

Cardiac Rehabilitation

What is Cardiac Rehabilitation?

Cardiac Rehabilitation is a programme designed to help you recover after a heart event or procedure, such as Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI). It aims to help you regain strength, return to normal daily activities, and reduce risks of future heart problems.

Goals of Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac Rehabilitation aims to:

- Support you in understanding and managing your heart condition
- Improve overall heart function and stamina
- Help you return to daily life safely and independently
- Reduce the risk of future heart problems
- Improve your mental and emotional wellbeing

It consists of:

- Physical activity counselling and exercise training
- Education on heart-healthy living (ie. diet, medication compliance)
- Emotional and psychological support
- Guidance on how to manage daily tasks during recovery

Role of Occupational Therapy (OT) in Cardiac Rehabilitation

Occupational Therapists can help you to:

- Return to perform daily responsibilities, tasks and activities safely
- Learn strategies or modifications to engage in daily activities
- Regain mental and physical confidence and wellbeing

The following Cardiac Rehabilitation education pertains to recovery after a PCI.

Precautions for Daily Activities after PCI Surgery

In the first two weeks post-surgery:

What to <u>avoid</u>:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Heavy lifting, strenuous activity and exercise✗ Carrying items of > 5 kg with the affected arm
What you can <u>continue</u> to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Resume normal daily routine✓ Rest and recover as required

After two weeks:

- ✓ Gradually resume all activities – be sure to pace, rest and recover as needed.

Returning to sexual activity:

There are no restrictions to return to sexual activity as long as you are able to climb two flights of stairs or brisk walk without feeling short of breath or experience chest pain.

Returning to driving:

There may be some risks to drive after a heart attack or surgery.
Please follow your doctor's advice or ensure you are cleared to resume driving.

Recognising Red Flags

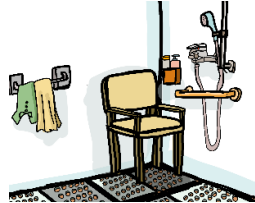



Common symptoms include:

- Chest pain (sharp or tight sensation in the centre of the chest)
- Pain that radiates to the jaw, neck, shoulder, arms or upper back
- Shortness of breath
- Lightheadedness or giddiness
- Excessive sweating
- Palpitations
- Vomiting or nausea
- Weakness

Seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of the above symptoms.

Modifying your Daily Activities to Conserve Energy

Fatigue can interfere with your ability to function independently after a cardiac event. You can practise these energy conservations techniques, using any of the 4Ps (whichever applies to you) to reduce your energy expenditure post-surgery:

<p><u>P</u>osture/ <u>P</u>osition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit during activities whenever possible or needed (e.g. laundry, meal preparation) • Minimise repetitive overhead reaching or bending down too low • Use proper body mechanics when carrying or lifting is required (e.g. carry children) • Place commonly used items within reach 	 <p>E.g. Showering: Have a chair on standby and place frequently used items such as soap, shampoo and towel within reach.</p>
<p><u>P</u>lan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a daily/weekly schedule • Use a daily journal to note the times of the day or tasks that cause more fatigue • Gather all the items you need beforehand • Plan ahead for assistive devices/tools to reduce the energy required to do tasks 	 <p>E.g. Meal preparation: Plan recipes with simpler food preparation methods and use assistive tools such as electric mixers.</p>
<p><u>P</u>rioritise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise essential and important tasks • Delegate/postpone less important tasks • Remove or reduce unnecessary tasks 	 <p>E.g. Delegate tasks (e.g. laundry) if you have other essential tasks such as medical appointments.</p>
<p><u>P</u>ace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace your activities with rest breaks in between tasks throughout the day and week • Alternate between light and heavy tasks • Stop and rest when you have fatigue 	 <p>E.g. Return to exercise gradually, while monitoring for chest pain and/or shortness of breath.</p>

Stress Management

Stress is a natural response to a situation when we feel we are in a difficult situation causing physical, emotional or mental strain. It is a normal part of everyday life and can come from many sources like family, relationships, work and health, such as a cardiac event.



However, too much or prolonged stress can bring about negative health effects. When inadequately managed, stress may lead to or exacerbate other health issues such as high blood pressure, depression, anxiety or slow cardiac recovery.





Good stress management is vital when recovering from a cardiac event and can positively improve your general health and wellbeing.

While it is not possible to avoid stress completely, it is important to:

- Recognise when you are feeling stressed
- Take action to manage stress in a positive and healthy manner
- Know that it is okay to seek help



Recognising different signs of stress

Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent headaches or digestive issues• Higher blood pressure and heart rate• Feeling tired and having difficulty sleeping	Emotional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling restless and more easily angry or irritated• Feeling hopeless or worthless• Frequent mood swings
Mental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty focusing• Tendency to forget things more often• Frequently worrying throughout the day	Behavioural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with family/friends less• Eating too much or loss of appetite• Procrastinating or avoiding tasks• Resorting to alcohol or smoking

Here are some examples of positive ways to manage stress:

1

Relaxation and taking care of your body

- Try relaxation activities such as meditation, mindfulness, yoga and journaling
- Ensure you get regular/adequate sleep and nutrition



2

Leisure activities

- Engage in activities that you like or enjoy e.g. walking in the park, reading a book, or cooking
- Consider signing up for classes or community centres to learn new sports or skills



3

Talking to your social circle

- Speak to your family or friends to share your feelings or ask for help with activities if you need



4

Seeking professional help

- Speak to your healthcare professional or a counsellor for professional support if you feel unable or unsure of how to manage the stress



Cardiac rehabilitation is an essential part to your recovery process, providing you with physical and psychological long-term benefits. By following the cardiac rehabilitation advice given, you are taking the first step towards regaining your health and improving your quality of life.

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