



Physical Activity and Heart Failure:

Helping your heart by being active



Queensland
Government



Artwork Story

This artwork represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Queensland. It speaks of the importance of traditional and cultural sensitivities, how these are communicated in the modern day health system and how health professionals can best provide health services for Indigenous people through best practice.

The central circular motif represents Health in Queensland, and the meeting place where people come to trade knowledge about health best practices and procedures.

The pathways leading in and out of this central motif represent people travelling from different professions, different communities and different country, and the importance of everyone contributing equally to this journey. A journey of change and growth for a brighter, healthier and happier future for all Indigenous people.

The surrounding markings and motifs represent the important network of people from these communities, their connection to each other, and how they work together to empower Indigenous Queenslanders to have long, healthy, productive lives.

The Queensland Health, Heart Failure Exercise and Rehabilitation network would like to thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who provided feedback in creation of this resource.

With thanks also to:

- Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation
- State-wide Heart Failure Services
- Queensland Health Cultural Capability Team
- North West Hospital and Health Service, Mt Isa
- National Heart Foundation of Australia
- Dr Lisa Pont, Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Macquarie University

Designed and illustrated by:



89 Grey Street, South Brisbane
Queensland, 4101
07 3367 8895
gilimbaa.com.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that the following information may contain images or names of people that may cause distress to certain readers.





Contents

What is heart failure?	4
Being active	5
What are the best ways of being active?	6
How hard should I exercise?	7
How long should I exercise for?	7
How do I increase my exercise?	8
What if I have been in unwell or in hospital?	8
Other ways to be active	9
When should I stop?	10
Water exercise	11
How do I make sure I keep going?	12
Exercise programs	14





What is heart failure?

Heart failure is when your heart gets damaged, becomes bigger and weaker and doesn't work properly. This causes extra fluid to build up in your body and sometimes in your lungs.

Lots of things can damage your heart including:

- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Too much fat in your blood
- Alcohol (grog)
- Too much sugar (diabetes)



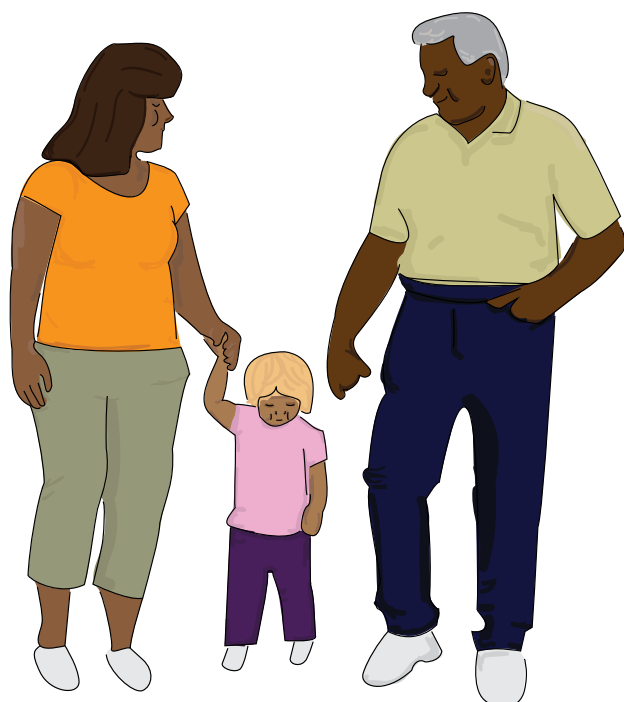


Being active

Being active helps your heart to work better by making you fitter and also makes you less short winded.

Being active can also help you:

- Walk further before you become short winded
- Stay out of hospital
- Strengthen your muscles and bones
- Do more things with your kids, family and community
- Lower the fat in your blood
- Lower your sugar levels
- Lose weight or keep your weight the same
- Lower your blood pressure
- Lower your stress levels
- Make you feel healthier
- Increase your energy levels
- Sleep better





What are the best ways of being active?

