

Hints on Staying Active

- ♥ **Choose an activity you enjoy or try a new activity.** Aqua (water-based) physical activity is much easier on the joints and a great way to stay fit.
- ♥ **Set yourself small achievable goals.** Include what you will do, when and with whom. Write these in a diary and tick them off when completed.
- ♥ **Incorporate physical activity as part of your daily routine.** Take the stairs instead of the lift, get off the bus early and walk or walk to the shops rather than drive.
- ♥ **Get your friends and family involved.** This way you can motivate and encourage each other to get fit and have fun at the same time.
- ♥ **Listen to music while you move.**
- ♥ **Join a sports club or group.** Enjoy some physical activity while socialising. Phone 0800 ACTIVE (0800 228483) to find out about physical activity opportunities in your community.
- ♥ **Reward yourself** for the progress you have made.



Angina and Physical Activity

- ♥ If you have a history of angina check with your doctor before starting a physical activity programme. Ask your doctor if Green Prescription is suitable for you.
- ♥ Carry your angina spray/tablets with you at all times and follow the angina action plan if necessary.
- ♥ If you get angina on exertion you may take a dose of your nitrate spray or tablet before you start your activity.
- ♥ For daily use, a few nitrate tablets can be carried in a small airtight container. These tablets should be thrown away after one week.
- ♥ If you get angina while you are exercising or you feel dizzy or unusually tired, STOP and let someone know how you feel. Follow the 'Action Plan' on the next page.

Angina and Heart Attack Warning Signs

Angina is when your heart muscle doesn't get as much blood and oxygen as it needs. It is a sign of heart disease; however it can be treated.

Angina usually occurs with exertion and may be felt as:

- ♥ **Chest discomfort** - pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in the centre of the chest. This can last for more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back.
- ♥ **Discomfort in one or both arms or in the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.**
- ♥ **Shortness of breath.** Often comes with or before chest discomfort.
- ♥ **Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness.**

Heart attack warning signs are similar to angina but usually last longer, are more severe and not relieved by rest or medications.

Action Plan

If you think you are having angina or a heart attack:

1. Stop what you are doing, sit down and rest.

If your doctor has prescribed you an angina (nitrate) spray or tablets, then:

- ♥ If the pain or symptoms persist after resting for one to two minutes, take one or two puffs of your nitrate spray or half to one tablet.
 - ♥ If the pain or symptoms are relieved by rest, or by your nitrate spray or tablet, you may resume activity gently.
 - ♥ If the pain or symptoms persists, repeat the dose safely every five minutes.
2. If the pain or symptoms are not relieved after three doses or with resting for 15 minutes, call an ambulance **Dial 111 immediately.**

When it's a heart attack, minutes do matter.

Ask for the ambulance service and tell them you are having a possible heart attack.

3. If available chew one aspirin unless you have been previously advised not to take aspirin.
4. Rest quietly and wait for the ambulance.

For More Information

Contact the following for further information on physical activity:

SPARC

SPARC ihi Aotearoa (Sport and Recreation New Zealand) is the government agency charged with promoting, encouraging and supporting sport and physical recreation in New Zealand.

Green Prescription

Green Prescription is a SPARC initiative part funded by the Ministry of Health. It is written advice from a health professional to be active as part of your health management. With it you can improve your health and feel better at the same time while receiving support from your local Green Prescription patient support person.

- ♥ Call **0800 ACTIVE** (0800 228483) to find out more or visit sparc.org.nz.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

If you have recently had a heart event, cardiac rehabilitation is an important part of your treatment. It involves education, exercise and emotional support for both you and your partner.

Cardiac Clubs

Cardiac clubs provide people at high risk or with established heart disease with ongoing support, education and a safe place to enjoy physical activity. There are a large number of cardiac clubs throughout New Zealand.

- ♥ For more information on cardiac rehabilitation or cardiac clubs, phone the Heart Foundation **(09) 571 9191** or visit heartfoundation.org.nz.

Being Active
with Heart Disease



→ a helping
hand to
making a
difference

Being Active with Heart Disease

If you have angina, have had a heart attack or heart surgery then regular physical activity is an essential part of your recovery and ongoing wellbeing. People who are physically active are shown to recover better from a heart event.

