



GET MOVING WITH HEART FAILURE
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Lace up and Go!
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Heart Failure and Exercise

Take the Plunge and Swim

Heart failure occurs when your heart is not able to pump enough blood to meet the needs of your body. There are many causes and types of heart failure. You can exercise when you have heart failure. Swimming or water walking are both beneficial.

Tips to work with your Heart Failure Team

- Keep all appointments with your health care providers.
- Bring all medications, including those you buy off the shelf to your appointment.
- Review all medications with your providers.
- Let your provider know if you are not able to get or take your medications.
- Ask how much and what kind of exercise is good for you. Ask your provider to write down your target heart rate and recommend rate of perceived exertion (RPE).
- Bring a list of your weights from home.
- Ask how much salt (sodium) you should have a day.
- Ask if you should limit your fluid intake.
- Talk to your provider if you need help to stop smoking or lose weight.
- Ask your provider what your weight goal should be.

Tips for exercise: Swimming

- Swimming/ water aerobics help to keep joints flexible and muscles conditioned. It also helps with weight loss. Swimming/water aerobics help to improve heart health. Swimming/water aerobics can help reduce the effects of stress.
- Water supports and cushions the body, eliminating the kind of pounding associated with running.
- Water is 12 times more resistant than air. Because of the resistance of the water, your heart works harder the deeper you exercise.
- Due to this resistance and the temperature of the water, it is easy to underestimate how intense you should exercise.
- You need to exercise at a lower intensity than you would out of the water on land.
- Water temperature should be 79 degrees to 91 degrees Fahrenheit (26-33 C). Most public pools are kept at 84-89 degrees Fahrenheit. Pools that are hotter can cause a drop in blood pressure and dizziness. Temperatures less than 79 degrees Fahrenheit may cause irregular beats.
- Always enter and exit the shallow end of the pool.
- Always allow a warm up period as you start your swim/aerobic exercise and end with a cool-down period.
- If swimming, use the swim stroke that is most comfortable for you. Use fins, pull buoys and kickboards.
- Stop swimming/exercising if you experience chest pain, palpitations, or light-headedness.
- Keep in mind good breathing techniques. Breathe in and blow out to avoid holding your breath.