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Reference:

Hansen Dominique, Beckers Paul, Neunhaeuserer Daniel, Bjarnason-Wehrens Birna, Piepoli Massimo F., Rauch Bernhard, Voeller Heinz, Corra Ugo, Garcia-Porrero Esteban, Schmid Jean-Paul,- Standardised exercise prescription for patients with chronic coronary syndrome and/or heart failure : a consensus statement from the EXPERT Working Group

Sports medicine - ISSN 1179-2035 - Northcote, Adis int Ltd, 53(2023), p. 2013-2037

Full text (Publisher's DOI): <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40279-023-01909-X>

To cite this reference: <https://hdl.handle.net/10067/1993230151162165141>

Standardised exercise prescription in patients with chronic coronary syndrome and/or heart failure: a consensus statement from the EXPERT working group.

EXPERT stands for 'EXercise Prescription in Everyday practice & Rehabilitative Training', this working group is endorsed by the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC)

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Funding: The realisation of the proof of concept of the EXPERT tool was supported by an UHasselt Industrial Research Fund (IOF) Proof of Concept (PoC) project. This work was supported by the Flemish Research Fund (FWO, FWO-ICA: G0F4220N).

Conflicts of interest: The authors disclose that there are no financial or non-financial interests that are directly or indirectly related to the work submitted for publication.

Word count: 8421

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Abstract

Whereas exercise training, as part of multidisciplinary rehabilitation, is a key component in the management of patients with chronic coronary syndrome (CCS) and/or congestive heart failure (CHF), physicians and exercise professionals disagree among themselves on the type and characteristics of the exercise to be prescribed to these patients and the exercise prescriptions are not consistent with the international guidelines. This impacts the efficacy and quality of the intervention of rehabilitation. To overcome these barriers, a digital training and decision support system (i.e. EXercise Prescription in Everyday practice & Rehabilitative Training (EXPERT) tool), i.e. a stepwise aid on exercise prescription in patients with CCS and/or CHF, affected by concomitant risk factors and comorbidities, in the setting of multidisciplinary rehabilitation, was developed. The EXPERT working group members reviewed the literature and formulated exercise recommendations (exercise training intensity, frequency, volume, type, session and program duration) and safety precautions for CCS and/or CHF (including heart transplantation). Also, highly prevalent comorbidities (e.g. peripheral arterial disease) or cardiac devices (e.g. pacemaker, implanted cardioverter defibrillator, left-ventricular assist device) were considered, as well as indications of the in-hospital phase (e.g. after coronary revascularisation or hospitalisation for CHF). The contribution of physical fitness, medications and adverse events during exercise testing was further considered. The EXPERT tool was developed based on this evidence. In this paper, the exercise prescriptions for patients with CCS and/or CHF formulated for the EXPERT tool are presented. Finally, to demonstrate how the EXPERT tool proposes exercise prescriptions in CCS and/or CHF patients with different combinations of CVD risk factors, three patient cases with solutions are shown.

Key points

- Current exercise prescriptions to patients with cardiovascular disease are often not in line with official recommendations and healthcare professionals/clinicians often disagree among themselves.
- To overcome these barriers, a digital training and decision support system (i.e. EXercise Prescription in Everyday practice & Rehabilitative Training (EXPERT) tool), i.e. a stepwise aid on exercise prescription in patients with chronic coronary syndrome (CCS) and/or congestive heart failure (CHF), taking into account concomitant risk factors, physical fitness, and comorbidities, in the setting of multidisciplinary rehabilitation, was developed.
- In this paper, the exercise prescriptions for patients with CCS and/or CHF, with concomitant risk factors and comorbidities, formulated for the EXPERT tool are presented, with the aim to assist healthcare professionals/clinicians on how to tailor exercise prescription according to the patient's phenotype.

Short title

Standardised exercise prescription in cardiovascular disease

1. Introduction

Exercise training, as part of multidisciplinary rehabilitation, leads to significant improvements in functional capacity, muscle strength and endurance capacity, as well as quality of life in patients with chronic coronary syndrome (CCS) and/or congestive heart failure (CHF), thereby reducing cardiovascular event rates, hospitalizations and/or mortality [1-10].

Alongside dietary intervention, psychosocial support/counselling, smoking cessation and the prescription of cardioprotective medication, exercise training is therefore classified as a type 1A intervention in the treatment of CCS and/or CHF, and its importance is endorsed by several international position statements and guidelines [11-14]. In general, it is recommended that patients with CCS and/or CHF should perform at least 150 minutes of continuous low-to-moderate-intensity endurance exercise training per week, ideally spread over 3-5 days per week. An energy expenditure of 1000-2000 kcal per week should be achieved in this way, and endurance exercise training should be complemented by dynamic resistance exercise training two times per week at a moderate intensity [11-16].

Despite the availability of international exercise guidelines for the secondary prevention in CCS and CHF [11-16], a study from the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC) EXPERT (Exercise Prescription in Everyday practice & Rehabilitative Training) working group reported a significant inter-clinician variance in exercise prescription for these patients [17]. As an example, for the same patient recovering from coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery with different comorbidities (incl. obesity, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, CHF) the prescribed exercise volume per program ranged from 300 up to 9000 peak-effort training minutes, which is an unacceptable variance [17]. In subsequent studies, similar heterogeneous exercise prescriptions were shown in primary care physicians and physiotherapists [18, 19]. This indicates that state-of-the-art exercise prescription for patients with CCS and/or CHF is far from being well-established and that clinicians and healthcare professionals need guidance that goes beyond existing guidelines and position statements (i.e. specifically how to tailor exercise interventions based on the patient's cardiovascular disease (CVD) type, risk profile, physical fitness and medication intake).

2. Exercise training as a component of multidisciplinary rehabilitation in CCS and/or CHF

Exercise training, which is the focus of this manuscript, is a component of the multidisciplinary rehabilitation of CCS and/or CHF. Hence, next to the optimisation of exercise prescription to these patients (by physiotherapists/clinical exercise physiologists/cardiac nurses), it is also key to optimise dietary intervention, psychosocial support, smoking cessation, medication prescription, and occupational therapy (if needed) by dietitians, psychologists, pharmacists and occupational therapists, under the coordination of a cardiologist trained in cardiovascular rehabilitation (CR). However, this would be beyond the scope of this manuscript.

3. General approach to exercise prescription in chronic CCS and CHF

Next to anticipated improvements in endurance exercise capacity and muscle strength, exercise interventions should also be tailored to positively affect all modifiable cardiovascular risk factors, as well as to motivate patients to integrate physical activity and training into their lifestyles and to remain physically active throughout their lives. Even though detailed exercise recommendations for different CVD risk factors have been reported [20], tailoring the exercise training program to each single patient according to his/her overall CVD risk profile remains difficult as the CVD risk factors and diseases are often considered separately. For example, to optimally reduce adipose tissue mass or arterial blood pressure, or to improve blood lipid profile or glycaemic control, more tailored exercise prescriptions are thus required [20]. Moreover, the co-existence of comorbidities, the intake of certain medications, physical deconditioning or the presence of abnormalities or adverse events during exercise testing warrant further individualized adjustments of these exercise prescriptions [21].

We therefore speculated that patients with CCS and/or CHF can benefit from a more standardized way of tailoring exercise prescription [21], aiming for greater clinical benefits, maintaining optimal medical safety and improving exercise adherence. As a result, clinicians and healthcare professionals involved in CR can now use a decision support system (EXPERT tool) that, based on the variables provided in this system, suggests how exercise should be individually prescribed [22,23]. Such an interactive digital decision support system can provide an exercise prescription but still leaving the user the opportunity

to fine-tune the program, based on specific patient characteristics or preferences, and the available infrastructure.

The aim of this manuscript was to provide a consensus statement for state-of-the-art exercise prescription and exercise training safety precautions for patients with CCS and/or CHF, as integrated into the EXPERT tool. Different CVD risk factors, comorbidities or devices, the intake of cardioprotective medications, adverse events during exercise testing and physical deconditioning are also taken into account. Finally, simulations of exercise prescriptions for these patients, as provided by the EXPERT tool, will be presented.

4. Methods

4.1 Formulation of exercise prescriptions and construction of EXPERT tool

Previously, details on the composition and activities of the EXPERT network working group (>30 members out of >10 European countries) and how exercise guidelines were collected from the literature, were provided [22]. Also, the development and functioning of the EXPERT tool, definitions for CVD risk factors and goals of CR have already been described in detail [22]. This project is endorsed by the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC) of the European Society of Cardiology.

In brief, working group members (see author list) were allocated to different topics according to their expertise (CCS, CHF, pacemaker, implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD), left-ventricular assist device (LVAD), peripheral arterial disease (PAD), heart transplantation), and were then requested to consult PubMed and/or Web of Science (up to February 2023) to: 1. define the criteria or definitions for the specific conditions, 2. identify the primary goal of exercise training interventions for each disease/condition, 3. provide exercise training recommendations, and 4. highlight exercise safety precautions. These recommendations and definitions had to be based on (with decreasing level of evidence) current clinical guidelines and position statements from the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and/or EAPC, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, or randomised controlled trials. If not available, also cohort studies, observational studies or expert opinions have been considered. The allocation of these experts to specific steering groups was based on specific scientific/clinical expertise from

PubMed track record. All this information was handed over to the project coordinator, who, in collaboration with computer scientists from Hasselt University, developed the EXPERT tool (Figure 1). This paper is an extension of a previous manuscript paper in which exercise prescriptions in (different combinations of) CVD risk factors were explained in detail [24].

