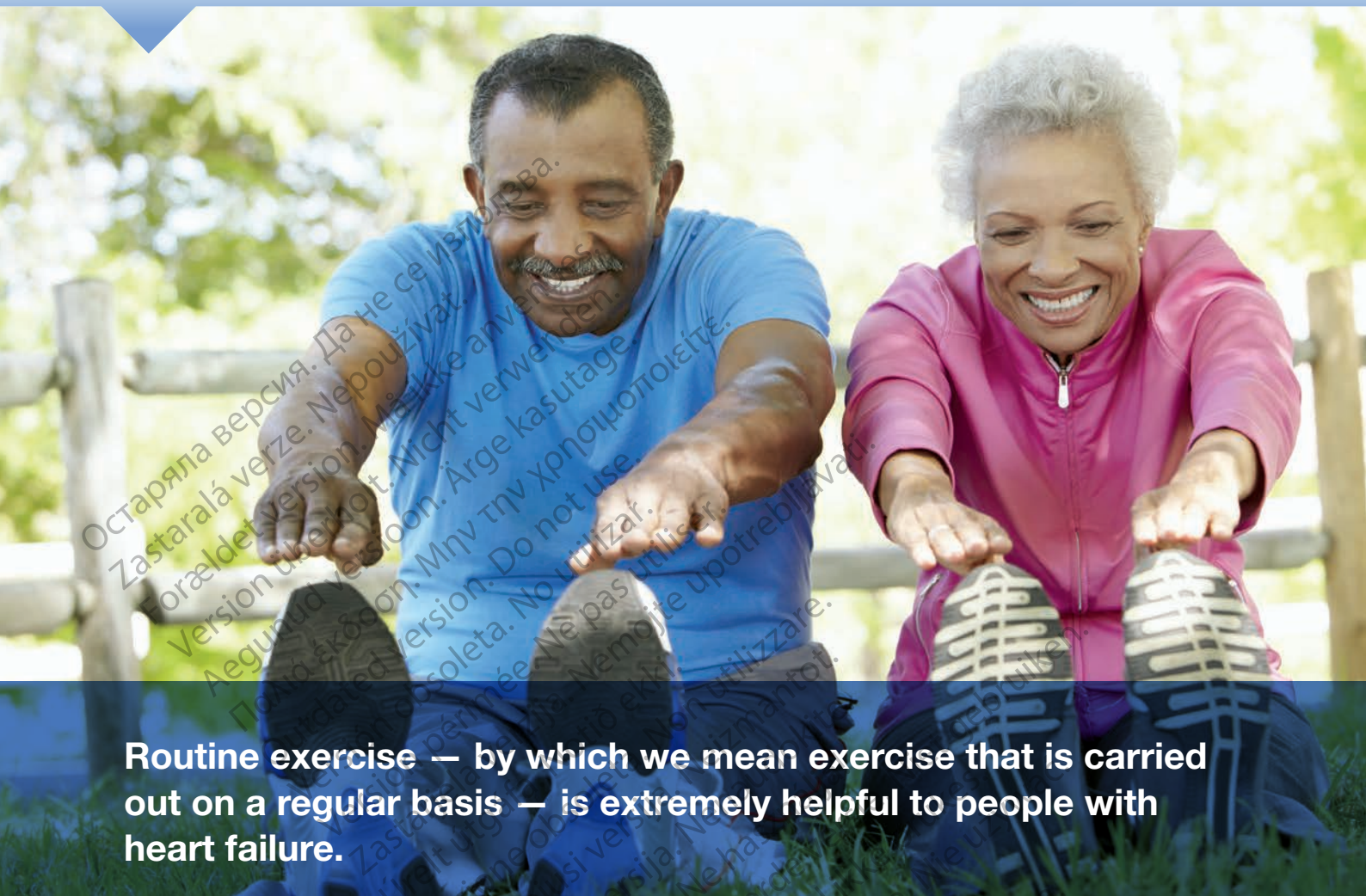




## Exercise



**Routine exercise — by which we mean exercise that is carried out on a regular basis — is extremely helpful to people with heart failure.**

**Routine exercise improves oxygen delivery and blood flow, decreases swelling and can reduce depression.**

Most people with heart failure can benefit from exercise to improve their flexibility and muscle power, and to strengthen their heart and lungs. Exercise can:

- Reduce your risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure and obesity
- Improve your heart failure symptoms and make you feel better
- Give you more energy
- Help you to sleep better





However, we know that certain types of exercise; in particular, sudden or intense exertion, can be risky for people with your condition. Monitor yourself when exercising and turn to your healthcare team if you feel unwell, you know yourself best!

For that reason, **you should discuss exercise with your doctor or nurse BEFORE you take up a new form of exercise, or**

**change the amount of activity you do.** There is an added benefit to this — once your healthcare team knows that you are willing to give exercise a try, they can give you all sorts of helpful tips and information, and even help you to devise the exercise plan that will work perfectly for you.

Remember — there is no ‘one size fits all’ exercise ‘prescription’ for people with heart disease. All exercise must be tailored to you, and approved by your doctor<sup>1</sup>. Please read on to find out more.



## Ready to go?

Now that you have taken the decision to add activity to your life, what are the next steps? Firstly, you should consult your healthcare team and establish what sort of exercises are suitable for you. Then, you need to start exercising! But don't jump in without thinking — every time you exercise you should:

- **Warm up** (perhaps with some gentle stretching exercises)
- **Carry out your main exercise, as approved by your healthcare team.** ALWAYS start off gently and build up gradually. You will find that, over time, the amount of exercise you can do increases, and the exercise will seem less difficult.
- **Always close your exercise routine with a cool down period,** in other words you should gradually reduce the intensity of the exercise that you are doing, before you stop.



You may find that you need a day off between exercise sessions, but even then gentle activity, like walking, can be very helpful in keeping you active.





## What sort of exercise?

Your healthcare team will help you to put together an exercise plan that suits your needs, but generally speaking there are three types of exercise particularly suitable for people with heart failure. These are:

### EXERCISES TO MAKE YOU MORE FLEXIBLE



**Yoga, tai chi and stretching exercises, for example.**

### EXERCISES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR HEART AND LUNGS



**These include walking and cycling.**

### EXERCISES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MUSCLES



**Lifting weights, or using resistance tubes or bands.**



**Exercise is helpful in heart failure and most people can benefit from it. However, there are risks attached to sudden or intense activity, and to certain types of exercise. There is no one-size-fits-all exercise plan, each patient has their own particular needs. For these reasons, you should speak to a healthcare professional **BEFORE** you change the type or intensity of exercise you do. They will be very happy to help you!**

**If you want to improve your activity levels its important that you keep track of your progress. Use a diary to monitor your day to day activities to help you stay on track in achieving your exercise goals!**

If you happen to have an urgent medical concern, please call your doctor, go to your local emergency room, or call your local Emergency Contact number. Remember, your doctor is your primary source for information on your condition and treatment. Be sure to speak with them if you have any questions or concerns.

#### References

1. Riegel B, Moser DK, Anker SD et al. State of the science: promoting self-care in persons with heart failure: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 2009 Sep 22; 120 (12): 1141-63.
2. Ileana L, Piña MD et al. Exercise and heart failure: a statement from the American Heart Association Committee on Exercise, Rehabilitation and Prevention. *Circulation* 2003; 107: 1210-1225.