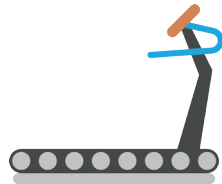


Before you begin

KNOWING WHAT TO DO WHEN THE TREADMILL ISN'T AN OPTION

We have seen that exercise stress testing is preferred over pharmacological stress testing because exercise yields more information (HR, BP, and exercise capacity) and is cost effective. The treadmill is generally the first option for stress testing as patients can usually achieve more stress on the heart by walking up a hill compared to cycling. However, for various reasons, such as orthopedic limitations or a tendency to get dizzy during exercise, many patients are not good candidates for the treadmill.



Our first choice is usually the treadmill because for most patients it is the easiest mode of exercise and they will be able to do more exercise and thus stress the heart better.

Some patients can't ambulate sufficiently to stress the heart—but can cycle. However, some patients with orthopedic issues cannot get to a good level of exercise stress on the cycle ergometer either!



Rather than losing the advantages of exercise over pharmacological stress testing, these patients can often be exercised on the arm/leg ergometer. For example, if a patient has one “very bad” leg they can still use the good leg and two arms.

If both lower extremities have very limiting issues, two arms can be used to exercise (although in some people this will not produce sufficient stress). Patients who cannot produce high levels of power output with a given extremity, but can use all extremities to some extent may be able to produce sufficient stress on their heart by doing “what they can with what works”.