4.2 Classification of level of evidence and grades of recommendation

To classify the level of evidence and the grade of recommendation for exercise prescription guidelines, the validated SIGN system was used throughout this paper, as shown in supplementary Table 1 [25].

4.3 Classification of exercise training intensity

Supplementary Table 2 shows the classification of exercise training intensity which is also used in the EXPERT tool [26].

4.4 Limitations of the EXPERT tool

The EXPERT tool, version of July 2023, is also prone to some limitations. The tool applies a classification of exercise training intensity as mentioned in supplementary Table 2 (mainly on heart rate (HR)), even though it is well established that the use of the ventilatory threshold (VT) leads to a far more precise determination of exercise intensity (better in line with personal exercise response) and a greater improvement in exercise tolerance [69]. However, in the tool the user can still adjust the target HR if desired (e.g. when the HR at VT2 has been assessed). In addition, the EXPERT tool generates an exercise prescription that ideally matches the CVD risk profile and medical treatment goals. However, it does not take into account the patient's feasibility and adherence issues (e.g. attractiveness, capabilities, personal goals, fears, etc.) of this prescription: that remains to be finally decided or implemented by the user of the tool.

5. Consensus statements from the EXPERT network working group

5.1 Recommended infrastructure and knowledge/skills of healthcare professionals

Patients with CCS and/or CHF are more prone to develop cardiovascular, metabolic or pulmonary complications during physical exercise. Therefore, it is advised that rehabilitation or exercise training facilities are specifically designed and equipped (see Table 1), and healthcare professionals are properly educated [27]. Even though intravenous tubing and emergency drugs/solutions may not be administered or used by clinical exercise physiologists or physiotherapists, it is recommended that these materials should be available in peripheral or private practice settings: if a medical doctor is called for an emergency, these materials are then immediately available to that clinician (i.e. clinical exercise physiologists or physiotherapists do not administer or use those themselves). Although CR programs within hospitals should be coordinated by a cardiologist, the direct assistance and guidance during exercise training to patients (especially in peripheral centres or private practices) is nearly always offered by allied healthcare professionals (such as physiotherapists, cardiac nurses, clinical exercise physiologists). To ensure sufficient patient safety, it is recommended that these allied healthcare professionals have acquired specific clinical competencies, composed of: core knowledge (e.g. clinical exercise physiology, pathology, pharmacology), professional behaviour, communication skills, abilities in supervised exercise training application, assessment/testing skills (e.g. HR and blood pressure (BP) measurement, exercise, functional capacity and muscle strength testing), physical activity planning and exercise prescription, abilities to lead and deliver the supervised exercise session, forward planning, management of emergency procedures (e.g. symptom recognition, care in case of syncope, resuscitation), service planning and management, as well as service evaluation [28]. Moreover, to optimise exercise prescription, cardiopulmonary exercise testing (CPET) is strongly recommended [69]. This will allow personalisation/fine-tuning of the endurance exercise intensity and energy expenditure targets, as well as the assessment of the medical safety of (high-intensity) endurance exercise.

The focus of this paper is on CCS and CHF, since CCS may progress to CHF (and subsequently to heart transplantation). Moreover, as PAD is often co-existent in patients with CCS, this clinical condition is also discussed in this paper. In final, CHF patients are often also candidates for implantation of ICD,

pacemaker, and/or LVAD, so how to prescribe exercise in these cases is described in detail. The proposed exercise prescriptions are summarised in Table 2. Since CR is most often started after hospitalisation due to angina pectoris, acute coronary syndrome or decompensation in CHF, it is important to offer active mobilisation as early as possible (phase 1 CR), given sufficient medical safety [16].

5.2 Phase 1 CR

Definitions of diseases. See Table 3

Intervention aim. To achieve early mobilisation, given sufficient medical safety. With prolonged bed rest the associated maladaptation will lead to an excessive rise in HR during orthostatic stress, cardiac atrophy, reduced exercise capacity, decreased blood volume, and muscle atrophy. A downward spiral of inactivity and deconditioning might occur.

Exercise training recommendations. Because some patients are so deconditioned, graded programs should be proposed. Early mobilisation as well as supervised and differentiated exercise training interventions should be provided in a supportive environment. Early mobilisation can be initiated when patients are hemodynamically stable and may include progressive therapeutic activities such as bed mobility exercises, sitting on the edge of the bed, standing, transferring to a chair and ambulation. Because of a lack of data from randomised controlled trials, the below-mentioned recommendations are expert opinions (level of evidence: 4, grade of recommendations: D). In early mobilisation it is proposed to follow a stepped care plan, including: pre-participation screening, what to assess during mobilisation, and how to select exercise modalities.

PREPARTICIPATION SCREENING AND PARAMETER REGISTRATION DURING MOBILISATION IN PHASE 1 CR

In the early mobilisation of patients with CCS and/or CHF, it is important to assess the patient's clinical status to verify medical safety of such intervention, as well as to register significant parameters during mobilisation. These data are shown in Table 4.

HOW TO SELECT AND PROGRESS EXERCISE MODALITIES IN PHASE 1 CR

Step 1

- Note obstacles, barriers or challenges related to the patient and environment and plan appropriately (e.g. set up equipment – chairs, transfer belt, mobility aids, length of leads/lines).
- Determine whether the benefits outweigh the risk (see pre-participation screening).
- Obtain baseline vital signs (see 'what to assess during mobilisation').

Step 2

- Use proper body mechanics during transfer and allow gradual change from lying to upright position. Encourage circulation exercises, i.e. foot and ankle, knee flexion/extension before commencing more demanding mobilisation procedures.
- Monitor closely. Watch for signs of fatigue, pain, dizziness, diaphoresis and intolerance during activity. Frequently ask the patient how he/she feels. Evaluate the patient's status at each progression to determine whether to continue or stop. Determine the limiting factor of the mobilisation and any undesirable response(s). Use objective outcome measures to monitor progress, e.g. ease of transfer, sitting duration, walking distance, HR, RR, BP, oxygen saturation, Borg ratings of perceived exertion (RPE), and pain.
- After mobilisation, monitor patients until vital signs have returned to pre-activity level.

Step 3

Intensity and duration of mobility/exercise sessions, and its progression, are further individualised according to response and tolerance:

1. During patient care, e.g. during washing, turns and transfers (i.e. blood pressure, O₂ saturation, and ECG should stay normal or within normal ranges during such care, and should thus be followed/observed by the healthcare professional accordingly).

2. Consider the inclusion of breathing exercises with or without respiratory trainer set, stretching exercises, balance/coordination exercises for head, neck and trunk, sitting balance exercises (with sit to stand exercises), arm ergometry, weight bearing/weight shifting exercises (calf muscle strengthening, heel lift), walking in room/corridor (begin walking practice with appropriate aids, increasing distance and frequency as patient tolerates), and individualised mobilisation prescription.

5.3 Phase 2 CR

5.3.1 Chronic coronary syndrome

Intervention aim. To increase the physical fitness and/or reduce/prevent angina pectoris (in case of stable angina pectoris) and hereby to improve prognosis (hospitalisation, cardiovascular re-event rate, mortality) and quality of life.

Exercise training recommendations [14, 16, 32-69]. Patients with CCS are generally advised to start with a session duration of ten minutes in the initial stage (for up to maximally two weeks or ahead of cardiopulmonary exercise testing) at a low to moderate intensity, but gradually increase up to 20 minutes, if possible to 30-45 minutes in the improvement stage (from two up to 12 weeks) (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C). In the maintenance stage (after 8-10 weeks of CR) it is advised to complete exercise sessions of 20-45 minutes or even up to 60 minutes or more if tolerated (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C). For some outcomes (e.g. VO₂peak, glycemic control) a slight reduction in minimal exercise session duration (from 30 to 20 min) can be allowed to maintain the achieved benefits, in particular when a higher exercise intensity is applied. This does not, however, apply to every CVD risk factor and should thus be carefully decided. In the initial and improvement stage CCS patients are advised to exercise 3-5 days per week (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). This exercise frequency can be maintained or could be increased ≥ 5 days per week in the improvement stage (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B), while in the maintenance stage daily exercise should be promoted (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C). Patients with CCS are advised to execute endurance exercises at a moderate intensity. In some patients (e.g. patients with a preserved physical fitness and absence of exercise-induced hypertension,

myocardial ischemia, or cardiac arrhythmias during exercise testing) high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can be offered as an alternative: HIIT has a similar adherence as moderate-intensity exercise training in patients with CCS [191]. In addition, cumulating evidence is showing that an up-titration of the exercise intensity during CR (as a progression) can elicit significantly greater clinical benefits [189, 190]. Hence, in some patients this can be considered. A minimal program duration of 12 weeks should be achieved (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B), although a permanent increment in physical activity is recommended (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C). Resistance training should routinely be added to endurance exercise provided that patients are clinically stable, and only dynamic resistance training (in contrast to isometric strength training) is applied (see 'resistance training for cardiovascular disease: safety precautions') (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C). Dynamic resistance training may be implemented by using specialised training devices in supervised institutions (e.g. prevention and rehabilitation centres) or simple devices like dumbbell, expander and therabands. In the initial stage resistance exercise intensity should be set at <30% of one repetition maximum (1-RM) (RPE Borg ≤ 11), for 5-10 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). In the first improvement stage, resistance exercise intensity should be set at 30-50% 1-RM, for 10-15 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). In the second improvement stage, resistance exercise intensity should be set at 40-60% 1-RM, for 10-15 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). In the third improvement stage (in selected patients in good clinical condition, with heavy physical employment, and/or those returning to sports) resistance exercise intensity should be set at 60-80% 1-RM, for 8-10 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B).

