Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cardiac Rehab and the Benefits of Exercise

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Cardiac Rehabilitation and the Benefits of Exercise

Patient and carer Information

Community Cardiology Rehabilitation Service

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Cardiac rehabilitation exercise programme

You have been referred to physiotherapy to discuss your exercise and activity levels.

The aims of the exercise programme are:

- To improve your physical fitness
- To improve self-management of your condition
- To improve your understanding of safe exercise.

The exercise programme content

- Individual assessment before starting the programme
- One hour exercise session once a week for six weeks
- Individual review at the end of the programme to set long term activity levels or exercise goals

Venues:

- Wigan Health Centre (Boston House)
- Leigh Health Centre

Assessment

The individual assessment takes approximately one hour.

Your activity levels and goals will be discussed with a physiotherapist. Please bring your medication list with you for this assessment.

Following the assessment, there is an opportunity to attend a six week exercise programme.

For some patients, an individual or home exercise programme is more appropriate. This will be discussed with you following the assessment.

Should I come to the assessment?

Even if you do not feel an exercise programme is something you wish to take part in, discussing your activity levels with a physiotherapist can help you with your recovery.

Attending the assessment does not mean you have to attend the exercise programme, but it may answer some of your worries or concerns about exercise or future activity levels.

What do I need for the exercise session?

- Glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) spray if you have one.
- Reading glasses, if necessary.
- Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear, i.e. something you would be comfortable exercising in.

Benefits of exercise

Exercise has many benefits. It will help to:

- Build up your physical fitness, gradually enabling you to do more with less effort.
- Give you a feeling of well-being and satisfaction (this is thought to be due to an increase in certain chemicals in the body called endorphins and encephalins).
- Make you feel less tense and help you relax and sleep better.

- Help you to lose/ maintain a healthy weight.
- Keep your blood pressure within normal limits.
- Lower blood cholesterol levels - this helps to prevent fatty deposits being laid down in the coronary arteries.
- Decrease the “stickiness” of small blood cells called platelets. This helps to prevent clogging up of the arteries.

Do’s and Don’ts for exercise

- Do remember to start any exercise or activity slowly and gradually build up. Avoid rare sessions of intense physical activity by making exercise regular.
- Do “warm up” before set exercise regime. This will help prevent muscular strains and allow time for your body to adapt to exercise.
- Do not continue to exercise if you have symptoms of chest discomfort, undue breathlessness, dizziness, or muscle cramp.
- Do not exercise during illness or infection (including the common cold). If you have a temperature, the body uses more energy, and your heart must work harder.
- Do make sure the intensity and duration of exercise is reduced after being ill, or when you have had a break from regular exercise.
- Do take care when exercising outdoors on very cold or windy days, as the heart must work much harder in these conditions.
- Do not exercise immediately after eating as the blood is diverted from

the muscles to the digestive system during this time.

- Do not drink alcohol before exercise.
- Do wear sensible clothing and appropriate footwear, i.e. comfortable, flat shoes when exercising.
- Do “cool down” after exercise.
- Allow your body to return to rest safely by gradually reducing the speed and intensity of the exercise.
- Do not have a very hot or cold shower, hot tub (e.g. Jacuzzi) or sauna after exercise. This can cause a rapid fall in blood pressure or abnormal heart rhythms.

For further information

If you have any questions or queries, which we have not covered in this leaflet, we will be pleased to answer your questions as clearly and honestly as we can.

Physiotherapy Department **Leigh** Health Centre

Telephone: 01942 483413

Physiotherapy Department **Wigan** Health Centre (Boston House)

Telephone: 01942 482260

Hours of service: Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm

(Excluding public holidays)

Local Pharmacy - Your local pharmacies offer a wide range of services including information and general advice on symptom relief medicines as well as a prescription collection and delivery service.

References

Myocardial Infarction: Cardiac Rehabilitation and prevention of further cardiovascular disease (NICE, 2013).

BACPR Standards and Core Components for cardiovascular disease prevention and rehabilitation (BACPR, 2017).



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