

Department of Cardiology

Living with Heart Failure



An Introduction to Heart Failure

What is Heart Failure (HF)?

It is a chronic condition where your heart is unable to pump enough blood to sustain your body's needs.

With heart failure, you may develop a lower activity tolerance. This means you will only be able to endure a shorter period of physical activity before feeling breathless and tired.

If left unaddressed, it may decrease your ability to perform daily activities (e.g. dressing, showering) with ease.



Signs and Symptoms of Heart Failure

Common Signs and Symptoms

Common signs and symptoms of heart failure include:

- Breathlessness during activity or when lying flat
- Fatigue and weakness
- Light-headedness/dizziness
- Coughing
- Fast heartbeat

Signs and Symptoms of Worsening Heart Failure

The following are possible signs that you are experiencing an acute episode of worsening heart failure:

- Sudden weight gain of >1kg per day, >3kg in 5 days, from fluid build-up
- Chest pain on exertion
- Increased swelling in the legs/ ankle/ feet or abdominal bloating
- Worsening breathlessness when resting or during activity

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, please do not engage in any exercise. Please consult your doctor before initiation of exercise.

Managing Your Heart Failure

Strategies to manage your heart failure:

Limit Your Fluid Intake

- Restrict your fluid intake to less than 1L per day
- This includes all liquids such as beverages/ soups/ porridge/ fruits



Limit Your Salt Intake

- Maintain a low salt diet (less than 2g of sodium per day)
- Avoid processed or canned food
- Avoid gravy or sauces



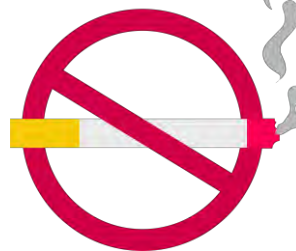
Managing Your Heart Failure

Take Your Medications as Prescribed

- Do not skip your medications even if you are feeling well



Avoid Smoking and Alcohol Intake



Measure Your Weight Daily

- Weigh yourself every morning, after passing urine but before having your breakfast
- Keep a daily record of your weight in a diary/notebook



Managing Your Heart Failure

Engage in Regular Exercise

Benefits of exercise include:

- Less breathlessness (difficulty breathing) on exertion
- Increased muscle mass and strength
- Better exercise tolerance
- More confident in performing daily activities
- Improved quality of life (higher standards of health, comfort and happiness)

This booklet will teach you how to exercise safely with your heart condition.

Recognising Your Symptoms

Normal Symptoms You May Experience During Exercise:

- Light to moderate shortness of breath (based on the **Modified Borg Dyspnea Scale 3-4**, on page 9 of this booklet)
- Sweating
- Tiredness
- Light muscle aches

Abnormal Symptoms You Should Take Note of During Exercise:

- Chest pain
- Intense joint pain
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Heart beating abnormally fast/pounding
- Severe or prolonged breathing difficulties
- Headaches

If you experience any of the above abnormal symptoms, please stop your exercise immediately. Please contact your doctor if the symptoms continue even after resting.

Monitoring the Intensity of Your Exercise

1. Measuring Your Heart Rate

- You should keep your heart rate between a range of _____ during exercise
- Measure your heart rate either manually or with a pedometer/steps tracker

2. Use the Talk Test

- **Low intensity:** you can sing while exercising
- **Moderate intensity (target):** you can talk but cannot sing while exercising

Monitoring the Intensity of Your Exercise

3. Use the Modified Borg Dyspnea Scale

Rating	Modified Borg Dyspnea Scale (Level of Exertion)
0	Nothing at all
0.5	Very, very slight (just noticeable)
1	Very slight
2	Slight
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat severe
5	Severe
6	
7	Very severe
8	
9	Very, very severe
10	Maximal

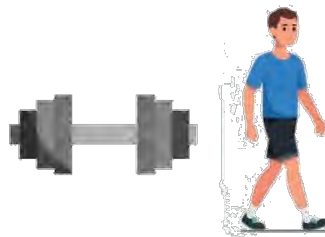
Target Level of Exertion

Getting Ready for Exercise

During Exercise:

- Pace yourself throughout the exercise session
- Progressively increase the intensity and duration of your exercises overtime
- Wear comfortable clothing and proper footwear
- Ensure you warm-up before exercising and cool down period after exercising.

An example of an exercise session will look like this:



Different Types of Exercises

You Are Recommended to Do:

Endurance Training



- 3 to 5 times per week
 - 30 minutes per session, accumulating to 150 minutes per week
 - Do low to **moderate intensity** exercises where you are still able to talk but not able to sing
 - Examples include walking and cycling
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Strength Training



- 2 to 3 times per week
 - Start with 1 to 3 sets of 10 to 15 repetitions
 - Gradually progress to use heavier weights, completing 1 to 3 sets of 8 to 10 repetitions
 - Examples include exercises targeting the upper body, stomach and lower body
-

Flexibility



- Daily
- Hold stretches for 30 seconds and repeat each stretch three times
- Examples include stretches for the body, upper limbs and lower limbs
- Usually done during warm-up and cool down

Goal Setting

Setting exercise goals for yourself will help motivate you to complete your exercise programme.

When setting exercise goals, ask yourself these questions:

1. **What** are you going to do?
2. **How long** are you going to do it for?
3. **How much** are you going to do it?
4. **How many days a week** are you going to do it for?

Example:

This week, I will walk (**what**) for 30 minutes (**how long**) at moderate intensity (**how much**) three times (**how many**).

Using an exercise log (refer to pages 11 and 12) will also make it easier for you to stick to your exercise programme.

You may use this template to log your exercise sessions:

- **Duration:** ___ minutes
- **Vital Signs:** Heart Rate/breathlessness
- **Comments:** Weather/other symptoms etc.

Your Physiotherapist will provide you with a list of exercises that you will need to perform.

WEEK	TYPE OF EXERCISE	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
2	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
3	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							

WEEK	TYPE OF EXERCISE	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
4	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
5	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
6	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							

WEEK	TYPE OF EXERCISE	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
7	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
8	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
9	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							

WEEK	TYPE OF EXERCISE	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
10	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
11	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							
12	Daily Weight							
	Endurance							
	Strength							

Clinics 3B
TTSH Medical Centre, Level 3
Contact:
6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



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