# Step Down Unit Schedule

Congratulations! This is your last stop prior to going home. It is an important time for you to learn life on the LVAD system: how to connect power, how to wear the batteries and controllers safely, how to sleep with your controller secured, record your VAD #s, and how to care for your driveline and equipment. It will be difficult as you just had surgery, however staff is here to facilitate your learning and empower you to become independent.

A schedule is important at this time to keep you on track. While it may not be in this particular order, it is important to walk at least 3x/day, get out of bed for meals, and practice VAD skills: power changes, recording VAD #s and working on your VAD test!

1. Out of bed for breakfast
2. Self-test, transfer to battery power
3. Record VAD numbers in VAD binder
4. Bathe
5. Rest
6. Morning walk, exercises
7. Rest
8. Out of bed for lunch
9. Walk, exercises
10. Rest
11. Dressing change
12. Out of bed for dinner
13. Walk in the evening

![C:\Users\ccheyne\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TDNLZT2P\1200px-Incentive_spirometer[1].jpg]()Use your Incentive Spirometer 10 times every hour!

**Activity Precautions for Thoracotomy Patients**

There are no weight lifting precautions for patients who underwent implant via thoracotomy. Continue to use your incentive spirometer 10 times every 2 hours and practice deep breathing as you recover from surgery.

**Activity Precautions for Patients who had a Sternotomy**

There are wires holding your breast bone together. The wire will not rust, will not dissolve, and will NOT set off metal detector.

* Do not lift, push, or pull anything more than **10 lbs for the first 6 weeks after surgery**.
* The next **4 weeks**, your weight restriction will be 20 lbs.
* The following **4 weeks**, your weight restriction will rise to 30 lbs.
* Your cardiac surgeon will discuss your **weight restrictions** with you at your follow up appointment and make changes accordingly.
* To stand up, put the majority of your weight through your legs. Use arms only to steady yourself. Do not have anyone pull on your arms to help you stand.
* Do not lean on elbows. Lift items with both hands.
* Do not lift one arm above shoulder height. If you need to lift your arm up, lift both arms together to raise arms over shoulders.
* Avoid pushing or pulling movements.

***We will refer you to Cardiac Rehabilitation approximately 4-8 weeks after discharge***

**Strong Memorial Physical Therapy Home Walking Program**

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| **WEEK** | **MINUTES TO WALK** | **HOW OFTEN TO WALK** | **TOTAL MINUTES TO WALK EACH DAY** |
| **1** | **3-5 minutes** | **3 times each day** | **9-15 minutes** |
| **2** | **6-10 minutes** | **3 times each day** | **18-30 minutes** |
| **3** | **11-15 minutes** | **2 times each day** | **22-30 minutes** |
| **4** | **16-20 minutes** | **2 times each day** | **32-40 minutes** |
| **5** | **21-30 minutes** | **1 time each day** | **21-30 minutes** |

\*Take seated rest breaks as needed.

\*STOP activity if you experience significantly increased shortness of breath, profuse sweating, dizziness/lightheadedness, tunnel vision, nausea/vomiting, or chest pain. Contact your physician if you have these symptoms

#### Activity Tips

* Avoid walking outdoors when it is very hot (greater than 80˚ F) or very cold (less than 32˚ F,) including wind chill factor and humidity.
* Wear a scarf in cold weather to cover mouth and nose in order to warm the air.
* Schedule daily morning and afternoon rest periods.
* DO stop and rest if you are tired, short of breath, or experience pain or discomfort, no matter what you are doing.
* Avoid tensing body (i.e. opening a tight jar, pushing or pulling heavy objects.)
* Do not smoke; avoid smoky environments.