

EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

Heart Valve Surgery

*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: 10-15 minutes
- Aerobic: 20-40 minutes continuous exercise (or as tolerated)
- 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

- 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.

Valve surgery patients may need to start and progress at a slower rate.

Weight Training

- 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 3 sets of 15 when able to tolerate.
- Strength training should only be performed after some form of aerobic 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:**
 - Post surgery patients should NOT do traditional weight training exercise until the sternum has healed enough, which is usually after 3 months.
 - 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.
- You can begin stretching as early as 24-48 hours after surgery.
- 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 prior to any further activity:

- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Palpitations or irregular heart beats, and
- Unusual shortness of breath

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	<i>Fairly Light</i>
12	
13	<i>Somewhat Hard</i>
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 998-7400

Developed by Preventive Cardiology (Exercise Physiologists), UMHS.