Safety precautions.

Safety precautions during exercise training depends on the clinical status of the patients [13, 14, 16]. Therefore, a distinction is made between all CCS patients, patients after ACS, percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) or CABG.

All CCS patients: Endurance training intensity has to be set below the ischemic threshold (if present) as defined by an exercise stress test before starting the training. The training modalities have to be individually adjusted for each patient with respect to: clinical cardiovascular conditions (e.g. ischaemia, CHF, atrial fibrillation, PAD; for patients after ACS or after CABG see below), individual non-cardiac limitations (e.g. frailty, concomitant diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), individual fitness, and individual preferences to increase motivation and adherence.

Patients after ACS: Participating in a centre-based, structured and multimodal CR program is strongly advised for all patients after ACS in order to implement an individually adjusted training program, to optimise all other aspects of secondary prevention (information and motivation for lifestyle changes, medication and self-control), and to early recognise and prevent potential complications (e.g. recurrent ischemia, life-threatening cardiac arrhythmia, CHF) (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B).

Patients after CABG: Participating in a centre-based, structured and multimodal CR program is strongly advised for all patients after CABG in order to implement an individually adjusted training program, to optimise all other aspects of secondary prevention, and prevent and to early recognise and treat potential complications (e.g. recurrent ischemia due to early bypass dysfunction, arrhythmia, CHF, post-operative infections, wound healing problems, Dressler syndrome) (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). In addition, exercise training has to be adjusted on the time course of wound healing and all other potential complications (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C), and thoracic shear and pressure stress (e.g. unilateral weight lifting with arm, excessive bilateral horizontal shoulder flexion/extension (with fixation cushion on chest if executed on machine)) has to be strictly avoided during the first 6-8 weeks after thoracotomy/sternotomy (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C).

Patients after elective PCI: exercise training may be started immediately after healing of the punctured vessel. This may be as early as one day after the intervention (radial artery, level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C), or one week after puncture of femoral artery. However, all patients must be under regular supervision by their local physician (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C), participation in local cardiovascular prevention centres and/or professionally supervised “heart groups” is strongly advised (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: C), and all public training centres must provide safety equipment including automated external defibrillators.

5.3.2 Congestive heart failure

Intervention aim. To improve exercise capacity, or to halt or slow the rate any further decline in exercise capacity that, at least in part, will optimise long-term outcome and quality of life.

Exercise training recommendations [13, 14, 16, 32, 69-88, 185-188]. Continuous endurance exercise at a moderate intensity is recommended as the core component of the rehabilitation intervention (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: A). The lower and upper limits of the endurance training intensity in CHF patients have however not been established yet. Aerobic training intensities as low as 40% of peak oxygen uptake (VO_{2peak}) ($\approx 25\% VO_{2reserve}$) have been effective in improving exercise capacity in CHF patients with a significantly reduced VO_{2peak} (see below for definition). An endurance training intensity approaching the first ventilatory threshold (i.e. around 50-60% VO_{2peak}) has been proposed as a safe lower limit. There is emerging evidence from clinical trials showing that CHF patients also may be trained at intensities close to the second ventilatory threshold (critical power) without additional risk. Further investigations are needed to determine the optimal training intensity in representative patient populations. If an assessment of (an)aerobic metabolism by cardiopulmonary exercise testing is not available, relative effort intensities in the ‘moderate’ domain have been used: these are expressed as percentage of peak heart rate ($\%HR_{peak}$) or percentage of heart rate reserve ($\%HRR$), or according to Borg RPE scales. However, the equivalence of $\%HRR$ vs. $\%VO_2$ reserve has been questioned in CHF patients both on and off beta-blockers, since the exercise intensity domains derived from these parameters often disagree with the first and second ventilatory threshold (which

is, in essence, the patient's personal exercise intensity). High-intensity interval exercise might also be considered in some patients (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). 15-40 min/day exercise sessions are generally advised, but shorter sessions are preferred at the beginning of the training program in patients with poor exercise capacity, fatigue and/or recent hemodynamic instability (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: A). The session duration should be progressed according to patients' tolerance, trying to reach at least a 30-min session duration (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: A). In most studies, a minimum of three sessions per week have been used, and stable patients in New York Heart Association (NYHA) class I-III had 3-5 sessions/week without adverse effects (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: A). Even in patients with recent haemodynamic instability starting an individually tailored training program of three sessions per week has been shown to be safe (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: A). When such an exercise program is initiated it should be attempted to permanently increase the physical activity level (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: A), although it remains difficult to define the minimal program duration. A lifestyle approach by including common activities into daily routine (e.g., walking instead of driving, climbing stairs rather than taking the elevator, engaging in active recreational pursuits) also is effective and to be recommended (level of evidence: 1, grade of recommendation: B). Alignment of activity modes with individual preferences and interests is most likely to increase patient's adherence to sustained activity. Particular types of exercise training (e.g., dancing, yoga) have been shown to be well accepted and beneficial in terms of functional capacity. Exercise modes like running or jogging traditionally are regarded to be contraindicated, since they are considered to be potentially very strenuous and often performed without supervision. However, further investigations are needed to clarify this point. In all clinically stable CHF patients dynamic resistance training should be included into the training program as a supplement to endurance exercise training. Training intensity for resistance training is very similar to those in patients with CCS (see CCS for greater details) and should include 8-10 exercises involving the large muscle groups and should consist of at least one set of 8-12 repetitions/exercise (type of evidence: 1, level of recommendation: A). Furthermore, resistance training should be performed as interval training, and single muscles

should be trained step by step. On the basis of expert opinion, in CHF patients dynamic resistance training should be guided preferentially by experienced exercise therapists or physiotherapists. In the rehabilitation of CHF patients, and in particular in those with inspiratory muscle weakness (maximal inspiratory muscle strength (P_{imax}) <70%), inspiratory muscle training (IMT) may be clinically relevant, since the combination of aerobic/resistance/inspiratory training might be the optimal for CHF patients (level of evidence: 2, grade of recommendation: B) [185]. IMT involves respiratory muscle specific-training devices to improve respiratory muscle function, thereby improving respiratory functional status and reducing dyspnoea. Respiratory muscle dysfunction predominantly has been observed in patients with advanced CHF. Modes of IMT usually involve inspiratory muscles, and training is performed at a percentage of P_{imax} . Strength devices are pressure threshold load trainers. Devices targeting endurance include isocapnic hyperpnoea endurance trainers, or incremental inspiratory endurance trainers with a computer-biofeedback. In CHF patients with poor exercise capacity, respiratory endurance training has been shown to improve respiratory muscle function, reduce dyspnoea and increase in $\text{VO}_{2\text{peak}}$ as well as quality of life. IMT may thus be used in CHF patients with low functional capacity. When using inspiratory endurance trainers, an intensity of 60% of sustained P_{imax} with a build-up towards a duration of 20-30 min and a frequency of three days/week for a minimum of 8-10 weeks has been proposed. If a pressure threshold trainer is used, respiratory training is usually started at 30% of P_{imax} and readjusted every 7-10 days up to 60% of P_{imax} . Training duration again should be 20–30 min/day, 3-5 times a week and for a minimum of eight weeks.

Safety precautions. CHF patients should be informed about the nature of cardiac prodromal symptoms on exercise-related warning symptoms including chest pain or discomfort, abnormal dyspnoea, dizziness or malaise and should seek prompt medical care if such symptoms develop. Regular follow-up depending on severity of CHF and the category of risk is recommended. Intensive isometric exercise such as heavy weight lifting can have a marked pressor effect and should be avoided [182]. Stopping exercise suddenly should be avoided as it may result in a precipitous drop in blood pressure. Patients with exertional dyspnoea, chest discomfort or palpitations need further examination, which includes exercise testing, echocardiography, holter monitoring or combinations thereof.

5.3.3 Pacemaker, implantable cardioverter defibrillator and resynchronisation therapy

Intervention aim. To increase physical fitness, and increase confidence during exercise, in order to improve mental health, quality of life and prognosis.