There are lots of different ways you can be active (or exercise) with heart failure. Before you start doing any exercise, talk to your exercise specialist about a plan to suit you. Here are some ideas:

Walking

Robert likes to walk.
Every day he walks around the corner to visit his family.



Weights

Tracey wants to stay strong so she can look after the children. She uses a 1 litre milk container to make her arms stronger.



Remember:

**Start slowly (warm up) to make your body ready for exercise.
Finish slowly (cool down) to stop you from feeling dizzy after you exercise.**



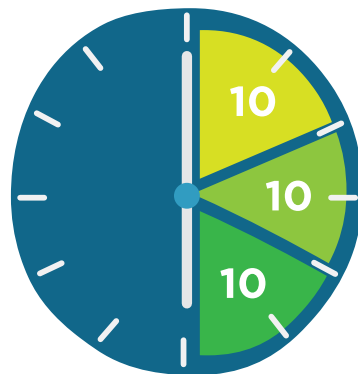
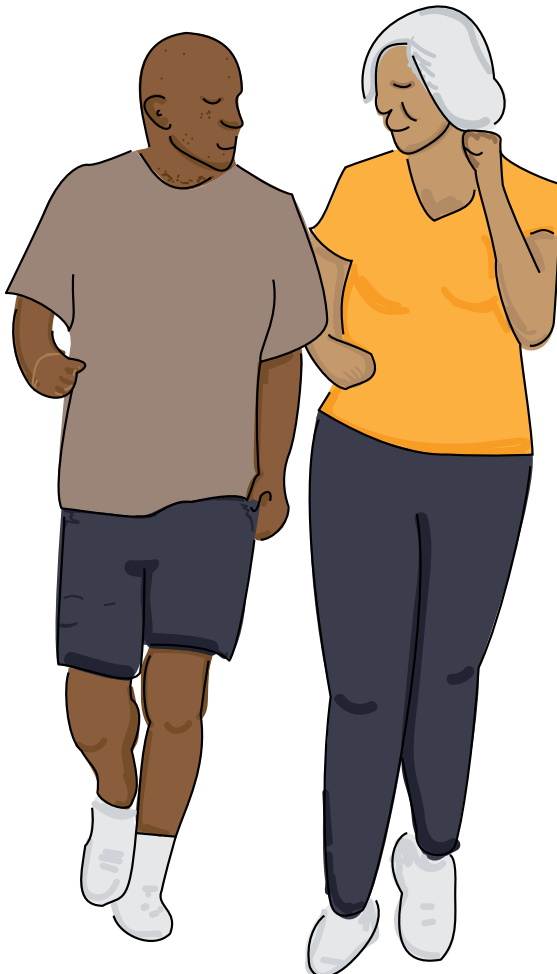
How hard should I exercise?

You should be able to talk easily in full sentences when you exercise, without having to stop to catch your breath. It is okay to be a little short winded – this is normal.



How long should I exercise for?

- Aim for 30 minutes or more on most days of the week
- You can break this into 3 lots of 10 minute blocks
- Remember even a little exercise is better than none at all

