

Heart Failure: Being Active

Heart failure means that your heart is not pumping as well as it should.

It may help to remember that your heart is a muscle.

And as with a muscle in your arm or your leg, you can help make your heart stronger with activity.

Being active may also help you have fewer symptoms.

For example, you may feel stronger, have more energy, or be less out of breath.

And activity may help you stay independent and live longer.

But like with all types of exercise, it's important to stay safe.

Because with heart failure if you exercise too much or too hard, you may put too much stress on your heart.

And that can make your heart failure worse.

So talk to your doctor about what's right for you.

They may suggest cardiac rehab.

Cardiac rehab can help you get and stay active.

Your rehab team or doctor will work with you to create a plan that will keep you active, healthy, and safe.

Let your rehab team or doctor know what activities you enjoy and what activities you want to try.

Your plan also will help you know when to call for help.

When you have your activity plan, here are a few things to keep in mind.

Before you exercise, are your symptoms under control?

If you're tired or not feeling well, it's okay to cut back.

How are you feeling?

You should be able to talk easily without being out of breath while you're exercising.

If you notice that you're out of breath, have chest pain, or don't feel right, stop exercising and rest.

It might be time to call for help.