have any of these symptoms before or during exercise, stop exercise immediately and contact your physician:

- Chest pain
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Rapid heart rate
- Unusual shortness of breath
- Anything that feels different than usual.

BORG RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE)

Use this scale to find the intensity level of your exercise. A rating of 11-13 is ideal.

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 6 | |
| 7 | Very, Very Light |
| 8 | |
| 9 | Very Light |
| 10 | |
| 11 | Fairly Light |
| 12 | |
| 13 | Somewhat Hard |
| 14 | |
| 15 | Hard |
| 16 | |
| 17 | Very Hard |
| 18 | |
| 19 | Very, Very Hard |
| 20 | |

For questions about exercise, call the exercise consultants at:

Cardiovascular Center

734-936-5627

Cardiovascular Medicine at Domino's Farms

734-998-5666 or 647-7321

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