

YOU Docs: Cardiac rehab classes can cut your risk of another heart attack by 50 percent

By Syndicated columns — JANUARY 27, 2010

If you're one of the more than 1.2 million people in the U.S. and Canada who've had a heart attack in the past year, there's a class that could dramatically lower your odds of having another in the next 12 months. But chances are you've never heard of it.

Cardiac rehab — CR for short — may be the best-kept secret in 21st-century cardiology. Study after study proves that these safe, supervised exercise classes slash the risk of repeat heart attacks and other heart-related deaths. Yet fewer than 20 percent of heart patients ever do CR, and fewer than 12 percent get a full course.

How great is cardiac rehab? It can cut your risk of subsequent heart attacks within a year by a whopping 50 percent, according to a recent Brandeis University study of more than 600,000 people. That's huge.

CR works its cardio wonders by lowering lousy LDL cholesterol, raising healthy HDL, reducing inflammation, dialing back heart-threatening metabolic syndrome, easing depression and even trimming excess pounds. In one study of 1,821 heart attack survivors, 95 percent of those who took CR classes were still alive three years later, compared with 46 percent of those who didn't.

Expensive? Government and most private insurance plans cover the cost. The most recent survey found reimbursement for this to be about \$34 an hour.

You're a candidate for CR if you've had any of these: a heart attack; bypass surgery; stents to avoid a heart attack; heart-valve surgery; worsening heart failure; or worsening angina (chest pain that's a sign of heart disease).

If your doc doesn't mention CR, ask. And don't be afraid of the classes: They're geared to your ability and are staffed by medical professionals who monitor your exercise so you don't overdo it.

Signed up? Mark the workouts on your calendar in pen — and consider them unbreakable appointments. In a recent study of 30,000 people who signed up for 36 rehab classes, perfect attendance reduced the risk for a repeat heart attack an extra 12 percent over those who made it to just 24 classes.

Women: Look for an all-female class. Women are more vulnerable than men to depression after a heart attack. In a University of South Florida study, a women-only rehab program countered depression better than a mixed class, thanks to extra support and information, which boosted confidence and motivation. If you can't find a strictly female program, look for a class with a female instructor.

Keep going. Medicare and most private insurance cover 36 sessions. But you need at least nine months of regular workouts to really cut heart attack and death risk, and you should keep exercising for the rest of your life. If insurance won't spring for extra sessions, ask your doctor and the rehab staff to give you an at-home routine. Make sure they spell out how much exercise you need and what to do if you develop chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath or nausea.

Bring your iPod. Heart surgery and stiff, clogged arteries can dull your thinking, but music can sharpen it again. In one CR study, those who sweated along to "The Four Seasons" by Vivaldi scored twice as high on a verbal test as those who worked out in silence. Doesn't have to be classical: Any rhythmic, upbeat tunes should work, from Beyoncé to Benny Goodman.



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The YOU Docs, Mehmet Oz and Mike Roizen, are authors of "YOU: On a Diet."

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Cardiac Rehabilitation at OHSU

Cardiac Rehabilitation is extremely important to your recovery after a heart attack, heart procedure or heart surgery. It provides medically monitored exercise, education and counseling that enables you to return to your regular and recreational activities as soon as possible. Cardiac Rehabilitation also teaches you the skills necessary for adopting healthier eating, stress management and lifestyle habits.

Continuing a safe exercise program is an essential part of resuming a healthy lifestyle.

Benefits of regular exercise include:

- Reducing stress during recovery
- Increasing your feelings of well-being and energy
- Helping your heart and lungs work more efficiently
- Reducing your risk of developing heart disease
- Increasing your muscle strength and flexibility
- Controlling your appetite and managing your weight

Cardiac Rehabilitation is divided into three phases:

PHASE I begins when you are still in the hospital. You will meet with a Cardiac Rehabilitation staff member and learn about the role of exercise in your recovery. You will also learn about cardiac medications, nutrition and tobacco cessation from other members of your health care team.

PHASE II begins when you leave the hospital. You will participate in medically monitored and closely supervised exercise. You will work on gradually increasing your activity level and exercise capacity. Phase II typically lasts for 36 visits (three times per week for 12 weeks).

PHASE III is a long-term maintenance program. If you have completed Phase II, you may opt to enroll in Phase III for continued supervision. The Cardiac Rehab team will set up an exercise program for you to carry out at home or in the gym.

