

# Cardiac Precautions

## THE STEPS

1. Warm up before activity and cool down afterwards. Pump your ankles, kick your legs and curl your elbows for 3-5 minutes. This will help your heart adjust to changes in activity level.
2. Pace your activity using the Rating of Perceived Exertion (see below). Listen to your body and take breaks when you need them.
3. Avoid exercise for 30-60 minutes after a meal.
4. STOP exercising if you feel:
  - Chest (or jaw, arm or mid-back) pain
  - Extreme shortness of breath
  - Dizziness, nausea or lightheadedness
5. Do not strain, hold your breath or bear down. This can increase your blood pressure and put extra stress on your heart.

### Rating of Perceived Exertion (Modified Borg Scale)

Keep your exertion between 3-5/10 until your doctor clears you for heavier work.

0	Nothing at all	6	
1	Very light	7	Very heavy
2	Light	8	
3	Moderate	9	
4		10	Very, very heavy (maximal)
5	Heavy		

*Source: Hillegass, Ellen and H. Steven Sadowsky. Essentials of Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy. W.B. Saunders Company, 2001*



KNIGHT  
CARDIOVASCULAR  
INSTITUTE

*Oregon Health & Science University*