

Your Heart Surgery: Rehab and Recovery

Narrator

Once you're home from the hospital you'll start the process of getting back into life.

Robert

Listen to the doctors, take it slow, and let people help you. Be sure to do your cardiac rehab program too. It's a structured plan to help you get back to normal.

David

Follow your instructions even if it's a challenge. That might mean you'll need to push yourself at first to do the usual daily things like getting dressed or making a simple meal.

Liz

One thing I made myself do each day, was to get up and change out of my pajamas into daytime clothing. Even if I wasn't going anywhere, it helped me feel I was getting back into a routine. Even though I couldn't drive for several weeks, I started planning short outings. Like lunch with a friend just to get out of the house and put some easy activities back into my schedule.

David

They'll want you to do post-surgery exercise and walk more than you might want to walk. Which is tough at first. If you're supposed to walk 30 minutes twice a day like I was, have a friend or family member arrive at exercise time every day. That way you're less likely to decide that you're too tired or sore to get up and go.

Liz

At week two I started walking five to 10 minutes three to five times a day, making laps within my home. My dog thought it was strange at first, but then he started walking laps with me.

If you care for small children or pets you won't be able to lift them, so plan to get the help you need. Don't forget the tasks you may not be able to do like laundry. I could drop a few pieces of lightweight clothing in the washer, but couldn't lift wet laundry to move it to the dryer. Bending and lifting for me was not allowed. So I needed help loading and unloading into the dishwasher too.

Narrator

Social support can also be very important for your recovery. Many people find the connection to other survivors can help them get stronger and remain hopeful.

Come visit our online community and connect with people who care.

We wish you a speedy recovery, and many years of good health.

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