Attached you will find a list of some Cardiac Rehabilitation programs in Oregon and Washington.



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Oregon		CARDIOPULMONARY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS		Washington	
CITY	FACILITY	ADDRESS	PHONE		
Portland	Oregon Health & Science University	3303 S.W. Bond Ave. Portland, OR 97239	503 418-2406		
OHSU PARTNERS					
Albany	Samaritan Albany General Hospital	1046 S.W. 6th Ave. Albany, OR 97321	541 812-5441		
Astoria	Columbia Memorial Hospital	2055 Exchange St. Suite 170, Astoria, OR 97103	503 338-4052		
Bend	Saint Charles Medical Center	2500 N.E. Neff Rd. Bend, OR 97701	541 706-7725		
Coos Bay	Bay Area Hospital	1775 Thompson Rd. Coos Bay, OR 97420	541 269-8389		
Eugene	Sacred Heart Medical Center	3311 River Bend Dr. Springfield, OR 97477	541 686-7216		
Longview	St. John's Medical Center	1615 Delaware St. Longview, WA	360 414-7384		
Medford	Rogue Regional Medical Center	2825 East Barnett Rd. Medford, OR 97504	541 789-4466		
Roseburg	Mercy Medical Center	2700 Stewared Pkwy. Roseburg, OR 97470	541 677-4826		
Salem	Salem Health	2561 Center St. Salem, OR 97302	503 561-5980		
The Dalles	Columbia Medical Center	551 Lone Pine Blvd. The Dalles, OR 97058	541 296-7202		
OTHER CARDIAC REHAB PROGRAMS					
Corvallis	Good Sam Regional Medical Center	3600 N.W. Samaritan Dr. Corvallis, OR 97330	541 768-5323		
Florence	Peace Harbor Medical Center	320 9th St. Florence, OR 97438	541 902-6300		
Gold Beach	Curry General Hospital	94220 Fourth St. Gold Beach, OR 97444	541 247-3128		
Grants Pass	Three Rivers Community Hospital	520 S.W. Ramsey Ave. Suite 103, Grants Pass, OR 97527	541 472-7850		
Gresham	Legacy Mt Hood Medical Center	24988 S.E. Stark, Gresham, OR 97030	503 674-1590		
Hillsboro	Tuality Community Hospital	364 S.E. 8th Ave. Suite 200, Hillsboro, OR 97123	503 681-1848		
Hood River	Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital	810 12th St. Hood River, OR 97031	541 387-6326		
Lebanon	Lebanon Community Hospital	525 N. Santiam Hwy. Lebanon, OR 97355	541 451-7888		
McMinville	Willamette Valley Medical Center	2700 S.E. Stratus Ave. McMinville, OR 97128	503 435-6550		
Newberg	Providence Newberg Hospital	501 Villa Rd. Newberg, OR 97132	503 537-1757		
Newport	Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital	930 S.W. Abbey St. Newport, OR 97365	541 574-4856		
Portland	Adventist Medical Center	10123 S.E. Market St. Portland, OR 97216	503 251-6260		
Portland	Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital	1015 N.W. 22nd Ave. Portland, OR 97210	503 413-6723		
Portland	St. Vincent's Hospital	9205 S.W. Barnes Rd. Portland, OR 97225	503 216-1250		
Tualatin	Legacy Meridian Park Hospital	19300 S.W. 65th Ave. Tualatin, OR 97062	503 692-2548		
Puyallup	Good Samaritan Hospital	16515 E. Meridian Ave. Suite 201 B, Puyallup, WA 98375	253 697-8141		
Woodburn	Woodburn Health Center (Silverton Health)	1475 Mt. Hood Ave. Woodburn, OR 97071	971 983-5307		
Vancouver	PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center	600 N.E. 92nd Ave. Vancouver, WA 98664	360 514-1600		
Vancouver	Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center	2211 N.E. 139th St. Vancouver, WA 98686	360 487-3770		

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



Sternal Precautions



During surgery, your sternum (breastbone) was cut. To best allow for healing, please follow the following precautions for the next 6 – 8 weeks:

- **No pushing, pulling or lifting more than 5 – 10 pounds**
- **No twisting of your trunk (roll onto your side to get in and out of bed)**
- **No raising your elbows above shoulder-level**



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Energy Conservation Guidelines

PLAN AHEAD

- Get everything you need together before you begin a project, activity or task.
- Delegate tasks to family members or friends who are willing.
- Leave yourself enough time: Hurrying is tiring.
- Plan for rest breaks: Never take on more activity than you can realistically accomplish.
- Keep a journal and assess your fatigue: What increases it? What decreases it?
- Prioritize activities that must be done daily vs. activities that can be done several times a week: Decide which activities are really important to you and which ones are not.
- Shop at grocery stores and/or malls during less busy times.
- Plan shopping trips with other people to help with heavier or bulky items.

