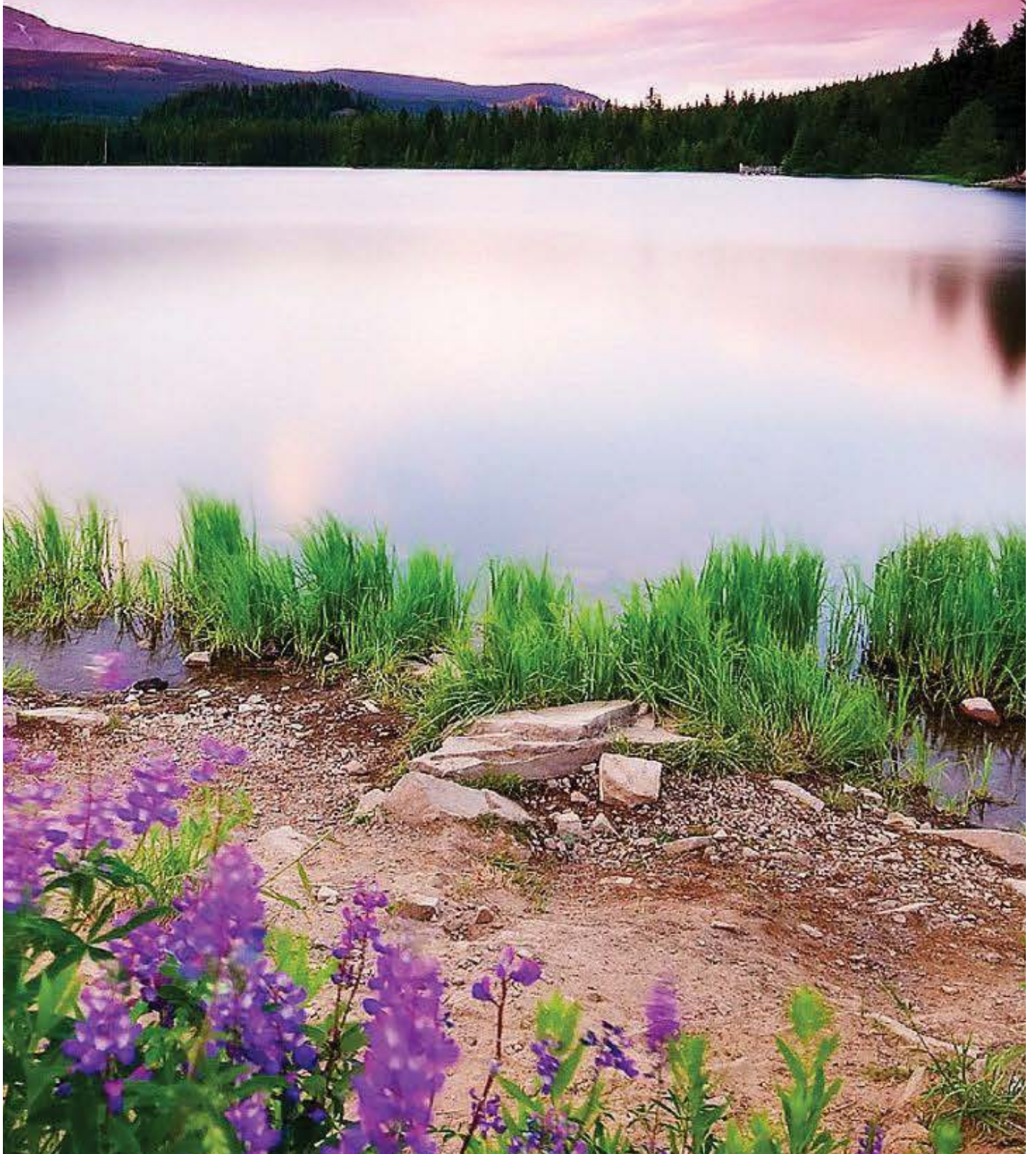


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# Cardiac Rehabilitation – in a nutshell

## What is cardiac rehabilitation?

Cardiac rehabilitation or cardiac rehab is nothing but a medically supervised program to help individuals with heart diseases get back to normal health and routine activities as early and safely as possible. A cardiac rehab program is an exercise cum education program individualized to the medical, psychological and social needs of the participants. With heart problems claiming the maximum number of lives all over the world today, prevention from heart disease and effective rehabilitation of affected individuals is the only way to overcome the problem.