Exercise training recommendations [26, 89-117]. As proposed by clinical guidelines, sports with a low cardiovascular demand and no competitive context is allowed in all ICD and pacemaker patients (level of evidence: 3, grade of recommendation: D). Leisure-time recreational physical activities with low-to-moderate dynamic or static demand are also allowed. Recommendations restricting participation in these activities are primarily based on the fear of exercise-induced device or lead complications, lack of data regarding the effectiveness of device therapy in metabolic, autonomic or ischemic conditions and potential inappropriate antitachycardic pacing or shock delivery due to misclassification of sinus tachycardia as malignant arrhythmia. However, recent data suggest that these recommendations, particularly in younger, physically active patients (with congenital structural heart disease or channelopathies) and middle-age patients with arrhythmogenic substrate due to ischemic or dilated cardiomyopathy might be too restrictive. Until now, in athletes with ICD competitive sports or strenuous exercise is still contraindicated. However, disqualifying young ICD patients from participating in sports without solid risk evidence might be unnecessary and should be an individualized risk-benefit decision [26]. The Heart Rhythm Society (HRS), European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA) and Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society (APHRS) guidelines give several disease-specific recommendations to allow participation in competitive activities. Under exercise conditions, appropriate and inappropriate ICD shock delivery and antitachycardic stimulation is frequent, but clinical relevant complications are rare even in patients with CHF (HF-ACTION trial) [101]. Nevertheless, regular intensive exercise can promote worsening the course of underlying cardiac diseases (arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC), dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM)). During CR, supervised exercise training in ICD carriers can be safely performed (continuous moderate intensity, with a gradual build-up towards 45-60 min/day, at a frequency of 3-5 days/week) as well as home-based moderate-intensity endurance exercise during the subsequent outpatient period. To achieve an

optimal adherence to the prescribed exercise intensity (i.e. within a certain range), monitoring equipment measuring HR behaviour can be considered. Aerobic interval training (i.e. interval training of a significantly lower intensity when compared with HIIT) in ICD patients leads to a significant increase in VO_{2peak} , cycle ergometer workload and improvement in endothelial function. Furthermore, regular exercise training shows to have an important impact on psychological stability of ICD patients. There are no separate evidence-based training recommendations for ICD and pacemaker patients per se. Recommendations for exercise participation should be individualised including the following modifiers:

1. Underlying heart disease (coronary artery disease, congenital or acquired structural heart disease, channelopathies),
2. Recent supraventricular and ventricular rhythm stability,
3. Indication for device implantation (primary or secondary prevention),
4. LV systolic and diastolic function,
5. Revascularisation status,
6. Settings of the device.

Additionally several limitations regarding the device system have to be considered, such as chronotropic incompetence, inappropriate sensor function for rate-adaptive pacing (under- or over responsive), sinus tachycardia above the upper tracking limit (dual-chamber and cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) devices), under- and over sensing (pacemaker and ICD), arrhythmias (ventricular or supraventricular extrabeats, junctional rhythm, supraventricular, and ventricular tachyarrhythmias) and/or changes in atrioventricular (AV) conduction.

Safety precautions.

The main target here is to prevent inappropriate therapy delivery under exercise conditions, and maintenance of system integrity.

For all patients with ICD/pacemakers:

- Leisure-time sports is only allowed from six weeks after implant to facilitate wound healing and lead fixation.
- Prior to sports participation a stress test under controlled conditions should be performed.
- Patients should be informed about the signs of arrhythmias, initiating loss of consciousness (dizziness, presyncope) and individual behaviour after therapy delivery.
- Rigorous arm-shoulder movements (e.g. aggressive ipsilateral arm movements during handball, volleyball, basketball, racket sports, swimming, tennis) should be avoided.
- Exercise-induced paroxysmal atrial fibrillation should be excluded by prior exercise testing and Holter electrocardiogram (ECG).
- Sports with bodily contact is contraindicated due to possible device or lead failure (mechanical trauma including hematoma and lead fracture).
- Electrostimulation in the proximity of the device as an additional training modality is contraindicated, although neuromuscular electrical stimulation to leg muscles has been shown to be a safe modality in ICD patients with advanced CHF.
- Allow a good warm-up and cooling-down during exercise sessions to optimise the chronotropic response.

For patients with antibradycardia pacemakers:

- Stress testing of chronotropic competence prior to exercising and, if necessary, reprogramming (rate response mode) is recommended.
- Stress testing for the exclusion of under-/over sensing and programming of the upper synchronization frequency is recommended.

For patients with cardiac resynchronization device (CRT-D, CRT-P):

- Control of left ventricular pacing threshold, AV delay (effectiveness of biventricular pacing) and effectiveness of rate response under metabolic conditions are recommended.
- Patients should be informed about signs of progressive CHF due to exercising.

For patients with ICD:

- Define the maximum exercise HR at least 10-20 beats below ICD intervention frequency (exercise testing and Holter ECG prior to exercise prescription needed).
- Exercise modalities, in which a short loss of consciousness is dangerous (e.g., swimming, diving, climbing) should be avoided in symptomatic patients with secondary preventive implantation indication or in patients with current ICD-discharge within the last three months.
- Prophylactic prescription of antiarrhythmic or bradycardic therapy should be contemplated.
- After appropriate or inappropriate ICD discharge advanced risk stratification should be performed before restarting exercising.

For athletes with ICD:

- The desire of the athlete with ICD to continue athletic competition should be secondary for evaluating the suitability for strenuous exercise.
- All recommendations should be based on an individual risk stratification including underlying genetic or structural heart disease, arrhythmogenic disposition and haemodynamic parameters.
- Individual programming corresponding to the maximum exercise HR (ICD intervention frequency at least 10-20 beats above exercise HR measured by exercise testing and 24h Holter monitoring).
- Start at least three months after the ICD implantation or three months after the last ICD-treated arrhythmia with class IA sports (level of evidence: 2, grade of recommendation: C) or with higher peak static and dynamic components than class IA depending on the likelihood of appropriate and inappropriate shocks and the potential for device-related trauma in high-impact sports (level of evidence: 2, grade of recommendation: C).

5.3.4 Left-ventricular assist device

Intervention aim. To achieve early mobilisation and improve functional/exercise capacity, and hereby to lead to an improvement in quality of life.

Exercise training recommendations [118-131, 174-178]. Patients with an LVAD should engage in cycle and/or treadmill exercise training at a continuous moderate intensity, with a gradual build-up towards 45-60 min/day, at a frequency of 3-5 days/week, for at least 8-10 weeks (with preferentially a further prolongation in exercise participation to maintain achieved benefits (level of evidence: 4, grade of recommendation: D). In theory, LVAD patients are CHF patients and would thus benefit from resistance exercise training, as well as IMT (see section CHF).

Safety precautions. LVAD patients are a heterogeneous patient population whose clinical condition can vary widely. Peak exercise capacity often remains limited (e.g. at 50% of prediction), while functional performance is better (e.g. at 80% of prediction). The most common complications are bleeding, thromboembolic events, driveline infections or right-sided CHF. In patients with a newly implanted LVAD system, the initiation of functional or exercise-oriented interventions should primarily be based on individual clinical conditions and disease progression. Before initiating functional and/or exercise therapy, patients must be in a clinically and haemodynamically stable condition. Exclusion criteria for exercise training include: low volume status with orthostatic response, bleeding, signs of systemic infection, ventricular arrhythmias and/or technical LVAD problems. Guidance should be provided by experienced, well-trained therapists who are familiar with the management of the LVAD systems used, general safety aspects and the specific emergency management. Before carrying out functional and exercise measures, the following safety aspects must be strictly observed: checking the batteries, checking the drive length and position, selecting and checking the attachment of the controller and batteries. When performing function and/or exercise-based measures, the following termination criteria must be observed: reduction in pump flow <3 l/min, inappropriate increase in pump energy demand in watts (watch out for thrombus formation), oxygen saturation < 90% (pulse oximeter), bleeding (e.g. nose bleed). Special care is required in the selection of exercises and the choice of training equipment. When performing functional and sporting activities, rapid changes in body position (e.g. from sitting to standing with rapid blood volume shifts) should always be avoided due to blood volume shifts and the risk of suction events. All activities that carry an increased risk of bleeding should be strictly avoided (e.g. water sports, contact sports, competitive forms of play, etc.).

Also treadmill walking can be dangerous to some patients (e.g. in patients with frailty an increased fall risk may be present, patients with (short) episodes of dizziness). A visualisation of the output/resistance curve of the device could be necessary in case of symptomatic syncope during exercise, particularly in hot conditions, and/or when the patient sweats profusely. HR monitoring is not valid for exercise prescription: the exercise intensity should be based on workload or Borg RPE.

5.3.5 Heart transplantation

Intervention aim. To achieve early mobilisation and hereby to lead to an improvement exercise capacity and life expectancy, and to improve physical performance in daily life activities.

Exercise training recommendations [132-143, 179-181]. It is agreed that these patients should engage in continuous moderate-intensity exercise (at 40-59 % $\text{VO}_{2\text{peak}}$ or 12-13 Borg RPE), for up to 30-60 min/session, at a frequency of minimally three days/week, for at least 20 weeks (with preferentially a further prolongation in exercise participation) (level of evidence: 3, grade of recommendation: C), if possible, and with a gradual build-up towards this intensity and volume of exercise. A good evaluation of exercise tolerance is strongly recommended at entry of CR, since a significant proportion of these patients can suffer from severe exercise intolerance (due to skeletal muscle dysfunction (as result of, at least in part, anti-rejection therapy, corticoid myopathy and from deconditioning as result of pre-operative physical inactivity)). Cardiac reinnervation occurs in a subgroup of heart transplantation recipients, which is associated with higher peak HR and HRR as well as a greater exercise tolerance. So, a regular assessment of the workload-HR relationship is important to re-establish the target HR during exercise training. In addition, resistance exercises should be considered as well due to the high likelihood for muscle weakness and/or wasting (level of evidence: 4, grade of recommendation: D). In this regard, resistance training up to 50-60% of 1RM, for 10-20 repetitions/series and 3-6 series/large muscle groups should be prescribed.

