



Aerobic Exercise Guidelines

UNC REX Cardiac Rehab

What is Aerobic Exercise?

- Aerobic means “with air or with oxygen”
- Aerobic exercise:
 - Improves the way your body uses oxygen
 - Uses large muscle groups in a rhythmic and continuous manner for an extended period of time
 - Typically increase heart rate, blood pressure and breath rate
 - Has the greatest impact on heart health

Types of Aerobic Exercise

- Walking
- Stationary bicycling
- Low impact aerobics
- Water aerobics
- Chair aerobics
- Seated stepper



Pre-Exercise Checklist

- ✓ **Eat:** Eat a light meal 1-2 hours before exercising. Avoid caffeinated beverages.
- ✓ **Hydrate:** It is important to drink water before, during and after exercise. Please discuss with your physician if you have fluid restrictions.
- ✓ **Medications:** Take all medications as prescribed by your physician.
- ✓ **Diabetes:** If you are diabetic monitor your blood sugar pre and post exercise.
 - If blood glucose is greater than 300 mg/dl, DO NOT exercise.
 - If blood glucose is less than 85 mg/dl, eat a fast acting carbohydrate with protein prior to exercise.

Symptoms

Stop exercise and inform your doctor or nurse of chest pain or pressure, severe shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea or sudden onset of unusual symptoms.

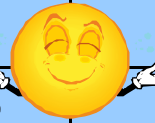


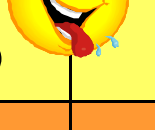

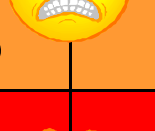

If symptoms do not resolve in 5 minutes, call 911



Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

- While doing any physical activity, we want you to rate your perception of exertion.
- This feeling should reflect how heavy and strenuous the exercise feels to you.
 - Include your feelings of physical stress, effort and fatigue
- We use a simple RPE scale to determine how hard you are working.

Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

LEVEL	HOW DO YOU FEEL?
1 	I am resting
2	I am hardly working
3 	Light effort, can talk easily
4	Starting to feel a little tired
5 	Increased effort, slightly breathless
6 	Moderately tired
7 	Working hard
8 	Very strenuous, I can't talk easily
9 	Extremely tired, I need to stop soon!
10	Maximal effort- I have to stop NOW!

- Scale of 1-10
 - 1 = no exertion at all
 - 10 = maximal effort
 - Choose the number from below that best describes your level of exertion.
- Choose the number that best describes your exertion.
- You can use this information to speed up or slow down your movements to reach your desired range.

Your Heart Rate

- Resting heart rate is how many times your heart beats per minute when you are at rest.
- Resting heart rate can be an important measure of the health of your heart muscle.
- It is important to know how to check your own heart rate.
- All of the following may have an impact on your heart rate:
 - Temperature
 - Body position, such as lying, sitting, standing, or exercising
 - Emotional state
 - Caffeine intake
 - Certain medications

Checking Your Heart Rate Using Radial Pulse

- Find the radial artery.
- Place your pointer and middle fingers on the inside of your opposite wrist just below the thumb.
- Don't use your thumb to check your pulse. The artery in your thumb can make it harder to count accurately.
- Once you can feel your pulse, count how many beats you feel in 15 seconds.
- Multiply this number by 4 to get your heart rate.
 - Ex: 20 beats in 15 seconds equals a heart rate of 80 beats per minute (bpm).



Let's Get Started!

- Begin with walking or stationary bicycling.
- Start gradually and build as your routine becomes easier.
- It's OK to begin with intervals of exercise/rest
 - Ex: Walk for 5 minutes and rest for 2 minutes, repeat as tolerated
 - Ex: Split up your exercise (walk for 10 minutes 2-3 times a day)
- Gradually decrease your rest intervals.
 - Add 1-2 minutes to your exercise time until you can exercise for 20 continuous minutes.
- The goal is to exercise 3-5 days a week for 30-60 continuous minutes.

Aerobic Exercise Guidelines

- Exercise should be comfortable and not painful.
- If you experience any unusual pain or symptoms **STOP and notify your doctor.**
- Begin each exercise session with a warm-up by exercising at a “light” effort for 6 minutes. RPE Scale of 2-3.
- Gradually increase the intensity to a “moderate” effort. RPE scale of 3-6.

Aerobic Exercise Guidelines

- Ask yourself:
 - ✓ Can you perform this activity without fatigue or shortness of breath?
 - ✓ Can you talk at this effort?
 - ✓ Are you exercising at an increased effort with increased respiration?



If you answer **YES** to all of the questions, you are exercising at the right intensity.

Exercise Guidelines

- Take the **Talk/Sing** test.
 - You should be able to talk when exercising.
 - If you cannot talk, slow down.
 - If you can sing, speed up.
- Start slow. Gradually increase your intensity as you become stronger. Your rehab therapist may suggest a recommended exercise heart rate range for you.
- End each exercise session by decreasing intensity to a “light” effort for 3-5 minutes.