ORGANIZE

- Keep items that you use often in easy-to-reach places (kitchen, bathroom, living room, bedroom, etc.).
- Store items within arm's length: Bending and reaching above the height of your shoulders takes extra effort.
- Rearrange your workspace to eliminate awkward seated postures. Keep a chair or stool nearby to take seated rest breaks as needed. Install hand rails and/or grab bars and use them.

PACE YOURSELF

- Take rest breaks, at least twice a day, for 30 minutes each.
- Take rest breaks during activities, but stay as active as you can.
- Practice deep, slow breathing during activity.
- Do not hold your breath when you are lifting/pushing/pulling.
- Sit down during activities whenever possible: Use a shower bench, dress while sitting on the bed or use a high stool at the kitchen counter.

ADAPT YOUR ENVIRONMENT TO YOUR NEEDS

- Take rest breaks, at least twice a day, for 30 minutes each.
- Take rest breaks during activities, but stay as active as you can.
- Practice deep, slow breathing during activity.
- Do not hold your breath when you are lifting/pushing/pulling.
- Sit down during activities.



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Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale

0	NO EXERTION
1	VERY MILD
2	
3	MILD
4	
5	SOMEWHAT HARD
6	
7	HARD
8	
9	VERY HARD
10	MAXIMUM EXERTION



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Home Exercise Program



- Walking is one of the best forms of exercise after heart injury. Go at your own pace and rest when you need to.
- Remember to do your warm-up exercises 3 – 5 minutes before you walk, and cool-down exercises for 3 – 5 minutes after you walk.
- Avoid walking outdoors if it is colder than 40 degrees or warmer than 80 degrees.

WHAT

Walk

HOW OFTEN

Most days of the week (5 – 6 days)

HOW LONG

Begin with 3 – 4 walks per day for _____ minutes. Add 2 – 3 minutes each week. As you add time, the number of sessions can be decreased. (For example, when you complete 30 minutes, decrease the frequency to one session per day).

Your goal is to reach 30 – 45 minutes of continuous training.

HOW HARD

Use RPE (rating of perceived exertion) scale from mild-somewhat hard level (3 – 6 on 10 point scale)



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OHSU CARDIAC REHABILITATION SERVICES

Home Walking Program

- Walking is one of the best forms of exercise after heart surgery. Go at your own pace and rest when you need to.
- Remember to do your warm-up exercises for 3 – 5 minutes before you walk, and cool-down exercises for 3 – 5 minutes after you walk.
- Slowly build up to walking at least 30 minutes a day, five or more days a week.
- Avoid walking outdoors if it is colder than 40 degrees or warmer than 80 degrees.

SAMPLE WALKING PROGRAM

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Monitor Time	10 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
OR										
Monitor Distance	1/4 mile (4 blocks)	1/2 mile (8 blocks)	3/4 mile (12 blocks)	1 mile (16 blocks)	1 mile (16 blocks)	1 1/4 miles (20 blocks)	1 1/2 miles (24 blocks)	2 miles (32 blocks)	2 miles (32 blocks)	2 miles (32 blocks)

CUSTOM WALKING PROGRAM

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Monitor Time										
OR										
Monitor Distance										



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OHSU CARDIAC REHABILITATION SERVICES

Sample Walking Program

FREQUENCY

Weeks 1 – 3: Three times per day

Weeks 4 – 6: Two times per day

Weeks 7 – 10: Once per day

WEEK	WARM-UP	BRISK WALK	COOL DOWN
1	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
2	5 minutes	8 minutes	5 minutes
3	5 minutes	11 minutes	5 minutes
4	5 minutes	14 minutes	5 minutes
5	5 minutes	17 minutes	5 minutes
6	5 minutes	20 minutes	5 minutes
7	5 minutes	23 minutes	5 minutes
8	5 minutes	26 minutes	5 minutes
9	5 minutes	29 minutes	5 minutes
10	5 minutes	30 minutes	5 minutes



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