Safety precautions. The heart transplantation patient very often presents at CR with a delayed exercise-onset and exercise-offset HR response due to denervation. As a result, a warm-up period before each session and steady-state aerobic exercise are recommended at the beginning, and also a

slowed HR recovery after exercise may occur. This denervation also gradually leads to an emptying of the catecholamine storage in the myocardium, meaning that the transplanted heart is then reliant on the stimulation of circulating catecholamines. Hence, these catecholamine receptors display an increased sensitivity. In an unfavourable case, this can lead to an increased incidence of cardiac arrhythmia. Therefore, in particular in the first weeks of CR, continuous ECG monitoring during exercise could be considered.

5.3.6 Peripheral artery disease

Definition. See Table 3.

Intervention aim. To improve pain free walking distance and hereby lead to improvements in daily life activities and quality of life.

Exercise training recommendations [145-159, 183]. Exercise programs in PAD patients are of significant benefit compared with placebo or usual care in improving walking time and distance. Supervised exercise training should be performed during 30 to 45 minutes, in sessions performed at least three times per week for a minimum of 12 weeks (level of evidence: I, grade of recommendation: A). Regimen of walking to near-maximal pain provides the best improvement (level of evidence: IIa, grade of recommendation: A). Exercise training programs that use intermittent walking to near-maximal claudication pain performed at a relatively low treadmill grade (i.e., 40% of maximal grade) or a relatively high grade (i.e., 80% of maximal grade) may both be used. However, the volume of exercise provided in terms of energy expenditure should be the same. The higher the intensity of exercise, the greater the cardiovascular responses, the higher the number of motor units recruited in the active muscles, and the greater the metabolic responses (level of evidence: IIa, grade of recommendation: C). The initial workload of the treadmill or speed during outdoor track walking should be set to a speed (and grade) that elicits claudication symptoms within 3 to 5 minutes. Patients walk at this workload until they achieve claudication of moderate severity, which is then followed by a brief period of standing or sitting to permit symptoms to resolve. The exercise-rest-exercise pattern should then be repeated throughout the exercise session (level of evidence: IIa, grade of recommendation: A). An

improvement in exercise tolerance can be observed within three months after initiating the exercise prescription. However, exercise programs longer than six months induced greater improvements in exercise tolerance (level of evidence: IIb, grade of recommendation: C). Training by walking results in greater increases in walking performance, when compared to mixed or alternative activity programs, including cycling or resistance-type exercise. However, muscle atrophy related to chronically reduced perfusion to skeletal muscles and inactivity in PAD patients, markedly influences exercise performance and patient mobility. PAD patients benefit from resistance training as do patients with other forms of CVD, and its use, as tolerated, for general fitness is complementary to walking but not a substitute for it (see below for further details) (level of evidence: IIa, grade of recommendation: C). Adding upper body exercise to walking as it is the case with pole striding training (e.g., Nordic walking) significantly improves the clinical indicators of cardiovascular fitness and quality of life, and decreases symptoms of claudication pain during exertion. Dynamic arm exercise training can be followed by similar improvement (pain-free and maximal walking distance) to that seen with treadmill walking exercise training (level of evidence: IIb, grade of recommendation: C). It is recommended to start arm exercise training at one work level (10 watts) below the maximal level achieved during baseline arm ergometry test at a rate of 50 cycles per min. Intermittent exercise periods of two minutes can be applied, followed by two minutes of rest, for a total of up to 60 minutes. After three weeks of exercise training, the intensity can be increased to the work level in watts achieved during the baseline arm ergometry test. Thereafter a progressive increase in each cycle by one minute every 2-3 weeks can be foreseen during the training period and decrease of rest periods by one minute, for a maximal volume of five minutes of exercise and one minute of rest for 60 minutes (50 minutes of exercise). In this regard, moderate-to-high intensity resistance exercise, i.e. 60-80% of 1RM, is advised. Monthly reassessments of muscle strength, and routine monitoring of HR and blood pressure (BP), is advised. Each exercise session, three sets (8–12 repetitions with 1–2 minute rest intervals per set) of resistance exercise should be executed. Whole-body progressive resistance training incorporating 6–8 exercises including the primary muscle groups involved in walking (e.g. gastrocnemius, tibialis anterior, quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteals) should then be targeted.

Safety precautions. Although the majority of exercise trials have focussed on the efficacy of walking to pain as treatment, there is some evidence that inflammation accompanying the onset of claudication may theoretically contribute to further vascular endothelium damage, and thus not be optimal. Therefore, there is a compelling rationale for further definitive, robust trials of alternative/complementary exercise prescriptions and guidelines for PAD. Pay attention to any poorly healing or non-healing wounds of the legs or feet, since they constitute a contraindication to exercise training due to the potential aggravation of the wounds during walking by reason of mechanical irritation. Because of the frequently concomitant clinical or occult coronary artery disease, it is advised to perform treadmill or bicycle exercise testing with 12-lead ECG monitoring before starting an exercise training program. Repeat the test after improvement of symptoms or consider alternative stress tests, if exercise capacity is limited by claudication symptoms.

5.3.7 Resistance training for cardiovascular disease: safety aspects

Although endurance exercise training is often the primary element of rehabilitation programs to many patients with CCS or CHF, resistance training is considered as an important addition. In this paragraph, it will be elaborated in greater detail how resistance training can be applied safely in these clinical conditions [160-172].

Performing resistance exercise can lead to inappropriate BP increase. However, by taking into account the factors that cause a rise in BP under exercise conditions this can be avoided. While static (isometric) loads are associated with a significant increase in BP, low to moderately dosed dynamic resistance exercises only result in a modest increase in BP, comparable to that seen in moderate-intensity endurance training. In addition to the exercise mode (isometric/isotonic component), the BP response depends on exercise intensity, (in relation to the individual maximum strength), the amount of the muscle mass used, the number and speed/rhythm of repetitions, the duration of loading as well as the number of sets and the resting period between sets. The Valsalva manoeuvre (a forced expiration invoked against the closed glottis) during resistance exercise causes a more pronounced rise in BP. Moreover, carrying out the Valsalva manoeuvre leads to an increase in intrathoracic pressure, and in

turn to a decreased venous return and a potential reduction in cardiac output. The physiological response includes an increase in HR to maintain cardiac output and peripheral vasoconstriction to maintain BP, which otherwise may decrease with decreasing cardiac output. Furthermore, the termination of the compressed breathing causes a dramatic increase in venous return and subsequently an increase in cardiac output being forced through a constricted arterial vascular system. The resulting dramatic rise and drop in BP can limit myocardial oxygen delivery resulting in potentially dangerous arrhythmias and/or reduced perfusion of the coronary arteries leading to ischemia. Therefore, avoid Valsalva manoeuvre by exhaling during the contraction or exertion phase of the lift and inhaling during the relaxation phase. The resistance exercises should be executed in a rhythmical manner at a moderate controlled speed through a full range of motion, avoid a continuous, tensed-up grip, and if symptoms occur, discontinue the training immediately (vertigo, arrhythmias, dyspnoea, angina pectoris). Additional special directions for the execution of resistance training should be given: use standardised exercises for mobilization and stretching for warming up, preparation, and cooling down, emphasize familiarisation with the learning of how the movement is executed correctly. Moreover, the assessment of muscle strength should be performed earliest after a sufficient thorough familiarisation. If exercising more than three days a week, plan one-day breaks between training sessions of the same muscle groups.

5.3.8 Medications

Beta-blockers, alpha-blockers, vasodilators, simvastatin, sulfonylurea, meglitinide and exogenous insulin administration may all affect the acute response to exercise, for which modifications in exercise prescription could be proposed, as explained in a previous paper of this working group [24]. In patients with CCS or CHF on anticoagulants, sports or exercise with direct bodily contact or prone to trauma should be avoided.

5.3.9 Adverse events during exercise testing

The safety of exercise for patients with CVD is strongly related to having an exercise prescription based on an exercise test. In patients after ACS the incidence of life-threatening adverse events was zero in 277,721 patient-hours of CR exercise when based on an exercise test prescription, whereas two of those adverse events occurred during 105,375 patient-hours when exercise training was not based on an exercise test [184]. CCS and CHF patients are more prone to the development of myocardial ischemia. As myocardial ischemia may increase the likelihood of cardiac arrhythmias in CCS and CHF (e.g. atrial fibrillation or ventricular tachyarrhythmia) and/or lead to a reduced cardiac contractility (e.g. reduced stroke volume), such possibility should be ruled out by cardiopulmonary exercise testing. If such myocardial ischemia with cardiac arrhythmias is noticed, it is advised to terminate the exercise test and postpone exercise training until clinically effective medical treatment is initiated. In addition, the BP response during exercise should be monitored closely to rule out exercise hypertension (e.g. if SBP rises >200 mmHg at a workload of 100 W) [26] or a decrease of SBP during exercise.

