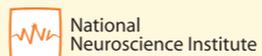


Ways to cope with stress and negative emotions

- ➔ Have a talk with family, friends, or other trusted advisors about your concerns and ask them for their support.
- ➔ Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly, breathe deeply and think of a peaceful scene.
- ➔ Learn to accept things you can't change. You don't have to solve every problem.
- ➔ Count to 10 before answering or responding when you feel angry.
- ➔ Do not use smoking, drinking, overeating, drugs or caffeine to cope with stress as these will only make things worse.
- ➔ Look for the good in situations instead of the bad.
- ➔ Exercise regularly. Do something you enjoy, like walking, swimming, jogging, golfing, walking a pet, tai chi or cycling. Check with your doctor to determine what activity level is right for you.
- ➔ Think ahead of what may upset you and try to avoid it. For example, spend less time with people who bother you. If you're still working, cut back on your hours and adjust your schedule to avoid driving in rush-hour traffic.
- ➔ Learn to say no. Don't promise too much. Give yourself enough time to get things done.
- ➔ Join a support group. For example, people with heart disease, for women, men, retired persons or some other group you identify with.
- ➔ Inform your doctor if you can't cope on your own.



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Activity Restrictions After A Heart Attack



What is a heart attack?

A heart attack occurs when blood vessels that supply blood to an area of the heart is blocked.

What happens after a heart attack?

The heart takes about 4 to 6 weeks to repair itself with scar tissue. While early physical activity is important to aid your recovery, you should also be mindful not to overstrain your heart.

Here are some guidelines to help in your recovery:

You should restrict your activities to not more than 4 METS for the first month.

✔ 2-2.9 METS	✔ 3-3.9 METS	✘ ≥4 METS
Stretching exercises	Standing up from and sitting down on the floor	Cycling, swimming, golfing
Showering	Fishing	Gardening (general)
Hair styling, shaving	Sweeping, mopping	Dancing (social)
Washing dishes	Ironing	Cleaning, vigorous effort
Cooking	Walking downstairs	Climbing stairs without carrying anything
Typing and desk work	Carrying objects <10kg	Carrying objects >10kg

METS or *metabolic equivalent* is the ratio of the resting metabolic rate to the metabolic rate while performing an activity. The higher the MET value, the more energy is used by the body.

✔ Do's

- ➔ Learn to take your pulse. You may perform physical activities of up to about 20 beats above your resting pulse rate or
- ➔ Perform an activity up to a moderate intensity (see *RPE scale at the bottom*)
- ➔ When doing housework or exercise, start with 5-10 minutes at a time. You may increase the duration as you go along.
- ➔ You may progress to an activity of higher METS if a lower METS activity feels easy.



Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)			
0	nothing at all	5	heavy
0.5	barely noticeable	6	
1	very light	7	very heavy
2	light	8	
3	moderate	9	
4	hard	10	very, very heavy

✘ Don'ts

- ➔ **Do not** carry more than 10 kg.
- ➔ **Do not** climb multiple flights of stairs at one go.
- ➔ **Do not** carry a load when going upstairs.
- ➔ **Do not** strain and hold your breath.
- ➔ **Do not** hold arms above shoulder level for a long time.



Important activities to note:

- ➔ **Driving**
 - ▶ Do not drive for the first month.
 - ▶ When you start driving again, avoid stressful situations such as driving at night, peak hours, bad weather, or high speeds.
- ➔ **Air travel**
 - ▶ Do not travel by air for several weeks after a heart attack.
 - ▶ Travel with a companion, carry GTN (nitroglycerine) with you and avoid rushing by requesting for airport transportation.
- ➔ **Sexual intercourse**
 - ▶ You may have sexual intercourse with your partner if you can climb two flights of stairs easily without any symptoms (e.g. breathlessness).
- ➔ **Work**
 - ▶ Your doctor will certify when you are fit to return to work.