

# EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

## Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) Surgery

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*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: 5-10 minutes
- Aerobic: 30-60 minutes continuous exercise
- Weight Training: 10-20 minutes (**10-12 weeks after surgery**)
- Cool-down: 5-10 minutes
- Stretching: Up to 5 minutes of light stretching

### Warm-up

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

### Aerobic

- Done most days of the week.
- Uses large muscle groups working together.
- Should cause an increase in heart rate (HR) and breathing rate, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.
- Examples: walking, swimming, biking, and using a Nustep®.

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

- Continuous exercise - exercise at the same pace for entire time
- Interval Training - vary exercise with easier to harder segments, for example:
  - walk at a comfortable pace for 3 minutes and
  - then try increasing speed or elevation for up to 1 minute,
  - then return back to original pace for another 3 minutes and
  - then repeat as you are able.

### Weight Training

*Avoid chest exercise for a minimum of 12 weeks after surgery to allow for adequate healing of your incision.* Once you have clearance from your doctor, light weight training may be done.

- Aim for high repetitions with light weights 2-3 days per week,
- Start with 1 set of 15 per muscle group (legs, back, chest, shoulders, arms) and
- Increase up to 2-3 sets of 15 when able to tolerate.
- Strength training should only be performed after some form of aerobic/cardiovascular warm-up.
- Be sure to breathe out on the exertional part of the exercise (when you are contracting the specific muscle you are training).
- **Note:** it is not safe to do isometric training (pushing against a fixed object or a high resistance without movement) at this time.

### Cool-down

Similar to the warm-up; light movement to help bring your heart rate (HR) back down 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.

### **PRECAUTIONS**

- Your physician should clear you before you start an exercise program.
- Exercise may result in fluid loss (dehydration) so drink fluids to prevent low blood pressure after exercise. However, patients on fluid restriction should ask for more specific advice.

### **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
- Shortness of breath
- Lightheadedness, or
- Anything that feels different than usual.

### **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	<b>Very, Very Light</b>
8	
9	<b>Very Light</b>
10	
11	<b><i>Fairly Light</i></b>
12	
13	<b><i>Somewhat Hard</i></b>
14	
15	<b>Hard</b>
16	
17	<b>Very Hard</b>
18	
19	<b>Very, Very Hard</b>
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 998-7400**

Developed by Preventive Cardiology (Exercise Physiologists), UMHS.