

Division: Diagnostic and Therapeutic  
Department: Physiotherapy

### Contact details

If you have any queries then please  
give us a ring and talk through your  
concerns

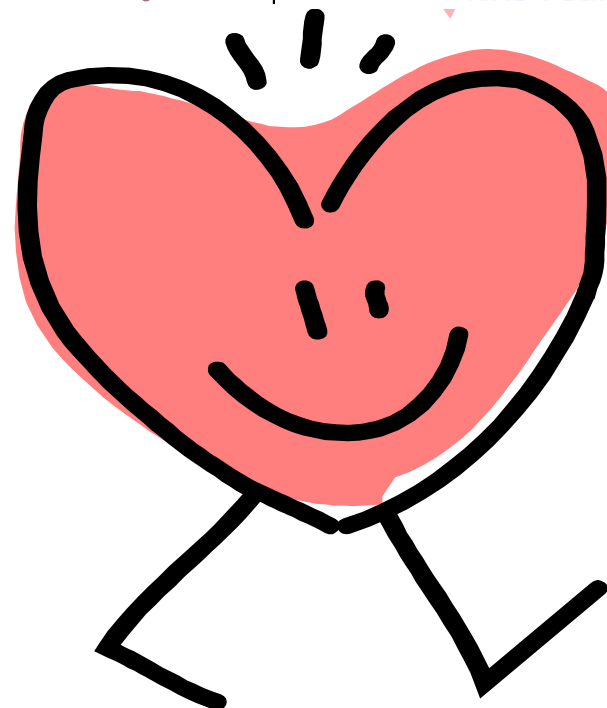
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24 hour answer phone please leave a  
message and we will call you back as  
soon as possible. Don't forget to  
leave your name and number.

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Class Days:  
Start Date:  
Days:

## Heart Failure Exercise Handbook



## Contents

<b>Benefits of Exercise</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Tips on Increasing Your Activity</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Exercising At Home</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Walking Programme</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Home Programme with DVD</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Borg Scale</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>When Not To Exercise</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Home Exercise Diary</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Personal Notes</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>More Information</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<b>28</b>

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or an audi-otape.

If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

اگر یہ معلومات پڑھ نہیں سکتے ہیں یا آپ کو اس کی سمجھ نہیں آتی ہے تو براہ مہربانی آتشک ہیلتھ ٹیم کے ساتھ ٹیلی فون نمبر 0161 331 5149/5150 پر رابطہ کریں تو وہ آپ کی مدد کر سکیں گے۔

آپنی یہی اگر یہ تথیا پڑھتے یا بڑھتے نا پآرےن، تاہلے انڈرہڈ کرے اٹھنک ہلٹھ ٹیم کے ساتھ ٹیلی فون نمبر 0161 331 5149/5150 پر رابطہ کریں تو وہ آپ کی مدد کر سکیں گے۔

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## Further Information

We would recommend the following website and/or organisations for information regarding Coronary Heart Disease.

- ♥ The British Heart Foundation—  
[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)
- ♥ British Hypertension Society—  
[www.hyp.ac.uk/bhs/](http://www.hyp.ac.uk/bhs/)
- ♥ British Cardiac Society— [www.bcs.com](http://www.bcs.com)
- ♥ Cardiomyopathy Society—  
[wwwcardiomyopathy.org/](http://wwwcardiomyopathy.org/)
- ♥ American Heart Association—  
[www.americanheart.org/](http://www.americanheart.org/)
- ♥ NHS Direct [www.nhsdirect.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.uk)

There is also a bi-monthly magazine published by the British Heart Foundation that you can subscribe to by contacting the BHF on  
0207 486 5820

## References

- American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR) (2007) [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)
- American College of Sports Medicine Guidelines (2006) [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)
- Association of Chartered Physiotherapist in Cardiac Rehabilitation (ACPICR) peer review (2008) [www.acpicr.org.uk](http://www.acpicr.org.uk)
- British Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation (BACR) Standards and core components (2012) [www.bcs.org.uk](http://www.bcs.org.uk)
- MI: secondary prevention. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. (2007) [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)
- (NSF) The National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease (2000) chapter 12 [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
- The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guideline 57 [www.sign.ac.uk](http://www.sign.ac.uk)

## Benefits of Exercise

If you have heart failure you will be advised to exercise if your symptoms are stable. There are lots of reasons to exercise but primarily this should improve the amount that you can do and the overall quality of your life. There have been studies that show that being physically active will help to reduce the frequency of hospital admissions and will also help to improve your exercise capacity.

During exercise one of the most distressing symptoms that most of our patients tell us about is their breathlessness which severely restricts their activity levels. This tends to get much worse if you do less, so the less you do the worse the breathlessness becomes on low levels of activity. The impact of exercise is to reverse this process and increase what you are able to do.

This process can take a little time to see the effects but once you do begin to see them you will notice that you are able to do more and you are not as short of breath on tasks that you previously found hard. Learning to control your breathlessness will help you feel fitter and less restricted in your daily activities.

