

spice up your LIFE



Bored with the same old exercise routine and losing enthusiasm? Make a change and get back on track, says **Martin Feaver**

If you had to eat the same meal day in, day out you would soon get bored. Food would cease to have any attraction and you might start to skip food altogether. Unsurprisingly exercise is the same. The familiarity of repeating a regular exercise session means exercise is a comfortable experience and you can do it without much thought or concentration. For a while this suits most of us. Eventually though, walking the same route, swimming the same number of lengths or repeating the same gym routine becomes boring, which could increase the chance of you stopping exercise altogether.

It is not just our brains that get fed up. The human body thrives on change and gets 'bored' by repeating the same exercise which means it becomes less beneficial.

Any good exercise programme must involve progression. This means your body has to regularly meet new challenges when exercising. It may sound complicated but by using simple ideas, sessions can provide interest and greater benefits for your health.

Walking your regular route in the opposite direction, a gradual change and increase of pace and meeting a friend can help restore a flagging walking programme. Consider a longer walk on days when your schedule allows. In the swimming pool, people get into the habit of resting at each end. Try starting your length in the deep end and turning without a pause at the other end. If you need

to stop after a few strokes you are still in the shallow end and can put your feet on the bottom. Eventually you will be doing two lengths! If you exercise at home or a gym, keeping your warm up and cool down the same, change the order of your exercises. The key things are to:

- **Keep it interesting!**
- **Make exercise progressive**
- **Vary activities**
- **Make it a social occasion**
- **Keep a record of your exercise sessions**

Exercise needs to be a life long habit and variety is the spice of life. It is a fact that exercise, unlike money, cannot be saved for a rainy day. No matter how much exercise you do, as soon as you stop the benefits start to ebb away. Of course most of us know this from experience – a few days away from your regular swimming session or a break from an exercise class and you notice your routine seems that bit harder. The reality is our bodies love to move and reward us by becoming stronger and fitter through exercise that challenges them. Sadly, by neglecting them through inactivity they reclaim their rewards.

EXERCISE PROGRESSION THROUGH THE STAGES OF CARDIAC REHABILITATION

Phase I

In hospital

EXERCISE

Everyday basic activities including standing, walking, personal hygiene

Phase II

At home

EXERCISE

Gradual increases in functional everyday activities including walking in and around the home and progressing to walking outdoors

Phase III

At hospital, in the community, at home

EXERCISE

Following graded exercise testing, medically supervised exercise in groups and individual exercise prescription. Group exercise typically uses circuit training

Phase IV

At hospital, in the community, at home

EXERCISE

Increased and progressive community-based or individual exercise. Exercise intensity similar to that recommended for healthy adults of comparable age with an increasing range of activities