



# Heart Murmurs

April 2022

## **Cardiac Athletic Society Edmonton - Contacts**

**Gary Duguay, President** Phone: 780-433-8628,  
cell: 780-993-0281  
Email: [garyduguay@gmail.com](mailto:garyduguay@gmail.com)

**Burn Evans, Membership** Phone: 780-435-1285  
Email: [gbevans@telus.net](mailto:gbevans@telus.net)

*Heart Murmurs* is the newsletter of CASE published each year in February, March, April, May, September, October, November, and December. Suggested articles can be submitted to Barry Clark at [kbclark1@telus.net](mailto:kbclark1@telus.net) Back issues of the newsletter are posted on the CASE website at: <http://www.edmontoncase.ca>

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please e-mail [gbevans@telus.net](mailto:gbevans@telus.net) with a subject line "unsubscribe".

## **Cardiac Athletic Society Edmonton Board**

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## **Support for CASE**

As a recognized charitable institution, CASE makes a significant difference to people interested in maintaining their heart health. If you make a financial gift, either as a direct contribution, or in the memory of a member who has passed, we will issue a tax receipt.

## **COMING BACK TO FULL SPEED FOR CASE**

CASE is returning to normal (perhaps a somewhat new and improved normal...) with its return to exercise programs, golfing, and social programs.

**Healthy at Heart** at Terwillegar has been underway since January. Unfortunately, the restart was challenged by the simultaneous arrival of Onnicron, so attendance has not yet returned to pre-covid times. The City of Edmonton has been concerned about operating our program if attendance remains low. However, CASE is pleased to announce that our program will continue for April at least. Lately, attendance is increasing, and we are looking forward to seeing even more members taking part. Indeed, if you know people who would like to participate in this heart healthy program, please encourage them to attend with you and even to join CASE to obtain the favourable rates for attending programs at Terwillegar! Members are encouraged to come out for this program on

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 to 12:45. If we do not use it we will probably lose it.

***Eccentrics with Lynn:*** This has been the popular online program that has sustained CASE through the last 2 years of Covid. Lynn has agreed to extend this program for the next 3 months of Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00 to 12:00. The cost of the program remains at \$40 per month, per person. If you have not registered yet for the April/May/June session, and are planning to take part full-time or part-time please let Wayne Jackson know at [waynejackson66@gmail.com](mailto:waynejackson66@gmail.com). Payment should be made to Treasurer John Sieffert 225 – 2903 Rabbit Hill Road, Edmonton, AB T6R3A3.

***Weekly Golf:*** We are starting to see grass and that means golf is not far behind! Our weekly golf activity is intended to be fun for everyone whether you know the difference between wood and iron, or par is how you feel today... Golf is held weekly on Wednesdays at Twin Willows with tee times (tea times) starting at noon. Contact Wayne Saunders ( [sharway@telusplanet.net](mailto:sharway@telusplanet.net) ) if you are interested in playing (?) this year.

***Ed Abel Memorial Golf Tournament:*** June 15<sup>th</sup> has been confirmed at Twin Willows Course for the tournament. This has become an extremely popular event for CASE members and friends. Look for more information closer to the date.

***CASE Walks:*** The group gets together several times over the spring, summer and fall to enjoy Edmonton's trails for an hour or two. Walks will start up as soon as the temperature is a little higher for a few days in a row and the trails are a little drier. Wayne Jackson and members lead walks are notified by e-mail of routes and times several days in advance.

***Social Events:*** Meeting with friends and sharing fun and conversation is a significant part of belonging to CASE and improving morale and heart health! The loss of these opportunities during the pandemic may have had the greatest impact on our mental fitness... We are beginning to reopen our social programs. The ***Barbeque*** is scheduled for June 10. Look for more information regarding time and place. We are considering having a ***Picnic*** during the summer. This will be an opportunity to get together in the great outdoors to share some time together. Planning has not started yet for the ***Christmas Party***, but we expect it will be held this year in December.

***Heart Health Education Programs:*** Our Education coordinator Mae Hadley is working towards restarting these monthly sessions this fall. If you would be interested in coming to sessions and/or have ideas as to useful topics or speakers, please contact Mae Hadley at [maehadley@telus.net](mailto:maehadley@telus.net).

## ***KEEPING YOUR BALANCE***

Balance is a skill you do not think about until you really need it like when you lose your footing and must perform an exotic dance to keep from hitting the ground. But do not

wait until your sense of balance fails before you give it proper attention. As we age, balance can sharply decline, often with little warning. An exercise program can help.

***How you keep your balance:*** While keeping proper balance may seem simple, it involves a complex system with many moveable parts. Whenever you move, your eyes and brain process information about your surroundings. Your feet detect changes in the terrain. Your arms swing to keep you stable, and your lower-body muscles and joints generate rapid power so you can move forward, stop, and change directions. Unfortunately, this system works less effectively over time. The sensation of our bodies moving through space is not as crisp, and information travels more slowly between the body and brain. Muscles become weaker, and joints lose flexibility. Any breakdown in your balance system increases your risk of falls, which can cause hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries.

There are many kinds of balance exercises. Science has not tapped any specific ones as the best; however, some have stood out in many balance-related studies. For instance, a 2016 study in the journal *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine* found that a specific Balance-Enhancing Exercise Program (called BEEP for short) improved balance skills among adults ages 60 to 80. Study participants did better on both solid and uneven surfaces and increased their walking speed and overall confidence.