5.3.10 Physical fitness

It is generally recommended to start exercise training at a rather low exercise intensity, and to build it up to the originally recommended exercise intensity, in patients with a VO_{2peak} <75% of the predicted normal value, as explained in a previous paper of this working group [24].

6. Examples of exercise prescriptions for CCS and CHF patients by EXPERT tool

To demonstrate how the EXPERT tool [22, 23] proposes exercise prescriptions in CCS and/or CHF patients with different combinations of CVD risk factors, three patient cases with solutions are shown in Table 5 (exercise safety precautions are not shown). The EXPERT tool always starts with the general recommendation for endurance exercise prescription in (secondary) prevention of CVD (150 min low-to-moderate intense endurance exercise training per week, spread over 3-5 days, achieving 1000-2000 kcal, for a duration of at least 12 weeks) [16]. However, the tool further adjusts exercise prescription based on the input of further variables.

Case 1: A 75-year old, slightly underweight (BMI: 19.04 kg/m²), male is referred to multidisciplinary rehabilitation for CABG. In this patient, the primary aim is to improve physical fitness. It is therefore important to offer a sufficient exercise volume (>150 min/week), to select a sufficient exercise intensity (moderate-intensity, HR: 95-105 bpm) and whole-body exercises (walking, stepping, rowing, cross-training), and to offer additional resistance exercise training (i.e. because of the low BMI and having undergone CABG, a lowered skeletal muscle mass may be present) [173]. However, the patient displays a significantly lowered physical fitness (e.g. VO_{2peak} at 67% of predicted value). Therefore, it is advised to start at a lower endurance exercise intensity and build up towards moderate-intensity endurance training within a few weeks. The preparticipation screening also reveals arterial hypertension. As a result, reducing BP becomes an important additional rehabilitation goal. For this reasons, a build-up towards at least moderate-intensity endurance training, and with a sufficient exercise session duration (30-45 min) is warranted. Moreover, as the patient takes metformin, the patient should thus be considered to experience type 2 diabetes. For this CVD risk factors, in theory, resistance exercise training (at least 21 sets) (leading to greater reductions in glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c)) is advised. However, the patient must be viewed carefully, including potential barriers, leading to increased exercise risk (e.g. postoperative anaemia, sarcopenia or cachexia, BP medication).

Case 2: A 68-year old obese male with a preserved physical fitness is referred for multidisciplinary rehabilitation after PCI. As a result, the general recommendation for endurance exercise prescription after PCI (150 min low-to-moderate intensity endurance exercise training per week, spread over 3-5 days, achieving 1000-2000 kcal, for a duration of at least 12 weeks, with the addition of resistance exercise training) is applicable. Because of the obese state (BMI = 30.77 kg/m²), a significant energy expenditure by exercise training is warranted (>1500 kcal/week) by offering whole-body exercises (e.g. walking, rowing, stepping, etc.) and by increasing the frequency and duration of the exercise sessions. A prolongation of the rehabilitation program is then also indicated, as well as a proper dietary intervention.

Case 3: A 72-year old female with a preserved physical fitness is referred to multidisciplinary rehabilitation for HFrEF and CRT-P. As a result, the general recommendation for endurance exercise

prescription in CHF (150 min low-to-moderate intensity endurance exercise training per week, spread over 3-5 days, achieving 1000-2000 kcal, for a duration of at least 12 weeks, with the addition of resistance exercise training) is applicable. In final, the patient takes statins, and should thus be considered to experience dyslipidaemia: a total weekly energy expenditure >900 kcal is desired. In final, also IMT should be added in the exercise prescription. All precautions regarding patients with CRT-P should be considered.

7. Conclusion

In this manuscript, state-of-the-art exercise prescription, based on a robust review of evidence, has been proposed for patients with CCS and/or CHF, and associated co-morbidities. With the EXPERT tool, clinicians and healthcare professionals are assisted in the selection of proper exercise training modalities in these populations.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the conception or design of the work, contributed to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work drafted the manuscript, and critically revised the manuscript. All authors gave final approval and agree to be accountable for all aspects of work ensuring integrity and accuracy.

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Tables and figures**Table 1** Mandatory emergency equipment in the rehabilitation/exercise training room

portable defibrillator
(portable) oxygen tank
nasal cannula
vent mask, non-rebreathing mask, oxygen mask, oral and nasal airways, bag-valve-mask hand respirator
syringes and needles, intravenous tubing, solutions and stand, suction apparatus and supplies (such as gloves)
emergency drugs and solutions

Table 2 Summarized exercise prescription recommendations for each disease separately

Indication	Exercise prescription
CCS	<p>Initial stage (for up to maximally two weeks): Endurance exercise can start at a low to moderate intensity, but gradually increase up to 20 minutes, and exercise 3-5 days per week. Resistance exercise intensity should be set at <30% of one repetition maximum (1-RM) (RPE Borg \leq11), for 5-10 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week</p> <p>Improvement stage (from two up to 12 weeks): Exercise sessions up to 30-45 minutes at moderate intensity for endurance exercise is advised, at a frequency of \geq5 days/week. In some patients high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can be offered as an alternative. In the first improvement stage, resistance exercise intensity should be set at 30-50% 1-RM, for 10-15 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week. In the second improvement stage, resistance exercise intensity should be set at 40-60% 1-RM, for 10-15 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week. In the third improvement stage resistance exercise intensity should be set at 60-80% 1-RM, for 8-10 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week.</p> <p>Maintenance stage (after 8-10 weeks of CR): Exercise sessions of 20-45 minutes or even up to 60 minutes are advised, and daily exercise should be promoted. A minimal program duration of 12 weeks should be achieved, although a permanent increment in physical activity is recommended. Resistance training should be continued as completed in the improvement stage.</p>
CHF	<p>A combination of endurance exercise, resistance exercise, and inspiratory muscle training is advised.</p> <p>For endurance exercise: the session duration should be progressed according to patients' tolerance, trying to reach at least a 30-min session duration, and being deployed 3-5 days/week. Moderate intensities are advised, but in patients with physical deconditioning, a lower exercise intensity can be selected in the first weeks of CR. A lifestyle approach by including common activities into daily routine also is recommended. HIIT can be proposed in some CHF patients.</p> <p>For resistance exercise: In a first stage, resistance exercise intensity should be set at 30-50% 1-RM, for 10-15 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week. In a second stage, resistance exercise intensity should be set at 40-60% 1-RM, for 10-15 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week. In the final stage resistance exercise intensity should be set at 60-80% 1-RM, for 8-10 repetitions per muscle group (1-3 sets per unit), at a frequency of 2-3 training units/week.</p> <p>For inspiratory muscle training: in particular in those with inspiratory muscle weakness (P_{imax} <70%), inspiratory muscle training (IMT) may be clinically relevant. When using inspiratory endurance trainers, an intensity of 60% of sustained maximal inspiratory pressure (P_{imax}) with a build-up towards a duration of 20-30 min and a frequency of three days/week for a minimum of 8-10 weeks has been proposed. If a pressure threshold trainer is used, respiratory training is usually started at 30% of P_{imax} and readjusted every 7-10 days up to 60% of P_{imax}. Training duration again should be 20-30 min/day, 3-5 times a week and for a minimum of eight weeks.</p>
pacemaker, ICD or resynchronisation device	<p>A distinction is made between athletes vs. sedentary individuals</p> <p>For athletes (or people with ambition towards competitive sports): In athletes with ICD competitive sports or strenuous exercise is contraindicated. However,</p>

	<p>disqualifying young ICD patients from participating in sports without solid risk evidence might be unnecessary and should be an individualized risk-benefit decision (based on the patient's phenotype and characteristics of the ambioned sports).</p> <p>For sedentary individuals (entering CR): A continuous moderate intensity is advised, with a gradual build-up towards 45-60 min/day, at a frequency of 3-5 days/week, for at least 8-10 weeks (with preferentially a further prolongation in exercise participation to maintain achieved benefits). Aerobic interval training can also be proposed in some individuals.</p>
LVAD	<p>A combination of endurance and resistance exercise should be offered.</p> <p>For endurance exercise: Endurance exercise training at a continuous moderate intensity is advised, with a gradual build-up towards 45-60 min/day, at a frequency of 3-5 days/week, for at least 8-10 weeks (with preferentially a further prolongation in exercise participation to maintain achieved benefits).</p> <p>For resistance exercise: LVAD patients are CHF patients and would thus benefit from resistance exercise training, as well as IMT (see section CHF).</p>
Heart transplantation	<p>A combination of endurance and resistance exercise should be offered.</p> <p>For endurance exercise: These patients should engage in continuous moderate intense exercise (at 60-70 %VO₂peak or 12-14 Borg RPE), for up to 30-60 min/session, at a frequency of minimally three days/week, for at least 20 weeks (with preferentially a further prolongation in exercise participation), if possible, and with a gradual build-up towards this intensity and volume of exercise.</p> <p>For resistance exercise: Resistance training up to 50-60% of 1RM, for 10-20 repetitions/series and 3-6 series/large muscle groups should be prescribed.</p>
Peripheral arterial disease	<p>A combination of endurance and resistance exercise should be offered.</p> <p>For endurance exercise: Supervised exercise training should be performed during 30-45 minutes, in sessions performed at least three times per week for a minimum of 12 weeks. Regimen of walking to near-maximal pain provides the best improvement. Exercise training programs that use intermittent walking to near-maximal claudication pain performed at a relatively low treadmill grade (i.e., 40% of maximal grade) or a relatively high grade (i.e., 80% of maximal grade) may both be used. The initial workload of the treadmill or speed during outdoor track walking should be set to a speed (and grade) that elicits claudication symptoms within 3 to 5 minutes. Patients walk at this workload until they achieve claudication of moderate severity, which is then followed by a brief period of standing or sitting to permit symptoms to resolve. The exercise-rest-exercise pattern should then be repeated throughout the exercise session. Adding upper body exercise to walking as it is the case with pole striding training (e.g., Nordic walking), or arm cycling exercise, significantly improves the clinical indicators of cardiovascular fitness and quality of life, and decreases symptoms of claudication pain during exertion. Prolonged programs (up to 6 months) provide the greatest benefits.</p> <p>For resistance exercise: moderate-to-high intensity resistance exercise, i.e. 60-80% of 1RM, is advised. Each exercise session, three sets (8-12 repetitions with 1-2 minute rest intervals per set) of resistance exercise should be executed. Whole-body progressive resistance training incorporating 6-8 exercises including the primary muscle groups involved in walking should then be targeted.</p>

