Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme

Information for you

Start date: ____________________________  
Time: ____________________________  
Site: ____________________________  
Class contact: ____________________________  

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Welcome to our Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme. These regular classes will help you to improve your fitness following a cardiac event in a safe and supportive setting.

The aims of the class are to:

• improve your general fitness;
• strengthen your heart muscle;
• improve your confidence;
• support self-management; and
• offer education in relation to coronary heart disease.

Assessment

Before starting a class you will attend for an assessment which may include exercise testing. Please wear suitable footwear with cushioning and non-slip soles.
Before the class

• Please arrive a few minutes early if you wish to change for the class. Wear clothes that you are able to move around in and wear flat, non-slip trainers or supportive shoes.

• Do not leave any valuables or belongings in the changing rooms.

• If you normally use GTN spray for relief of angina, then bring these with you. **If you forget to take any of your usual medications or have run out of your prescription, do not exercise.** Report to the cardiac rehabilitation nurse or the physiotherapist at the class.

• If your doctor has changed your medication, your pulse rate may be affected, so please inform staff of this before the class.

• It is a good idea to have a light, healthy snack about two hours before the class. **Never exercise immediately after a big meal.**

• If you have a sore throat, a cold, flu, chest infection or are feeling unwell then **do not come to class.** Please contact the Cardiac Rehabilitation Team and leave a message to let us know.
During the class

• Please do not use any pieces of equipment in the gym that you have not been instructed to use.

• Please inform a member of staff immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms when exercising:

  ✫ angina or chest pain;
  ✫ dizziness;
  ✫ nausea;
  ✫ palpitations or butterflies in your chest; or
  ✫ unusual shortness of breath.

These symptoms are often not serious and are easily checked out.

• Exercise at your own pace and remember that at all times you should be able to talk, never gasping for air.
Class content
The exercise programme consists of:

1. warm-up and stretch;
2. circuit training (individual exercises which can be adjusted for your level of fitness); and
3. cool down and stretch.

Warm-up and stretch
The aim of the warm-up is to loosen off joints, get the circulation moving and supply blood to exercising muscles. Warming up should take around 15 minutes.

It is important to pace yourself. Warming up should gradually raise your pulse from resting level and your breathing should feel fairly light and effortless.

The warm-up will consist of warming and moving exercises (such as marching or side steps) followed by stretching your main muscle groups.

Stretching also helps improve your flexibility.
Stretching exercises

Here are some examples of the stretches used in the warm-up and cool down sections of the cardiac rehabilitation class:

Chest stretch  Upper back stretch  Side stretch

Calf stretch  Hamstring stretch (back of thigh)
Triceps stretch    Quads stretch
(back of upper arm)   (front of thigh)

• Each stretch should be held for five to ten seconds and should be performed slowly and sustained. Avoid ‘bouncing’ into a stretch.

• During the stretches please do not hold your breath and remember to be aware of your posture.

• You can practise these stretches at any time to help improve your flexibility.

Circuit training

After warming up, you can increase your exercise pace a little by working at various timed stations set up around the gym.

This section of the class will involve both aerobic and muscular endurance exercises.
**Aerobic**

These exercises involve rhythmical movement of major muscle groups and require the heart and lungs to work harder to deliver oxygen to the working muscles.

As with the warm-up, always aim to work at a level that is comfortable for you - everyone is different!

If you feel the exercises are too hard or too fast then slow down and march on the spot. When you rejoin the exercises, do so at an easier pace.

Here are some examples of the exercises used in class:

- Knee bends

  - Low knee bends
  - Medium knee bends with swinging arms
  - High knee bends with reaching arms
• Exercise bike

• Side steps

Low alternate side taps

Medium with half arm lift

High reaching over
• Knee lifts

Low
knee raises only

Medium
hand to opposite knee

High
hand to opposite ankle

• Heel kicks

Low
toe tap behind opposite heel

Medium
heel kick behind

High
heel kick to opposite hand
• Marching

Low
heel lift only

Medium
gentle march

High
high march with arms

• Step backs

Low
alternate toe tap behind

Medium
alternate lunge behind with elbow bends

High
alternate lunge behind with pec deces
• Heel digs
  - Low
    - alternate heel digs
  - Medium
    - with half arm lift
  - High
    - with double arm lift

• Step ups
  - Low
    - toe tap to box
  - Medium
    - full step up
  - High
    - step up with arm raises
Muscular endurance

These exercises help to increase the strength and tone of your muscles and improve your ability to perform tasks such as lifting, carrying and climbing. Some of these circuits involve using equipment - for example, dumbbells or therabands to give resistance. Your physiotherapist will guide you on the resistance level that is right for you.

You should work at a slower pace during the strengthening section of the class, which will help you avoid jarring or ‘locking’ your joints.

You should aim to do 10-12 repetitions and 2 - 3 sets of each exercise.

Breathe out during the action phase of the exercise and breathe in on the return phase. **Never hold your breath when doing strengthening exercises** as this can make your blood pressure rise too steeply.

Remember to work at your own pace too and adjust the intensity of the exercise accordingly.

During arm exercises remember to keep your toes tapping.
• Sit to stand

Low
using chair arms to help

Medium
leg work only

High
reaching arms in front

• Leg lifts to side - keep a tall posture

Low

Medium

High
• Leg lifts behind - keep a tall posture

Low  Medium  High
• Arm lifts to side

Low
small weight

Medium
medium weight

High
larger weight

• Bicep curls

Low
small weight
alternate bends

Medium
medium weight
both arms together

High
larger weight
both arms together
• Heel raises

• Wall press

Low pec dec

Medium feet close to wall

High increase distance of feet
Cool down and stretch

During circuits your heart will be pumping harder and your heart rate will remain raised. If you stop exercising too suddenly your blood pressure may fall too quickly.