While you have been ill with your heart failure your may have noticed changes in your muscles i.e. feel tired easily. This is probably due to reducing your activity levels and leading an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. The exercise programme aims to reverse these muscle changes and to help your muscles to regain their strength and endurance overtime so that they do not tire and fatigue as quickly.

Exercise has other benefits.

1. Being physically more active can often help with sleep patterns so you are more tired when you go to bed therefore hopefully sleep better.
2. Exercise can help you to feel better in yourself as some of the chemicals that are released in your brain (endorphins) can have an impact on mood particularly if you are anxious or you have mild depression symptoms.
3. Exercise has been shown to have a positive impact on diabetic control and insulin sensitivity.

Remember sitting and doing nothing will **NOT** help you it will only make your symptoms **WORSE**.

	DVD	Other exercise	Borg (RPE)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

	DVD	Other exercise	Borg (RPE)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

### TIPS ON INCREASING ACTIVITY LEVELS

- Walking—its free and you can do it anywhere
- Walk the dog
- Walk with a friend/family/children
- Get off the bus at an earlier stop
- Take the stairs rather than the lift
- Get out of the lift one floor early and do a flight of stairs
- Housework does count as long as you do get out of breath but can still talk in a full sentence.

**REMEMBER YOU ARE AIMING FOR 30 MINUTES OF MODERATE INTENSITY EXERCISE AT LEAST 5 TIMES PER WEEK.**

(This can be in one or a number of shorter bursts activity throughout the day)

(Moderate intensity means working hard enough to be breathing more heavily than at rest and becoming slightly warmer, but not so hard that you are unable to talk in full sentences and exercise at the same time).

**Exercising At Home**

All the exercises on your programme are designed to raise your heart rate and make you slightly breathless (aerobic). This is the best type of exercise to improve the fitness of your heart

**Prior to exercise**

- ♥ Avoid eating at least 1 hour before exercising and do not drink alcohol before or after exercise.
- ♥ Modify your exercise to the temperature – if it is very hot or very cold you need to reduce the Intensity and wear appropriate clothing for the weather.
- ♥ Wear suitable clothing that will allow evaporation of sweat and supportive footwear suitable for your chosen activity.

	DVD	Other exercise	Borg (RPE)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

	DVD	Other exercise	Borg (RPE)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

♥ Do not exercise if you have a short term illness such as a cold, infection or stomach bug. If you have a temperature your heart is working harder due to fight illness, (reduce the intensity and duration of exercise when resuming following illness or a break, and gradually return to your previous intensity as you feel able).

**Breathlessness** – it is important that you do not become too breathless or feel that your breathing is becoming increasingly laboured when exercising. Strong breathlessness challenges those with or without a heart condition and should not be encouraged. If you cannot breathe easily, oxygen cannot get to the lungs and working muscles properly (don't forget the heart is a muscle). If you feel an activity is restricting your ability to talk in full sentences, then you are doing too much. Make sure you can breathe out easily and fully. With regular sessions you may find you can gradually build up to more activity.

**Avoid overhead work** – You should avoid activities which involve one or both of your arms being raised above the shoulders for long periods, particularly while the rest of the body is static. In this situation muscles contract, tense and stay contracted. This results in raised blood pressure and increased strain on the heart. Do not decorate the ceiling just yet and get someone else to hang curtains. blood through the muscles and helps to lower blood pressure.

If movement of the arms is regular, of low intensity and mainly below shoulder level the pumping action of the muscles contracting and relaxing actually helps the passage of

The exercise we recommend is a home walking programme to start with to allow you to gradually increase your endurance. Building up your endurance should be your first aim, do not try to increase the intensity of exercise. Once you have increased your walking and can do approximately 30 minutes of constant walking on the flat and you are starting to feel more confident then you may start to increase your pace or add gentle gradients to increase your work load.

Once you are feeling confident with doing the exercises at the class you can start to do your DVD at home.

Included in this booklet are both walking guidelines and also guidance for using your DVD.

### Your Home Exercise Diary

If you are starting with walking, record how long (time) and how far you walk daily (distance or lamp-posts).

	<b>DVD</b>	<b>Walking</b>	<b>Borg (RPE)</b>
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			



## **Do not exercise if you are having any of the following problems:**

- ♥ **Angina and needing to use your GTN spray more often.**
- ♥ **Feeling more breathless than you would expect to.**
- ♥ **Dizziness.**
- ♥ **Palpitations.**
- ♥ **Nausea.**
- ♥ **Extreme fatigue.**
- ♥ **A fever/temperature**

## **How To Begin A Walking Programme**

### **Start slowly.**

♥ If you are only able to do a short distance try to do it twice or three times a day, remember each of those walks adds up.

♥ Do not go out for your walk until you have got moving for the day and had your medications (e.g. a least an hour after breakfast).

♥ Measure how far you can walk at the beginning. Measure it in time, distance, and how hard or easy you found it to do the walking. Best of all measure all three then it makes it easy to compare as you improve. You can put these in diary at the back of the booklet.

♥ Start off by walking only on the flat if this is possible. We do understand that around Tameside this is very difficult in certain areas. If you live in a very hilly area and it is possible try some of the parks or around a reservoir where it is flatter.

