

Heart Failure: Being Active

You have a condition called heart failure (also known as congestive heart failure, or CHF). Being active doesn't mean that you have to wear yourself out. Even a little movement each day helps to strengthen your heart. If you can't get out to exercise, you can do simple stretching and strengthening exercises at home.



Ideas to get you started

- Add a little movement to things you do now. Walk to mail letters. Park your car at the far end of the parking lot and walk to the store.
- Choose activities you enjoy. You might walk, swim, or ride an exercise bike. Things like gardening and washing the car count, too.
- Join a group exercise program at a YMCA or YWCA, a senior center, or a community center. Or look into a hospital cardiac rehabilitation program.

Tips to keep you going

- Get up and get dressed each day. You'll feel more like being active.
- Make a plan. Choose one or more activities that you enjoy and that you can easily do. Then plan to do at least one each day. You might write your plan on a calendar.
- Go with a friend or a group if you like company. This can help you stay motivated, too.

For your safety

- Exercise indoors when it's too hot or too cold outside, or when the air quality is poor. Try walking at a shopping mall.
- Wear socks and sturdy shoes.
- Start slowly. Do a few minutes several times a day at first. Increase your time and speed little by little.
- Stop and rest whenever you feel tired or get short of breath.
- Don't push yourself on days when you don't feel well.