## What are the benefits of cardiac rehab?

Several research studies from the recent past have demonstrated that individuals who undergo cardiac rehab have better immediate and long-term outcomes as compared to those who do not receive cardiac rehab. The benefits of cardiac rehab are improvement in risk factor control, positive changes in health-related behavior, increased physical ability to do things, better psychological wellbeing and disease coping skills, and a reduction in symptoms, repeat hospitalizations and complications. The American Heart Association, the European Society of Cardiology and the British Cardiovascular Society recommend that all eligible individuals should be referred for cardiac rehabilitation.

Most importantly, reversal and complete regression of coronary blocks is a known outcome of following a cardiac rehab program.

## Who is cardiac rehab for?

Individuals with one or more of the following conditions are eligible for cardiac rehab: coronary heart disease (blocks in the blood vessels supplying the heart), angina (chest pain on exertion), angioplasty (stenting), bypass surgery (coronary artery bypass graft or CABG), heart failure, heart valve surgery, heart transplantation and device implantation.

## How is cardiac rehab provided?

Cardiac rehab centers may be housed within a hospital or they may be located in the community as outpatient units. The program is typically provided by a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, which includes a physician, a physiotherapist, a nutritionist and a counseling psychologist.

There are typically 4 phases and 4 components in a cardiac rehab program:

**Phase 1** – guidance and counseling during hospitalization (the rehab team will meet the affected individual and his/her family and provide clarification about the health condition)

**Phase 2** – monitoring and support during the recovery period (which might be just a few days for a stent procedure and about 6 weeks for bypass surgery)

**Phase 3** – supervised exercise cum education sessions (participants will attend two or three sessions a week for 6-12 weeks)

**Phase 4** – maintenance and follow-up (upon completion of the

program, participants will continue to adhere to the lifestyle changes at home and visit the rehab centre periodically)

## When should one enroll in a cardiac rehab program?

Enrolment in a cardiac rehab program is best done immediately after a heart disease is diagnosed (such as myocardial infarction or heart attack) or after an intervention or surgery (such as stent placement or bypass surgery). Having said this, not everybody would have easy access to a cardiac rehab facility. Nevertheless, participating in a cardiac rehab program any time after a cardiac event or procedure will lead to better outcomes than not doing so.

## What are all included in a cardiac rehab program?

A thorough cardiac evaluation, supervised and personalized exercise sessions, a tailored diet plan to suit your health requirements, health education, nutritional and psychological counseling, stress management, smoking cessation and group support therapy are all included in a cardiac rehab program.

## How are the benefits of cardiac rehab assessed?

Some of the assessment tools used pre-program and at end-of-program are questionnaires to assess health-related behavior, psychosocial wellbeing and nature and frequency of symptoms, anthropometry (weight, body mass index, waist hip ratio etc.), blood pressure, blood biochemistry (blood sugar, cholesterol levels), functional capacity (ability to exercise) and ejection fraction (an echocardiographic assessment of heart function).

## What happens after a cardiac rehab program?

Upon completion of a cardiac rehab program, individuals will be put on a maintenance program whereby periodic visits to the rehab center will pave the way for better long-term adherence and adequate clinical monitoring.

## Is cardiac rehab an alternative to medications, stenting or bypass surgery?

Cardiac rehab is not a replacement for medications, stenting or surgery. It is a more holistic approach to treatment addressing the root cause of disease rather than just the symptoms and signs.

## Is cardiac rehab available in Chennai?

Cardiac Wellness Institute located in Besant Nagar in Chennai is a pioneer in this field in South India and is providing world-class cardiac rehab for individuals with heart problems.

## Please visit the website:

[www.cardiacwellnessinstitute.com](http://www.cardiacwellnessinstitute.com)

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