♥ If you have to walk on gradients try to do them in the middle of your walk and walk up hill more slowly than you would normally then pick the pace up again on the flat.

♥ When the weather is very warm or very cold you will not be able to do as much as you can on normal days so adjust your pace accordingly and slow down.

♥ If it is very warm wear sun cream and appropriate clothing to keep you as cool as possible.

♥ In very cold and windy weather wear hat gloves and a scarf and it often helps to pull the scarf up around your face.

♥ Measure how far, how fast every week. Do not expect to make an improvement everyday. Think of this as a week to week project.

♥ Take someone with you for moral support when you first start your walking programme but you must make sure that they do not set the pace, you must.

♥ Once you start to feel more confident about going out for your walks start to go on your own but always take your mobile phone with you and make sure someone knows where you are going and when you may be back.

### **RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION SCALE**

We want you to be able to rate your exertion/breathlessness and we use the Borg scale (see below) in the classes.

#### **PLEASE USE THIS SCALE TO INDICATE YOUR OVER ALL FEELING OF EXERTION**

6	NO EXERTION AT ALL	“NO EXERTION AT ALL”
7		
8	EXTREMELY LIGHT	
9	VERY LIGHT	“VERY LIGHT”
10		
11	LIGHT	
12		
13	SOMEWHAT HARD	“OK TO CONTINUE”
14		
15	HARD (HEAVY)	“HARD”
16		
17	VERY HARD	
18		
19	EXTREMELY HARD	
20	MAXIMAL EXERTION	

## THE BORG SCALE

We want you to rate your perceived exertion (breathlessness), that is, how heavy and strenuous the exercise feels to you. This depends mainly on the strain and fatigue on your muscles and on your feeling of breathlessness or aches in the chest.

Start with a verbal expression and then choose a number. If your perception is “very weak”, say 1; if “moderate” say 3; and so on. You are welcome to use half values (such as 3.5 or decimals for example 0.3, 0.8 or 2.3). It is very important that you answer what you perceive and not what you believe you ought to answer. Be as honest as possible and try not to over estimate or under estimate the intensities.

- 1- Is “very light” like walking slowly at your own pace for several minutes.
- 3- Is not especially hard; it feels fine, and is no problem to continue
- 5- You are tired, but you don’t have any difficulties.
- 7- You can still go on but have to push yourself very much. You are very tired
- 10-This is as hard as most people have ever experienced in their lives
  - This is absolute maximum for example 11 or 12 or higher

You are aiming for level 4 breathlessness but able to talk in full sentences while continuing to exercise.

♥ Remember that if you are over 60 that walking can be your main exercise and 30 minutes of brisk walking per day is enough to keep most adults fit.

♥ Do not go out for your walk for an hour after a meal as blood is diverted away from your heart and essential organs towards your stomach.

♥ If you have worked out a short circular route you can start to gradually enlarge it or if you are walking in a straight line down the road you can go a little further before you turn around to head home.

♥ If you are unsure about how to progress your walking, give your Therapist a ring, they will be more than happy to talk it through with you and help you to plan how you are going to progress your walking.

## Home Programme with DVD

♥ Always do a 10 – 15 minute warm up first, if you have been given a DVD to assist you with your home exercise programme make sure you complete the warm up. This allows blood pressure and heart rate to increase slowly and safely and prevents rhythm problems and warms up muscles. The warm up should be **15 MINUTES** long. If you are using our DVD it is important you use the appropriate warm up for your level: Slow warm up, medium or fast warm up as advised at your class

♥ If you do not have a DVD your warm up should include movement exercises such as heel/toe tapping, arm and shoulder movements, gentle marching/walking on the spot and stretches to all limbs. After the warm up you should feel moderately warm but not feel the activity as particularly hard – around level 3 on the Borg scale (see information further in the booklet).

### Suggested Warm Up

♥ Start sat down with marching your feet on the spot and shrugging your shoulders up and down repeat 10-20 times (or as many as you feel able). Tap your feet out to the sides repeat 10-20 times with each foot. Tap your heels to the front of you alternate each foot, repeat 10-20 times (or as many as you feel able) Then stand up and do slow walking for three minutes with gentle arm movements e.g. bending and straightening your elbows, followed by two minutes of slow side stepping/tapping.

♥ Now restart the walking on the spot for two minutes but increase the pace and size of arm movements.

### Cooling Down

♥ After exercising it is important to allow your heart to slow down and your blood pressure to drop back to normal levels gradually.

♥ Stopping exercising abruptly can lead to drops in your blood pressure and this causes dizziness, it can also cause heart rhythm problems which while we all have them, having a greater number is not desirable.

♥ Cooling down is very simple to do. You can simply walk for 8 – 10 minutes at a steadily decreasing pace.

♥ If you wish to use weights as part of your exercise plan use small weights and do high reps i.e. 10-20 of each exercise, do not hold your breath when doing this as this can make you dizzy. Please ask a member of the rehab team to check your technique.

♥ If you wish to do any exercises for your abdominals or back that involve lying down, these should be done **AFTER** your cool down, as doing them before or during your exercise session could lead to heart rhythm problems and dizziness.

Please ask a member of the rehab team to check your technique.