Abbreviations: CCS, chronic coronary syndrome; RM, repetition maximum; RPE, ratings of perceived exertion; HIIT, high-intensity interval training; CR, cardiovascular rehabilitation; CHF, congestive heart failure; IMT, inspiratory muscle training; Pimax, maximal inspiratory pressure; ICD, implantable cardioverter defibrillator; LVAD, left-ventricular assist device.

Table 3 Definitions of diseases/conditions

IN-HOSPITAL PHASE (PHASE 1 CR)	<p>Being hospitalised for at least three days due to CCS or acute coronary syndrome (ACS) (with or without revascularisation), decompensation in CHF, heart transplantation.</p>
CCS	<p>To detect CCS non-invasive stress imaging (e.g. cardiac magnetic resonance, stress echocardiography, positron emission tomography or single-photon emission computed tomography) may be considered for the assessment of myocardial ischaemia and viability in patients with CHF and/or CCS (considered suitable for coronary revascularisation) [29].</p>
ACS	<p>The clinical definition of ACS denotes the presence of acute myocardial injury detected by abnormal cardiac biomarkers in the setting of evidence of acute myocardial ischaemia [30]. Detection of an elevated cardiac troponin value above the 99th percentile upper reference limit is defined as myocardial injury [30]. The injury is considered acute if there is a rise and/or fall of cardiac troponin values.</p>
CHF	<p>CHF is a clinical syndrome characterized by typical symptoms (e.g. breathlessness, ankle swelling and fatigue) that may be accompanied by signs (e.g. elevated jugular venous pressure, pulmonary crackles and peripheral oedema) caused by a structural and/or functional cardiac abnormality, resulting in a reduced cardiac output and/or elevated intracardiac pressures at rest or during stress [31]. CHF patients with a</p>

<p>PAD</p>	<p>left-ventricular ejection fraction <40% are considered as CHF with reduced EF (HFrEF), while CHF with preserved EF (HFpEF) is used when the left-ventricular ejection fraction \geq50% [31].</p> <p>In the diagnosis of PAD the ankle-brachial index (ABI) is a useful, first-line, non-invasive outcome parameter. An ABI <0.91 represents insufficient perfusion of the extremities, while an ABI >1.40 represents arterial stiffening (medial arterial calcification) [144]. In case of a deviating ABI, the following additional diagnostic tools/investigations can be considered for further optimisation of diagnosis and treatment: Doppler ultrasound, computed tomography angiography and/or magnetic resonance angiography [144].</p>
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Abbreviations: CR, cardiovascular rehabilitation; CCS, chronic coronary syndrome; CHF, congestive heart failure; ACS, acute coronary syndrome; PAD, peripheral artery disease.

Table 4 Preparticipation screening and parameter monitoring in phase 1 CR**PREPARTICIPATION SCREENING IN PHASE 1 CR**

1. Medical history: changes in body weight and weight goal, diet, previous (pre-hospitalisation) clinical status, symptom(s) description and recognition, physical activity level and weekly exercise training hours. Barriers of care (language, literacy, culture, transportation, insurance, ability to pay, caregiver, self-care, knowing when to contact a provider).
2. Pre-hospitalisation level of function (e.g. mobility aids), activity and exercise response.
3. Primary diagnosis.
4. Medications.
5. Investigations, blood chemistry (e.g. haemoglobin, red blood cell count, glycaemia, fluid/electrolytes).
6. Risk factors (blood pressure, waist circumference, blood lipid profile, blood c-reactive protein content) and lifestyle conditions.
7. Physician's recommendations and specific restrictions on mobilisation according to acute and post-acute clinical conditions.

The patient, family and team member should also be requested to provide more details on:

1. Multisystem review (e.g. cognition, respiratory, cardiac, musculoskeletal & neurologic system).
2. Level of cooperation.
3. Ask the patient what he/she currently feels about mobilisation concerns and readiness.
4. Consider the impact of the illness or medical procedures (e.g. patient waiting for cardiac valvular surgery or myocardial revascularisation) and medications on the patient's mobility (e.g. weakness from disuse, pain, equipment needs (e.g. walker)).
5. Coordinate with team members the timing of treatment with medication, availability of equipment and of personnel to optimize effectiveness.

The following contra-indications for early mobilisation should be respected and known by healthcare professionals (the cited values are not absolute criteria for withholding mobilisation but are within the range of concern) [14]:

Absolute contra-indications:

- acute coronary syndrome < 48 hours
- known untreated and clinically relevant main stem stenosis
- uncontrolled cardiac arrhythmias at rest or during exercise
- severe aortic valve stenosis or other severe valvular heart disease
- decompensated heart failure
- acute pulmonary embolism or pulmonary infarction
- acute aortic dissection
- acute non-cardiac conditions that limit exercise capacity or are worsened by physical exertion (e.g. infection, sepsis, hyperthyroidism/ hypothyroidism)
- acute deep vein thrombosis
- acute myocarditis or pericarditis
- active endocarditis
- recent stroke or TIA

- physical disability that prevents safe and appropriately dosed exercise training
- other clinical situations that worsen under physical exertion

Relative contra-indications:

- significant anaemia
- severe, disease-relevant electrolytic derailments
- therapeutically uncontrolled tachy- or bradycardia/arrhythmias, e.g.
 - o untreated sick sinus syndrome
 - o untreated and/or higher-grade (e.g. II) AV blockages
 - o atrial fibrillation with uncontrolled ventricular rate
- HOCM with maximum resting LVOT gradient > 25 mmHg
- known aortic dissection (Stanford B type, stable)
- orthostatic hypotension (particularly in the elderly)
- severe arterial hypertension at rest (systolic blood pressure \geq 180 mm Hg and diastolic blood pressure \geq 110 mmHg)
 - blood pressure drop of systolic \geq 20 mmHg during mobilisation
 - uncontrolled diabetes mellitus
 - cognitive impairment that prevents/significantly limits cooperation during exercise testing and training
 - relevant pericardial effusion

WHAT TO ASSESS DURING MOBILISATION IN PHASE 1 CR

After this intake/screening phase, it is important to know what to monitor during exercise/activities:

1. Subjective: Dizziness, vertigo, shortness of breath, fatigue, nausea, pain (consider use of scales, e.g. Borg rating of perceived exertion (RPE)).

2. Objective: Cognition, balance, perspiration, cyanosis, HR, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate and BP and all other factors relevant to patient and mobility tasks. For example, cardiac rhythm in those patients when ECG is essential during mobilisation. For the neurological status, assess the ability to follow commands, for spontaneous movements, pupil size, cranial nerve function, and ability to recognize parents. Assess oriented times, and follow nursing standards of care.

These objective parameters should include: BP and mean arterial pressure, HR, cardiac rhythm (symptoms, assess radial pulse or monitor cardiac rhythm using devices (monitors or pulse oximetry)), respiratory rate and effort (use pulse oximetry, perform arterial blood gases (if needed), assess breath sounds), clinical status as well as haemodynamic and respiratory adaptations to mobilisation (central venous pressure (if available) and peripheral perfusion), body temperature, invasive catheters and tube drainage conditions.

Abbreviations: CR, cardiovascular rehabilitation; TIA, transient ischemic attack; HOCM, hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy; LVOT, left ventricular outflow tract; HR, heart rate; BP, blood pressure.