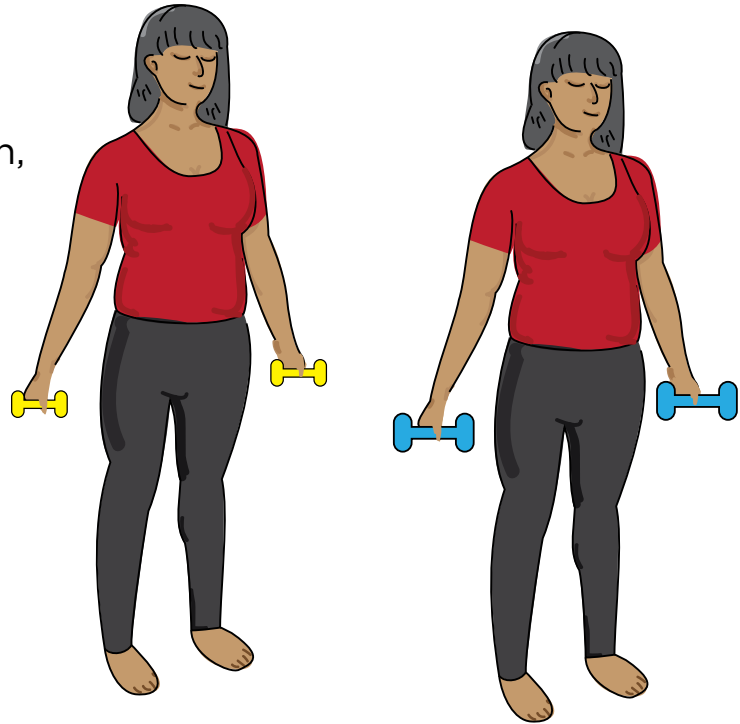




How do I increase my exercise?

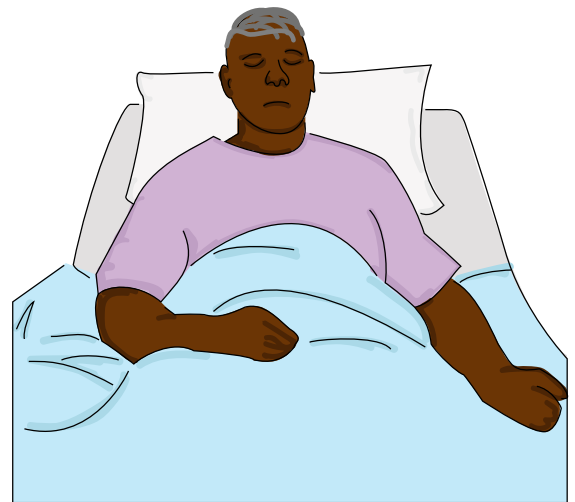
If you exercise most days, it will become easier. You may find it gets too easy. You can then slowly increase your exercise program by:

- Exercising more times every week
- Exercising for longer
- Lifting weights more times and then, after a couple of weeks, you can lift heavier weights



What if I have been unwell or in hospital?

If you have been unwell, it may take a little while to recover. Start your exercise at an easier level and slowly increase it again. If you have been in hospital, talk to your doctor before starting your exercise again.





Other ways to be active

Every little bit of movement you do helps. These are some good ways to be active every day:

- Walk to the shops or visit family or friends instead of driving
- Help with jobs around the house, like cleaning or gardening
- Walk on the spot while watching TV





When should I stop?

Stop or avoid exercising if you feel any of the following:

- More tired than usual
- More short winded than usual
- Pain or heaviness in your chest, neck, shoulder, jaw, throat or arm
- When your heart keeps racing fast, even at rest
- Dizzy or light-headed
- Sick in your stomach
- Sweating more than usual
- Feeling cold and clammy
- Bad pain or cramps in your legs



Remember:

**Wait one hour after eating a big meal before you exercise.
Do not get too hot or too cold when you exercise.**



Water exercise

Exercising in water like in a pool, ocean or creek is good, but you need to think about a few things first. The heart has to work harder when you stand or lie in water.

- Don't go into water above your waist level. This is because the deeper the water is, the more pressure it puts on your heart
- Make sure the water is not too warm or too cold
- Always have someone close by
- Don't exercise in the water if you have been in hospital recently or if you are more short-winded or dizzy than normal





How do I make sure I keep going?

Continuing to exercise helps you to stay strong and healthy.

- Exercise with family or a friend
- Set yourself some goals
- Write down when you exercise in a calendar
- Have a regular yarn about how you are going with your exercise and your heart, with your Indigenous Health Worker.