***Focus on three exercises to improve balance:*** The BEEP program focused on three exercises: squats, heel and calf raises, and one-legged standing. “These types of exercises increase both the physical and cognition skills needed for better balance,” says Dr. Manor. “Plus, they mimic movements of everyday life.” He recommends adding these to your regular workouts or doing them daily on their own.

1. **Squats.** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and imagine you are sitting down on a stool. Lower down until your thighs are parallel to the ground, or as far as is comfortable. Keep your weight on your heels. Extend your arms forward or place your hands on a chair, counter, or table for stability. Pause for a second or two, then rise back to the starting position. Do this up to ten times.
2. **Heel and calf raises.** Stand with your arms crossed over your chest and lift your heels, so you rise up on your toes. Hold this position for up to 10 seconds, or as long as possible, and then lower your heels. Do these five to ten times. If you need support, hold on to a door frame, a table, or another sturdy object. You also can place your hands flat on a wall.
3. **One-legged standing.** Stand tall and place your hands on your hips or hold on to a table or chair for stability. Then raise one leg, so your foot is about six to twelve inches above the floor. Keep your gaze straight ahead. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat on the other leg. Go back and forth three to five times.

You also can perform these exercises with your eyes closed to work on coordination and concentration. Another option is to “distract” yourself by doing unrelated cognitive tasks such as counting backward, naming words that begin with the same letter, or making a mental supermarket list.

“Balance is definitely a use-it-or-lose-it skill,” says Dr. Manor. “But if you work on your balance continuously, you are almost guaranteed to see improvements.”

Source: March 10, 2020, [Matthew Solan](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-beep-program-keep-your-balance-2020031019038), Executive Editor, *Harvard Men's Health Watch*  
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-beep-program-keep-your-balance-2020031019038>

## ***CAN MEDITATION HELP YOUR HEART?***

People who practice this mind-calming technique may be less likely to have risk factors linked to heart disease. Millions of Americans are using modern technology via apps on their smartphones to practice meditation, an ancient tradition that helps promote a sense of calm and relaxation.

Growing evidence suggests that meditation may also improve factors linked to cardiovascular health. The latest comes from a Sept. 15, 2020, article in the *American Journal of Cardiology*. Researchers studied more than 61,000 people who took part in the two most recent National Health Interview Surveys (done in 2012 and 2017). Nearly 10% of the participants said they practiced some form of meditation. After adjusting for age, sex, sleep, depression, and other possible confounding factors, researchers found people who meditated had a lower prevalence of high cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and coronary artery disease compared with people who did not meditate.

***Breathe and relax:*** There are many forms of meditation, and it is not clear whether certain types offer specific advantages. But the heart-related benefits likely stem from a common underlying mechanism, says Dr. Darshan Mehta, medical director of the Benson-Henry Institute (BHI) for Mind Body Medicine at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital.

"Many forms of meditation slow down your breathing, which leads to the downstream physiological effects, such as lowered blood pressure," he says. In fact, meditation allows one to evoke the relaxation response, which refers to the physiologic changes that are the opposite of the body's "fight or flight" stress response.

The relaxation response slows down your heart and breathing and reduces your oxygen consumption. Other meditative techniques such as guided imagery, tai chi, yoga, prayer, or even knitting can also induce those changes. Initial studies of the phenomenon were done on Transcendental Meditation practitioners in the late 1960s, but it was later recognized that the relaxation response changes were not unique to that type of

meditation. There is an evolved human experience present in all cultures that counteracts the negative effects of the stress response.

***Meditation: Cultivating attention and awareness:*** Most major religions feature meditative practices but many people who meditate do it independently of any religious or spiritual beliefs.

Some experts think of meditative practices in two broad categories: focused attention and open monitoring. With focused attention, you concentrate on one thing: counting, a mantra (a word or phrase), or an object (a candle, tree, or prayer beads, for example). With open monitoring, you open your awareness to everything that you are experiencing, including thoughts and feelings but also sounds, smells, and bodily sensations. Transcendental Meditation (which the Beatles helped popularize in the 1960s) uses mantras. Mindfulness meditation practices (all the rage in recent decades) incorporate both attention and awareness. Other forms of meditation include samatha (calming and concentration) meditation, vipassana (insight) meditation, and metta (loving-kindness) meditation

***Better blood pressure:*** Perhaps the best evidence for meditation's role in heart health is its ability to lower blood pressure, although the effects vary quite a bit from study to study. A study suggests in some people, regularly evoking the relaxation response appears to turn on genes involved in dilating the blood vessels and turn off genes associated with inflammation and blood vessel constriction. Regular meditation also may help raise heart rate variability, according to one small study. Finally, it is possible (though not proven) that meditation may encourage other behaviors that foster heart health, such as sleeping more soundly and feeling less stressed. High stress levels can lead some people to develop unhealthy habits, such as eating too much junk food and drinking too much alcohol.

***Getting started with meditation:*** Using a meditation app can be a convenient way to learn the practice. You can also try one of the free guided meditations from the BHI (online at <https://bensonhenryinstitute.org/guided-relaxation-exercises/>).

Source: Harvard Heart Letter Published: February 2021

# CASE Events Calendar - April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	5 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	6 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	7 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	8	9
10	11 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	12 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	13 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	14 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	15 Good Friday	16
17 EASTER SUNDAY	18 Easter Monday  CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	19 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	20 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	21 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	22	23
24	25 CASE Essentrics online 11:00 Board Meeting	26 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	27 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	28 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	29	30

Note: Watch email for more detail on activities and events.