To avoid this, the last ten minutes of the class is spent gently exercising, to gradually bring your heart rate and breathing back down to a resting level.

Cooling exercises may be similar to those used in the warm-up although will be performed at a lower level.

The cool down will finish with stretching of the body’s main muscle groups. After working through the circuits, you may find that the muscles are much more ‘stretchy’ in the cool down than at the start of the class.

How hard should I work?

It is important to pace yourself. The warm up should feel ‘fairly light’ and you should not be breathless.

During the aerobic exercises you can increase your pace a little so that it feels ‘somewhat hard’. Remember it’s okay to feel a bit warm and slightly breathless during this section of the class but you should always be able to talk.
You can use the Borg RPE scale as a guide to how hard you should be working. To do this look at the chart during or immediately after exercise and decide which statement or number corresponds to how you feel. During the warm-up you should feel the exercise is ‘fairly light’ or 10 - 11 on the scale and during the circuits you can move up to ‘somewhat hard’ or 12 - 14 on the scale. If you find yourself working at a 15 or above then you are working too hard and need to slow down a bit.
The Borg RPE Scale

Sing
6  No exertion at all
7  Extremely light
8
9  Very light
10
11  Fairly light
12
13  Somewhat hard
14
15  Hard
16
17  Very hard
18
19  Extremely hard
20  Maximum exertion (unable to continue)

Talk

Gasp
We will also give you a target heart rate that you should aim to work towards when exercising.

The physiotherapist will work this out for you as it takes into account your age and medication.

A member of staff will always be available to help take your pulse but if you wish to try this yourself you can find your pulse on the thumb side of your wrist,

or about one inch to the side of your Adam’s apple.

The heart rate is usually expressed in terms of beats a minute, so count the number of beats in 15 seconds and multiply by four.

• Remember your heart rate is only a guide. Always listen to how your body feels.
Relaxation / Tai Chi
At some of our classes we are able to offer relaxation or Tai Chi. We are also able to provide you with a copy of our relaxation CD.

Moving on Together (MoT)
A six week self-management programme is available for people with any cardiac condition. Please ask a member of staff for more information and details of upcoming courses.

Weigh to Go
This six session supported weight-loss programme has been adapted to support cardiac rehabilitation. Please ask a member of staff for details.

Education
A programme of educational talks relating to: coronary heart disease will be available together with the exercise classes.

Home exercise
We recommend that you attend the exercise classes but if this is not possible we can provide a home exercise programme for you. A cardiac rehabilitation exercise DVD is available.
Low intensity

If you are coming along to the low intensity exercise session, aspects of these classes will differ to the information in this booklet:

• Sometimes the first few minutes of the warm up are spent exercising in a chair - good for those who have leg/mobility problems!

• Whether performed sitting or standing, the warm up is always at an easy pace - designed to suit even low fitness levels.

• The circuit exercises are similar to those shown in this booklet, though have been adapted to make them easier.

• Any exercises in the class can be further adapted to suit your needs - staff will be happy to help!

Remember:

• Always exercise at your own pace - don’t worry about anyone else!

• If you are finding the exercises too hard, slow down and march on the spot. When you rejoin the exercises, do so at an easier pace.

• Always make sure you are able to talk when exercising.
Physical activity levels

• The current national physical activity guidelines state that on at least five days of the week adults should aim for 30 minutes of physical activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more at a moderate intensity level.

• Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength (for example, carrying shopping, housework, gardening) on at least two days of the week.

• Adults should keep the amount of time they are sitting for extended periods to a minimum.

Walking

Walking is an ideal way of adding time to your total weekly physical activity and it can be a relaxing way to clear your mind. There are lots of simple ways you can make walking part of your daily routine.

Why not start by;

• Getting off the bus a stop earlier and walking the rest of the way

• Walking up stairs instead of using the lift

• Sitting down less – take regular breaks from sitting in front of the television or computer by getting
up and moving around.

- Once you have got used to walking build up the speed and distance you walk gradually.

- Always start and end your walk at a slow pace – this will be your warm-up and cool-down.

You can use a diary to help gradually build up your walking. If you are walking briskly every day and your total time is more than 150 minutes a week, well done. You are already doing a great job.
## Activity diary

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Classes in Ayrshire

University Hospital Ayr - Physiotherapy gym
  Monday    12 noon - 1pm
           (Low intensity)
  Wednesday 2pm - 3pm

University Hospital Crosshouse - (Lister Centre)
  Tuesday   11.30am - 1pm
           (Low intensity)
  Thursday  9.30am - 10.30am

Ayrshire Central Hospital - Douglas Grant Rehab Unit
  Thursday  3.15pm - 4.15pm

Arran - (Auchrannie Hotel Spa)
  Thursday  2pm - 3.15pm

Ardrossan - (St Peter’s Church Hall)
  Tuesday   9.15am - 10.30am

Auchinleck - (Boswell Centre)
  Thursday  1.30pm - 3pm

Girvan - (Girvan Community Hospital)
  Tuesday   3.30pm - 4.30pm
Contact telephone numbers

University Hospital Crosshouse:
01563 827175

University Hospital Ayr:
01292 614550

Arran: 01770 600516
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0800 169 1441

reviewed for plain English

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