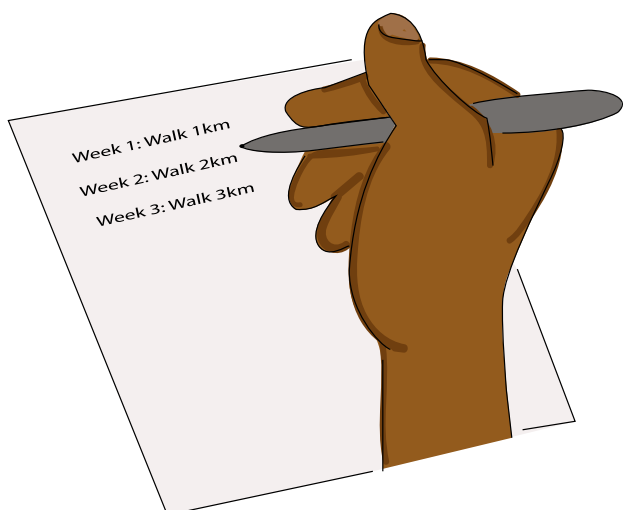
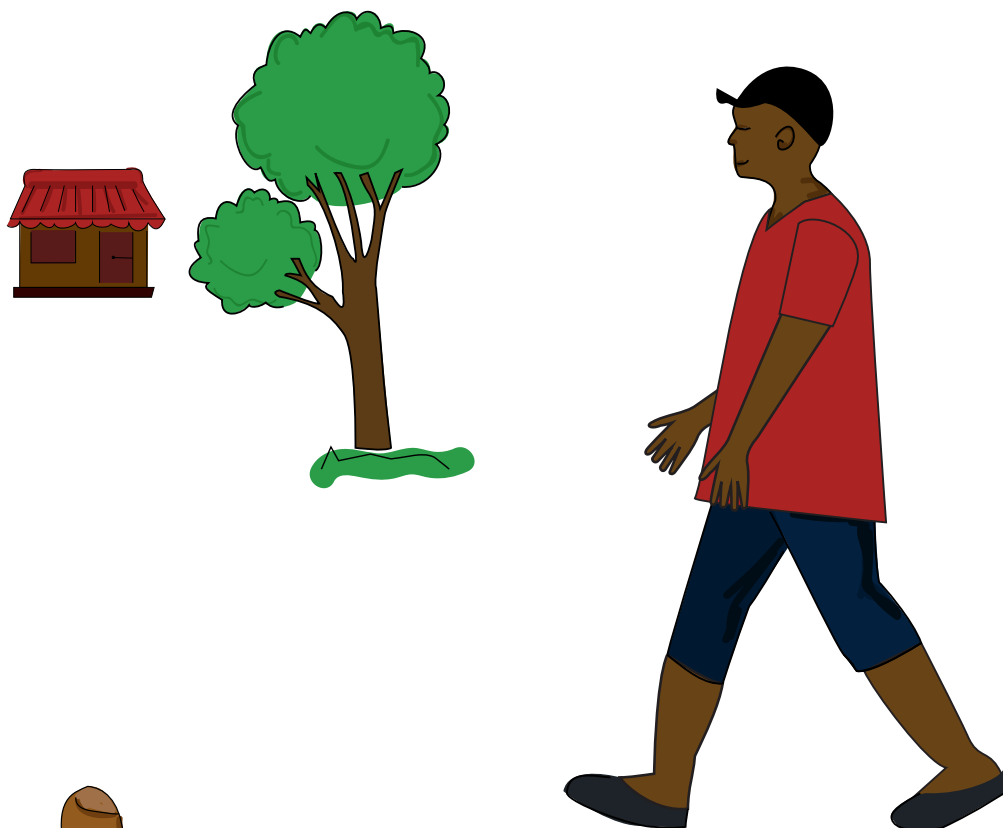
Karen

likes to walk with her family and friends.



Neil

tries to set goals every week. Once he can walk easily to the tree at the end of his street, he plans to walk a little further to the shop.



Joyce

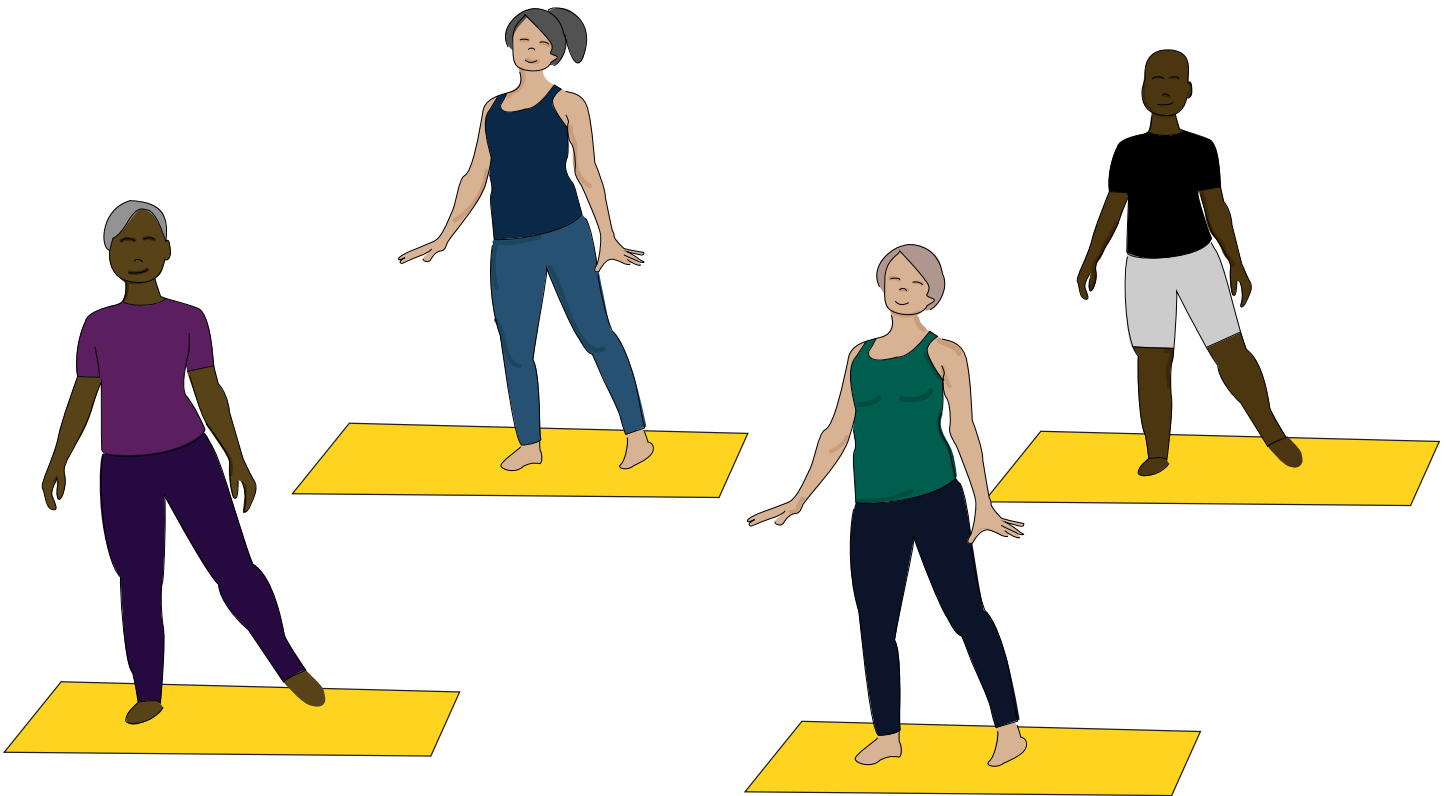
likes to write down how much exercise she does, so she can see how much better she is.





Exercise programs

Many hospitals run exercise programs for people with heart conditions. There are also many programs in the community. These programs can help you feel better faster. Ask your doctor where the closest one is for you.



This book belongs to: _____

Specialist Name: _____

Contact: _____

This booklet was developed by the Queensland Health, State-wide Heart Failure Exercise and Rehabilitation Network with generous funding support from the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, State-wide Heart Failure Services Queensland and the Queensland Health Cultural Capability Team.

Copies of this booklet can be downloaded from the following website:

www.heartonline.org.au/resources



