



Primary Care Cardiac Service

Exercise and physical activity advice
after your cardiovascular event



Who are CityCare?

We are your local provider of high quality community health services.

We provide quality care you can trust.

We deliver a diverse range of healthcare services for adults and children in the community including health visiting, school and family nursing community nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and in-home rehabilitation of older people; services for cardiac, respiratory, neurology, continence, palliative care, diabetes, dietetics and the NHS Urgent Treatment Centre.

We have a long heritage of delivering high quality care for you and your family at home, or close to home, in community settings such as health centres, schools and GP surgeries.

As a social enterprise we work in partnership with patients, staff, partners and the local community to build a healthier more sustainable future for all.

What is the Primary Care Cardiac Service?

The team is made up of Specialist Nurses, Physiotherapists and Assistant Practitioners who can offer advice and support to improve your cardiovascular health and help you recover from a recent health problem.

What is a 'cardiovascular event'?

This can include heart surgery, heart attack, angioplasty, heart failure or transient ischaemic attack (TIA).

Exercise and the heart

Exercise is a safe and important part of your recovery after your cardiovascular event.

Everyone will recover at different rates and it is important not to compare yourself with other people. It will depend on many factors including your medical condition before your cardiovascular event, the nature of your event and your age.





Benefits of exercise

- Reduces the risk of developing further cardiovascular disease
- Reduces and maintains healthy blood pressure levels
- Lowers cholesterol levels
- Help you lose weight and maintain your weight at a healthy level
- Reduces your risk of developing diabetes and helps you to control your blood sugar levels better
- Reduces stress, anxiety and depression levels
- Improves muscle strength and stamina
- Keeps bones strong and reduces the risk of osteoporosis
- Reduces joint stiffness and can help with arthritis
- Reduces angina and breathlessness

Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise Programme

It is important for you to complete the Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise Programme. The Programme is one session each week, and runs for up to eight sessions. You can choose to attend this at a number of local venues, at Nottingham City Hospital, or you can choose support at home from a Cardiac Physiotherapist.

Partners/spouses are encouraged to attend as well but can not join in the exercise part of the session.

There may be a virtual option available - please ask your Cardiovascular Nurse.

For further information about exercise and the heart please visit

www.bhf.org.uk

What should i do?

It is important to exercise regularly but also stay physically active and only sit for short periods of time.

Physical Activity

Any movement that is carried out by your muscles. This includes everyday activities such as shopping, household chores and even climbing the stairs.

Exercise

Exercise is planned and repeated physical activity that's done on purpose. It makes your heart and blood vessels work harder, helping your heart get better at pumping blood and sending oxygen throughout your body. Examples include brisk walking / jogging, swimming and exercise classes.

Choose an exercise you enjoy as you are more likely to continue it in the long term.

How often should I exercise?

You should exercise regularly, ideally building up to exercising five times per week. If this is not possible it may be more appropriate to exercise every other day. It is not advisable to do a one off episode of exercise and then nothing for a long time.

How hard should the exercise be?

It should be hard enough to get you slightly out of breath but still able to have a conversation. The muscles in your arms and legs should feel like they are working. If you find the exercise hard work or you feel extremely tired after doing the exercise, you have done too much.

If you can't speak a full sentence without taking a breath you are exercising too hard.

It is important to listen to your body as it will tell you if you have done too much.

How long should I exercise for?

Start with a small amount of exercise and gradually build up. Aim to build up to thirty minutes of continuous exercise. If this is not possible you may want to exercise for ten minutes three times a day.

Warm up and cool down

It is important to warm-up and cool-down during an exercise session. This may consist of walking or doing exercises at a slower pace. The warm-up prepares your body for the exercise ahead. The cool-down allows your heart rate and blood pressure to return back to normal levels. For every ten minutes of exercise you should aim for at least five minutes warm-up (maximum of 15 minutes) and five minutes cool-down.



