



# Walking programme guide

**This guide recommends a programme of walking to help manage your heart condition. Everyone is different, so please check with your heart nurse or an instructor about where to start on this programme.**

Regular walking is recommended as the best way to regain physical fitness and maintain fitness in the future. Most people walk as part of their everyday life.

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Frequency: 2-3 times a week</b>	<b>Duration: 12 minutes</b>
<b>Intensity:</b> Easy to comfortable pace during the first 6 minutes, at a slightly faster pace to return (6 minutes). Walk at a slower pace when nearing the destination.		
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Frequency: 4-5 times a week</b>	<b>Duration: 14 minutes</b>
<b>Intensity:</b> Easy to comfortable pace during the first 7 minutes, at a faster pace on return (7 minutes). Walk at a slower pace as you reach the destination.		
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Frequency: 4-5 times a week</b>	<b>Duration: 20 minutes</b>
<b>Intensity:</b> Easy to comfortable pace during the first 10 minutes. On the return journey, alternate normal pace with some brisk walking. Finish the walk with a cool down phase, beginning at a normal walking pace and reducing the walking speed to a slow pace.		
<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>Frequency: 4-5 times a week</b>	<b>Duration: 25 minutes</b>
<b>Intensity:</b> Comfortable pace on first 10 minutes. Walk briskly as much as you can for the second part of your walk. Finish the walk with a cool down phase, beginning at a normal walking pace and reducing the walking speed to a slow pace.		
<b>Stage 5</b>	<b>Frequency: 4-5 times a week</b>	<b>Duration: 30 minutes</b>
<b>Intensity:</b> Comfortable pace on first 10 minutes, gradually increasing the speed to a brisk walk for a further 10 minutes. Finish the walk with a cool down phase, beginning at a normal walking pace and reducing the walking speed to a slow pace.		

- If you have been prescribed a GTN spray always remember to take it with you.
- Walk with a relative or friend initially as this will help with confidence.
- Always include a warm up and cool down.
- Start at stage 1 on the above chart. Walk at your own steady pace on the flat building up to 'beginning to feel a bit puffed' (RPE 3-4). Remember you should always be able to walk and talk at the same time. Feeling slightly breathless on returning home is normal, but you should not feel exhausted.

- Once you can manage this comfortably you can either progress onto the next level, which increases your walk time, or stay at the same level but increase the number of walks per day before moving onto the next level. Gradually increase the duration and distance of walking, before increasing your speed. It is useful to alternate brisk walking with a slower speed to build up the intensity gradually.
- If you have other conditions that affect your mobility e.g. arthritis, bronchitis, you may find increasing the number of walks rather than the time is more suitable.
- It is advisable to go for a walk at your best time of the day. Do not leave it until the evening when you are likely to be tired and not immediately after a heavy meal.
- It is advisable to wrap up in bad weather, as the heart works much harder in cold or windy conditions. Patients with angina or in the first few weeks after a heart attack should avoid extremes of temperature.

### Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

Practise using the scale below during your walk. Consider how short of breath you are, as well as how your muscles are feeling when deciding on the 'Rate of Perceived Exertion' (RPE) score.

Modified Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale (1-10)		
0	SING	REST
1		REALLY EASY 'Just noticeable'
2		EASY 'No problem'
3	TALK	MODERATE 'Beginning to feel a bit puffed but happy to continue'
4		SORT OF HARD 'Feeling puffed; warm but able to speak in full sentences'
5	GASP	HARD 'Tiring; you have to push yourself to continue'
6		
7		REALLY HARD 'Out of breath; shattered'
8		REALLY, REALLY HARD
9		
10		

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Reviewed by RBFT Cardiology September 2024. Next review due: September 2026.

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent