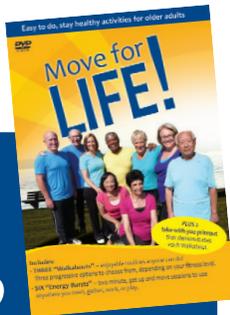


# Move for LIFE!

## Congestive Heart Failure & Physical Activity



### The Move for Life DVD



shows older adults ways to keep strong and healthy by adding physical activity options to their daily routines.

For more information or to order a copy of the DVD please contact:

**Health and Seniors Information Line at**  
**1.800.465.4911**  
**[www.actnowbc.ca](http://www.actnowbc.ca)**  
**[www.bcrpa.bc.ca](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca)**

## Why it's important to be physically active—

Physical activity helps strengthen your heart so it works more efficiently, and helps blood flow to all parts of your body. Here are some of the ways physical activity helps people who have congestive heart failure:

- Gives you a feeling of wellbeing.
- Helps you do day-to-day activities.
- Increases your quality of life.
- Lowers your risk of other heart diseases.
- Manages and prevents high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Helps prevent high levels of unhealthy blood cholesterol (also known as LDL cholesterol).
- Helps you lose weight or maintain your weight.

# Remember - Every Move is a Good Move!

## Preparing for physical activity

Doing gentle physical activity can often help people with congestive heart failure feel healthier and better able to do day-to-day activities. Here are some things you should do BEFORE starting any physical activity and AFTER each session.

### BEFORE you start any physical activity

- Check with your doctor or health care team to see what types and amounts of activities are best for you.
- Check with your doctor to see if an increase in physical activity will affect the medication you're taking. Also, find out if any of your medications will affect your ability to be physically active safely or your response to activity.
- Do a light warm-up before starting your activity. This could include walking or stretching for 10-15 minutes.
- Remember to breathe normally during activity. Avoid holding your breath.
- Plan your energy use. Save up energy for activities you plan to do in the next day or the next week. If you have a big job or activity to do, break it into parts. Do one part at a time and rest between parts.

### AFTER each physical activity session

- Do a proper cool-down after being active. This could include walking or stretching for 10-15 minutes.
- Give your heart a chance to rest and catch up with your body's demands on it. Rest in a comfortable position with your feet and legs up and support for your back and head.
- If you're really tired, short of breath or have discomfort in your chest after activity, talk to your doctor to see if you're doing the right amount of activity.

## Recommended activities

If you have congestive heart failure, you should be physically active on a regular basis, preferably every day. Here are some recommended activities:

- Walking is an easy choice because it doesn't require any special equipment and can be done outdoors or indoors, at your own pace.
- Ride a bicycle, either outdoors or indoors using a stationary bike.
- If you have mobility problems, try an arm bike. This is a stationary bike that lets you pedal with your hands.

### Keep these things in mind as you do your activities:

- Physical activity should be done with a light effort. Even if you use a lower level of effort, the activity is still beneficial. Every bit of activity is helpful for your health and wellbeing.
- If you're doing strengthening activities (resistance training), keep the weight or level of effort low, but do the exercise more times.
- Increase your activity a small amount each day. Be careful not to overdo it.
- Feeling tired the next day usually means you used too much effort.
- Stop and rest if you feel extremely uncomfortable, become very tired or are short of breath during activity.