

CAREGIVER TIPS FOR CARDIAC REHABILITATION

One small step at a time.



What can I do for myself?

It can be stressful when your loved one needs cardiac rehabilitation. It's important to make sure that you are still taking care of yourself. Here are some top things to make sure this journey goes smoothly.

- 1. Make time for yourself.** Even when you are busy, find time for yourself. You might listen to your favorite music, read a book, or visit some friends. A good time to do this may be when your loved one is at their cardiac rehabilitation appointment.
- 2. Make your favorite meals healthier.** Eating healthy is a big part of recovery from a cardiac event. Join in and find ways to make your favorite meals healthier! Need ideas? Check out the American Heart Association's [Healthy Eating webpage \(https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating\)](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating) for cooking tips and recipes.
- 3. Make a support list.** Having support is important. Make a list of people you can call for help and put it in a place you see regularly, like your refrigerator or bathroom mirror. You may feel anxious, fearful, even depressed during this time. It is common! If you are feeling these things, reach out to those on your support list and talk with your care provider about mental health resources.



What can I do for my loved one?

- 1. Encourage completion of cardiac rehab program.** Completing the cardiac rehab program is important for making a full recovery.
- 2. Participate in physical activities together.** Find ways to move together, whether it's gardening, going for walks, or taking an exercise class together.
- 3. Review medications together.** Make sure your loved one continues to take medication as prescribed, even as they start to feel better. If there are questions, bring them to the nurse, doctor, or pharmacist.
- 4. Find ways to celebrate the successes.** Every small step is a big change in the right direction. Celebrate those successes to help keep your loved one motivated.

RESOURCES

Caring for someone you love during their cardiac rehabilitation and recovery journey is not easy. There can be days that are harder, and some days that are easier. It's okay to ask for help when you need a break. The resources below are organizations dedicated to supporting caregivers.

- Take a caregiver class to help manage stress. Find upcoming care giver classes at <https://www.powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org/caregivers>
- Talk with a caregiver coach, join a caregiver support group, or find a temporary substitute caregiver for some respite. Family caregiver resources are available at <https://trellisconnects.org/get-help/family-caregivers>