Table 5 Exercise prescriptions for simulated CVD risk patients by the EXPERT tool

	Patient characteristics		EXPERT exercise prescription	
1	Age: Body height: Body weight: BMI: Sex: VO2max: Resting HR: Peak exercise HR: Total cholesterol: LDL: Fasting glycaemia: Blood pressure: Medication intake: Comorbidities: Indication for rehabilitation:	75 176 cm 59 kg 19.04 kg/m ² Male 1302 ml/min (67% of normal value) 74 bpm 126 bpm 102 mg/dl 35 mg/dl 135 mg/dl 164/106 mmHg Statin, beta-blocker, metformin Type 2 diabetes CABG	Intensity (HR) Frequency (days/week) Session Duration Program Duration Strength Training Additional Training Advice	Start at lower intensity, and build towards 95 – 105 bpm Start with 3, building up to daily exercise (for optimal glycaemic control) Start at 20min, building to 45min (for blood pressure control) >24 weeks Yes Start at lower exercise intensity and build towards original proposal. Strength training for the arm muscles are only allowed when the sternum is stabilized. For resistance training: 2 days/week, build towards 40-80% of 1RM, 12-15 reps/set to 60-70% of 1RM, 8-12 reps/set. Also, ≥21 sets is advised for optimal glycaemic control.
2	Age: Body height: Body weight: BMI: Sex: VO2max: Resting HR: Peak exercise HR: Total cholesterol: LDL: Fasting glycaemia: Blood pressure: Medication intake: Comorbidities: Indication for rehabilitation:	68 years 173 cm 92 kg 30.77 kg/m ² Male 1823 (95% of normal value) 65 bpm 122 bpm 161 80 95 114/77 mmHg Beta blocker None PCI	Intensity Frequency Session Duration Program Duration Strength Training Additional Training Advice	Moderate-intense: 88 - 99 bpm Start at 3 days/week, but increase up to >5 times 20 min, building towards 60 min >24 weeks yes Elevated energy expenditure by exercise training (>1500 kcal/week) is advised (prefer whole-body exercises), as well as dietary intervention, for optimal body weight control. For strength training: 2 days/week, build towards 40-80% of 1RM, 12-15 reps/set.
3	Age: Body height: Body weight: BMI: Sex: VO2max: Resting HR: Peak exercise HR: Total cholesterol: LDL: Fasting glycaemia: Blood pressure: Medication intake:	72 159 cm 61.6 kg 24.4 kg/m ² Female 1176 ml/min (95% of normal value) 66 bpm 117 bpm 129 mg/dl 48 mg/dl 115 mg/dl 170/55 mmHg Beta-blocker, statin Resynchronisation therapy	Intensity (HR) Frequency Session Duration Program Duration Strength Training Additional Training Advice	Moderate intense: 86 - 96 bpm 3 days/week 20 min, building towards 45 min >24 weeks Yes >900 kcal/week of energy expenditure should be achieved for optimal effect on HDL-c,

	Co-morbidities: Indication for rehabilitation:	Heart failure (HFrEF)		<p>For strength training: 2 days/week, build towards 40-80% of 1RM, 12-15 reps/set.</p> <p>For IMT: advice to use a pressure threshold: start at 30% of P_{Imax} and readjusted every 7-10 days up to 60% of P_{Imax}. Training duration again should be 20–30 min/day, 3-5 times a week.</p>
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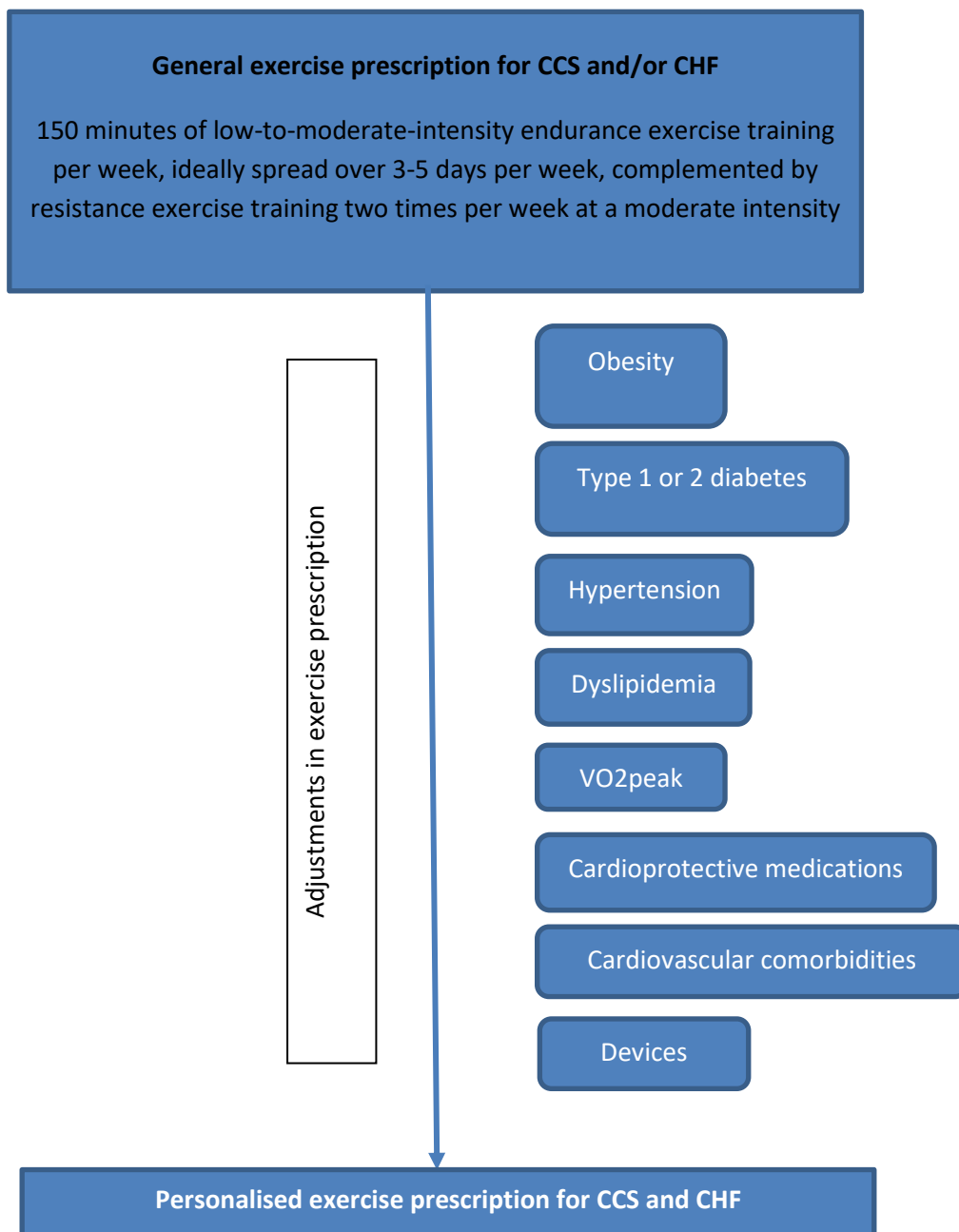
Abbreviations: BMI, body mass index; VO₂max, maximal oxygen uptake; HR, heart rate; LDL, low-density lipoprotein; CABG, coronary artery bypass graft; RM, repetition maximum; PCI, percutaneous coronary intervention; HDL, high-density lipoprotein; IMT, inspiratory muscle training; P_{Imax}, maximal inspiratory pressure.

Figure legends

Figure 1 Exercise prescription approach to patients with CCS and/or CHF in EXPERT tool

Abbreviations: CCS, chronic coronary syndrome; CHF, congestive heart failure; VO₂peak, peak oxygen uptake.

Figure 1



Supplements

Supplementary Table 1 Classification of level of evidence and grades of recommendation

Levels of evidence

1++ High quality meta-analyses, systematic reviews of RCTs, or RCTs with a very low risk of bias

1+ Well conducted meta-analyses, systematic reviews of RCTs, or RCTs with a low risk of bias

1– Meta-analyses, systematic reviews or RCTs, or RCTs with a high risk of bias

2++ High quality systematic reviews of case-control or cohort studies or

High quality case-control or cohort studies with a very low risk of confounding, bias, or chance and a high probability that the relationship is causal

2+ Well conducted case-control or cohort studies with a low risk of confounding, bias, or chance and a moderate probability that the relationship is causal

2– Case-control or cohort studies with a high risk of confounding, bias, or chance and a significant risk that the relationship is not causal

3 Non-analytic studies, e.g. case reports, case series

4 Expert opinion

Grades of recommendations

A At least one meta-analysis, systematic review, or RCT rated as 1++ and directly applicable to the target population or

A systematic review of RCTs or a body of evidence consisting principally of studies rated as 1+ directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results

B A body of evidence including studies rated as 2++ directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results or

Extrapolated evidence from studies rated as 1++ or 1+

C A body of evidence including studies rated as 2+ directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results or

Extrapolated evidence from studies rated as 2++

D Evidence level 3 or 4 or

Extrapolated evidence from studies rated as 2+

Based on reference 9.

Supplementary Table 2 Classification of exercise intensity

Intensity	Lactate (mmol/l)	METs	VO _{2peak} (%)	HRR (%)	HR _{max} (%)	RPE scale (/20)	Training zone
Low intensity, light effort	2-3	2-4	28-39	30-39	45-54	10-11	Aerobic
Moderate intensity, moderate effort	4-5	4-6	40-59	40-59	55-69	12-13	Aerobic
High intensity, vigorous effort	6-8	6-8	60-79	60-84	70-89	14-16	Lactate, aerobic, anaerobic
Very hard effort	8-10	8-10	>80	>84	>89	17-19	Lactate, aerobic, anaerobic

Abbreviations: METs, metabolic equivalents; VO_{2peak}, peak oxygen uptake; HRR, heart rate reserve; HR_{max}, maximal heart rate; RPE, ratings of perceived exertion

Based on reference 26.