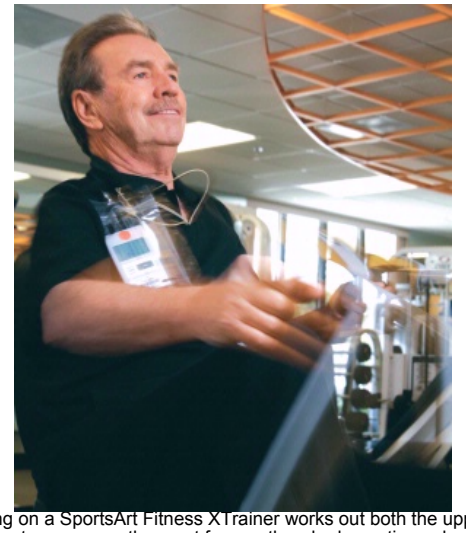
Cardiac Rehab Explained

CARL ENZOR BREAKS IT DOWN



Tamkin Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation: Exercising on a SportsArt Fitness XTrainer works out both the upper and lower body while connected to cardiac monitors.
Carl Enzor, Director, Eisenhower Renker Wellness Center, answers the most frequently asked questions about cardiac rehabilitation for Healthy Living magazine.

What's The Biggest Fear?

"The biggest fear expressed by new patients entering the Tamkin Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation program for the first time is 'How am I going to start exercise when I feel so weak right now?' This is a valid question. After all, a patient may have just had heart surgery, a heart attack or perhaps, developed angina…and their physician wants them to start exercising.We frequently have patients arrive who have never had any exercise history."

What Is The Program?

"First, all patients who come to Eisenhower's Tamkin Cardiac Rehabilitation (rehab) receive an exercise program specifically tailored to their current medical condition and capabilities. A short, timed walking evaluation is performed by the staff while the patient is monitored with a cardiac telemetry system. Then, the evaluation results are combined with the information from the patient's physician, and we create an individualized exercise program. Each time the patient exercises, they are connected to a cardiac telemetry monitor for the entire length of each exercise session."

"Initially, when stamina and endurance are low, the exercise time may be very limited to prevent fatigue. Cardiac rehabilitation at Eisenhower Medical Center utilizes treadmills, upper extremity ergometers [arm bikes] and a variety of different style exercise bikes to help increase the heart rate of the patient while exercising. Gradually, the patient's exercise program is increased in length of exercise time and intensity to help strengthen the heart to meet the normal challenges of daily life. As stamina increases, light hand weight exercises are added to increase muscle tone."

How Often?

"Typically, a patient in cardiac rehab visits the Eisenhower Renker Wellness Center three days per week. A cardiac rehab program can be as short as one month, or as long as three months, depending on the diagnosis and the severity of the illness of the individual."

What Is The Goal?

"The overall goal of cardiac rehab is to help the individual regain stamina and endurance that may have been lost during recent illness or through health that has declined over many years."

"The goal for all patients is to be able to exercise 40 to 50 minutes per session. As patients progress, they often notice that fatigue subsides and that they feel stronger. These changes are often great motivators as patients begin to regain some control in their lives."

After Rehab?

"After the cardiac rehab program is complete, we hope each patient will continue a program of aerobic exercise and light muscle toning."

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