Normal response to exercise

When exercising it is normal to:

- Feel your heart beat faster and stronger
- Breathe faster and deeper
- Feel warm and start to sweat



Abnormal response to exercise

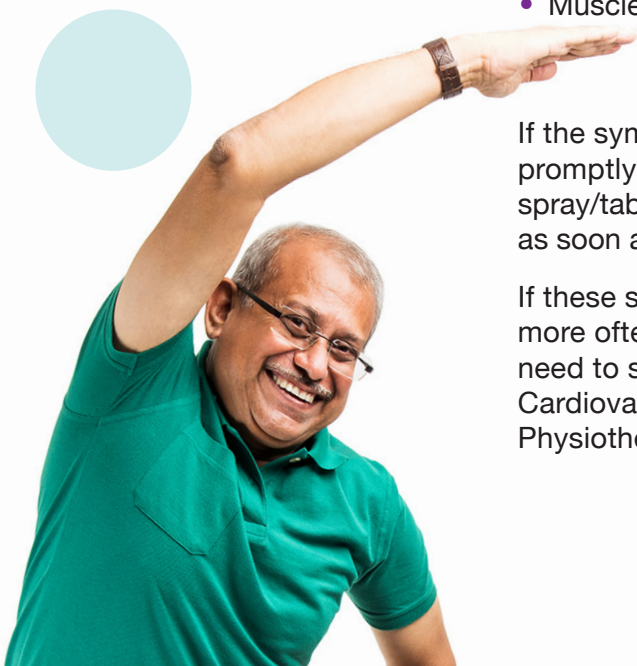
Stop exercising if you experience:

- Chest discomfort or tightness
- Excessive shortness of breath
- Dizziness and nausea
- Palpitations
- Extreme or unusual fatigue
- Muscle cramps

If the symptoms do not go away promptly with rest and/or GTN spray/tablets seek medical advice as soon as possible.

If these symptoms start to happen more often when you exercise you need to speak to your GP, Cardiovascular Nurse or Physiotherapist.

You should not exercise within 2 hours of eating a heavy meal, if you are feeling unwell with respiratory symptoms or if your cardiovascular symptoms are getting worse.



Walking Programme

It is recommended you start a walking programme when you are discharged to help you regain and improve your fitness. It is important you start with a short walk and gradually increase the distance or time you walk for as the weeks progress. Below is a general guide you may wish to follow.

| Weeks | Time | Repeat (per day) |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| Up to 2 weeks | 5-10 minutes | 2-3 times |
| 3 weeks | 10-15 minutes | 3 times |
| 4-6 weeks | 15-20 minutes | 3-4 times |

Tips for walking safely

- You should always be able to walk and talk at the same time
- Go for a walk at a time of the day when you have the most energy
- If you feel you have done too much one day then reduce the amount you walk the following day
- If you tire easily do two short walks instead of one long walk
- Do the same walk each day to monitor your progress
- Keep warm in cold windy weather by wearing a coat, hat, scarf and gloves as you may find the walk more difficult
- Gradually build up the pace at the start of the walk to warm-up, and slowdown your pace at the end of the walk to cool-down
- Progress your walks by increasing the speed you walk at or incorporating gradually steeper slopes or hills
- Set yourself a weekly goal to achieve



Household tasks, hobbies and returning to work

Most people can return to their previous hobbies following their cardiovascular event. It is important that you build up your physical activity levels which can include household tasks such as cooking, cleaning and hoovering. Speak to your Cardiovascular Nurse or Cardiac Physiotherapist who can guide you with this. This is especially true if you wish to resume sports such as swimming and high intensity competitive sports.

If you have had heart surgery and have been issued a leaflet advising you to follow sternal precautions, you must keep to this advice for the first 6-8 weeks.

This advice says do not:

- Lift anything heavier than a kettle with enough water for two cups of tea.
- Push or pull forcefully with your arms.
- Reach backwards.
- Pull yourself up in a chair or push yourself up with your arms.
- Let people pull on your arms when helping you move. Have them assist from your back, if needed.

Sex

You can continue to enjoy a happy and healthy sex life; however, it is normal to feel anxious about starting this again. You can usually resume sexual activity as soon as you are feeling well enough. A loss of sex drive or impotence is a common problem and usually temporary. Speak with your GP or Cardiovascular Nurse for advice and support.

Returning to work

After a cardiovascular event you will need time off work to recover. Returning to work will depend on a variety of factors including the type of job you do and how you progress after discharge. Returning to work sooner rather than later can help you to recover more quickly. Speak with your employer, occupational health department, GP, Cardiovascular Nurse or Cardiac Physiotherapist for advice.

Contact details

For further information contact your Nottingham CityCare Partnership Cardiovascular Nurse or the Cardiac Physiotherapist on
0115 883 4733

The team are available
from 8am to 6pm,
Monday to Friday

Getting in touch with CityCare

You can feed back any compliments,
concerns, complaints or comments by:

T: 0115 883 9654

E: ncp.customercare@nhs.net

W: www.nottinghamcitycare.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another language or
format such as larger print, please contact: **0800 561 2121**

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języku lub formacie, takim jak duża czcionka, należy zadzwonić pod nr
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