

Heart Disease Home Walking Program

Walking is a very important part of your exercise program and treatment. By walking each day, you will use many of the muscles in your body. As these muscles become stronger, they need less oxygen to do their work. This means you will not need to work as hard at breathing.

When starting an exercise program, review the chart below. Begin at the level where you are comfortable. Please listen to your body and your symptoms. You may rest as often as you need. As you move to the next level, your goal will be to add to your exercise time and lower your rest time. Research shows that exercising at least 5 days per week leads to many health benefits.

There are tools to help you watch your exercise intensity. Two tools you can use are the "Talk Test" and the Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale. Both are discussed on the back of this handout.



Level	Walking	How Often?	Intensity
1	5-10 minutes walking Rest as needed	2-3 times per day	Talk Test: Light-Moderate RPE: 6-11
2	10-20 minutes walking Rest as needed	2-3 times per day	Talk Test: Light-Moderate RPE: 6-11
3	20-30 minutes walking Rest as needed	1-2 times per day	Talk Test: Light-Moderate RPE: 11-16
4	30-40 minutes walking Rest as needed	1-2 times per day At least 3 times per week	Talk Test: Light-Moderate RPE: 11-16

*Please listen to your body and your symptoms. Move to the next level when you are comfortable. If you have any concerning symptoms while exercising, stop. Contact your doctor or 911 for any emergency.



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Watch out for the symptoms listed below while exercising or after your exercise:

- Chest discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Discomfort in other parts of the upper body such as arm, jaw, or neck
- Extreme fatigue or weakness
- Cold sweats
- Feeling dizzy
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Feeling of irregular heart rhythm or rapid heartbeat, called palpitations

Know your limits.
The **“Talk Test”** is an easy way to judge your exercise intensity. These phases are:

Light:

You can talk or even sing without changing your breathing pattern.

Moderate:

You have slightly increased breathing effort. You cannot sing but can still talk some.

Vigorous:

Your breathing is deep and rapid. You can only say a few words before pausing to breathe.

Rating of Perceived Exertion

Borg RPE Scale®

6		How you feel when relaxed, lying in a bed or sitting in a chair. Little or no effort.
7	Extremely Light	
8		
9		
10		
11	Fairly Light	Target Range. How you should feel with exercise or activity.
12		
13	Somewhat Hard	
14		
15	Hard	
16		How you felt with the hardest work you have ever done. Don't work this hard!
17	Very Hard	
18		
19	Extremely Hard	
20	Maximum Exertion	