Being active is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your chance of having a heart attack or further heart complications.

Being physically active not only makes you feel good, but also keeps your heart healthy by helping to:

- ♥ improve your cholesterol levels
- ♥ lower your blood pressure
- ♥ control your blood sugar levels
- ♥ reduce your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes
- ♥ reduce your weight and/or maintain a healthy weight
- ♥ reduce stress and feelings of depression
- ♥ improve your sleep.

Physical activity can also make you feel more confident.

If you have a history of angina, have had a heart attack or heart surgery or you're not used to doing physical activity, it is important to talk with your doctor before starting a physical activity programme.



What is physical activity?

Physical activity is any form of exercise or movement. It can include planned activities such as going for a walk, swimming or playing a sport. It also includes everyday activities such as household chores, gardening, walking to work or climbing stairs.

What Type of Activity is Appropriate?

The best type of activity to help improve your heart is called 'aerobic' activity. Aerobic activity is any activity that uses the large muscle groups such as the legs, shoulders and arms e.g. walking, cycling, swimming and dancing.



How Much Activity Should I do?

Aim to do at least **30 minutes** of **moderate physical activity** on most, if not all, days of the week to improve your health.

This total time can be taken in smaller doses of 10-15 minutes of activity to reach the 30 minute goal.

Once you manage 30 minutes, try gradually increasing your activity up to 60 minutes daily.

How Hard Should my Physical Activity Programme be?

Aim to maintain a **moderate intensity** during your activity. An easy way to monitor your intensity or 'how hard' you are working during an activity, is to use the talk test:

| Intensity | Talk Test |
|------------------------|--|
| Light | You should be able to talk easily and even sing while doing the activity |
| Moderate (Recommended) | You will notice a slight increase in breathing, but should be able to carry on a conversation comfortably while engaging in the activity |
| Vigorous | You will be breathing a lot harder and too out of breath to carry on a conversation. |

The table below gives examples of various levels of physical activity. If you are new to regular physical activity start off with 'light' activities and gradually progress to 'moderate' activity over several weeks.

| Activity Level | Activity Example |
|----------------|---|
| Light | Leisurely walk on the flat Slow stationary cycling Indoor bowls Ironing Watering the garden Making the bed Slow ballroom dancing Chair-based physical activity |
| Moderate | Brisk walking Lawn bowls Gentle water aerobics Line dancing Mowing the lawn and gardening Vacuuming Playing cricket Golf – wheeling or carrying clubs |
| Vigorous | Walking very briskly/brisk walk uphill Jogging or running Moderate cycling Swimming Hiking or tramping Step aerobics Skipping Carrying groceries up the stairs |

It is recommended you talk with your doctor before performing vigorous activity.



Getting Active the Safe Way

- ♥ **Talk to your doctor first.** If you have heart disease or if you're not used to doing physical activity, it is important to talk with your doctor about the safest way to increase your level of physical activity.
- ♥ **Always warm up and cool down.** When you do any physical activity, begin slowly for the first few minutes and build up gradually. When you come to the end of your activity, take time to slow down, and make sure you don't stop suddenly. Stretching as part of your cool down will help to avoid pain and stiffness in joints and muscles.
- ♥ **Start slowly and build up your activity level.** It is very important to increase your physical activity gradually. This means both the length of time you spend doing it, and how intense the activity is.
- ♥ **Listen to your body.** Do not exercise if you feel unwell (e.g. have a viral infection or temperature). If you get any angina type pain, feel dizzy, sick, unwell, very tired or very short of breath, stop what you are doing. If the symptoms don't go away, or they come back later, see your doctor.
- ♥ Be wary of exercising when the temperature is extremely hot or cold. Ensure you dress appropriately.
- ♥ Wear comfortable clothing/shoes and drink plenty of water.
- ♥ Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back. If you can, take a cell phone with you.
- ♥ Always carry your angina spray or other necessary medication with you if appropriate.



Being active is for life so make sure you are doing something you enjoy!