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**NO EXCUSES**

**TRAINING HAS NOT STOPPED ME**

**WITH MY HEART CONDITION**

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# Introduction

Have you ever been told that you can't do something because of a health condition? Maybe you've been told that you can't exercise or that you need to be extremely cautious with physical activity. If you can relate, then this book is for you.

As someone who lives, thrives and still exercises despite my health condition, I'm excited to share my story with you. I have a heart condition that requires me to have an implanted cardiac-defibrillator (ICD). This condition hasn't stopped me from living an active lifestyle, but it has certainly changed the way I exercise.

Do you have a heart condition? Maybe you know someone who does? Regardless, I want to share my experience and inspire others to live a healthy and active life, even with a heart condition.

In this book, you'll learn about my journey of discovering my heart condition, adjusting to life with an ICD, and developing a workout routine that works for me. I'll share my tips for training smarter, not harder, and explain how I've been able to continue exercising with caution.



## More precisely, this ebook will cover:

Backstory of my heart condition, what happened and how I found out

How I live with a heart condition with an ICD (implanted cardiac-defibrillator)

What it's like to exercise with this condition

Exercises to avoid

When to stop exercising

I know that having a heart condition can be scary and overwhelming, but I hope that by sharing my story, I can help others see that it's possible to be active and healthy. So, are you ready to learn more about how I train with a heart condition? Let's get started.





## The Backstory of My Heart Condition

I'll never forget the day when my heart condition became a reality. I was eagerly awaiting my review for the insertion of an implanted cardiac-defibrillator (ICD) when I had an episode of ventricular tachycardia. This episode brought forward the insertion of my device, and my life was forever changed.

My condition is **arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy**, a genetic heart condition that my father also has. He has a pacemaker/ICD. However, I never expected it to hit me so hard.

One day, while training at the gym, I was doing single arm rows for my lats. Suddenly after my set, my heart rate skyrocketed to 226 beats per minute. I wasn't taking any pre-workout supplements or doing anything out of the ordinary, yet my heart went haywire. It was a frightening experience, and I knew something was seriously wrong.

I was rushed to the hospital, and the doctors had to put me under to defibrillate my heart and reset its rhythm. After speaking to different surgeons and cardiologists, we all decided that I'd get ICD implanted in my chest, but it was necessary for my survival.

The recovery process was challenging, both physically and mentally. I had to adjust to a whole new way of living and learn to take care of my heart in a way I never thought was possible. But, with the support of my family and friends, I was able to push through and come out stronger on the other side.



The reality of having a heart condition was tough to swallow. It was something I never thought would happen to me, but it did. I had to come to terms with the fact that my life would never be the same again.

However, I refused to let my condition define me. Instead, I embraced it and used it as motivation to become the best version of myself. I changed my eating habits, cut out caffeine, and started to train with caution.






Looking back, I'm grateful for my experience because it taught me to appreciate my health and never take it for granted. It also inspired me to share my story and create more awareness about my condition and ICDs.

So, if you're reading this and can relate to my experience, know that you're not alone. Having a heart condition is scary, but it doesn't have to stop you from living your life to the fullest. With the right mindset and support, anything is possible, including exercise!



## How I live with a heart condition with an ICD

When I was diagnosed with a heart condition, my whole life changed. I had to make significant changes to my lifestyle that ensures my heart's health and longevity. My cardiologist recommended that I get an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD), a small device implanted under the skin that helps regulate my heartbeat and prevent dangerous arrhythmias.



Adjusting to this new lifestyle was tough, but I knew I had to change my habits to keep my heart healthy. I started by cutting out a lot of my bad eating habits, such as fast food and excessive amounts of sugar. I also had to eliminate caffeine especially pre workouts as I used to be addicted to stimulants while training.

Another major adjustment was learning to live with the ICD. It took some time for my body to get used to the device. However, after about three weeks, my body was getting used to it and it gave me peace of mind knowing that it was there to regulate my heartbeat if needed. One thing that made a significant difference in my journey was the support system around me. My family and close friends were there for me during my lowest point, offering encouragement, comfort, and practical help. Their unwavering support gave me the strength to keep going and never give up.

Through my experiences, I realised that there are many misconceptions and myths surrounding heart health, and it's crucial to educate people on the facts. Many people are unaware of the risk factors for heart disease and how to prevent it. Therefore, I strive to raise awareness by sharing my story and offering practical advice on heart-healthy living.

Additionally, I understand the emotional toll that a heart condition can have on a person. That's why I also aim to provide support to those who may be struggling with similar challenges. I believe that connecting with others who understand your experience can be incredibly empowering and comforting.

In conclusion, adjusting to life with a heart condition and an ICD requires a significant lifestyle change, but it's essential for a healthy heart. By making healthy choices, taking care of your device, and surrounding yourself with a supportive community, you can live a fulfilling and active life.





# What it's like to exercise with this condition

Maintaining an active lifestyle is essential for everyone, but it's crucial when you have a heart condition and an ICD. Exercise will help strengthen your heart, improve your overall health, and boost your mood. However, it's important to approach exercise with caution and modify your routine to accommodate your condition.

Personally, I have found that I must train smarter, not harder. I program everything myself to ensure that I'm following a safe and effective exercise program. I avoid weightlifting above shoulder level, such as military press and dumbbell shoulder press, to avoid putting too much strain on my heart.

I also make sure to listen to my body and avoid pushing myself too hard. I train five days a week with moderate intensity and take regular breaks to allow my heart to rest. It's crucial to find a balance between staying active and taking care of your heart's health.

Despite these challenges, I'm still making progress and seeing the benefits of exercising regularly. It's important to remember that everyone's experience with a heart condition and an ICD is unique, and it's crucial to work with your healthcare team to develop a personalized exercise plan that suits your needs.

# Exercises to Avoid

Exercise is vital for your overall health and wellbeing; certain exercises can put undue stress on your heart and should be avoided. Exercises that involve anything overhead pressing and heavy weightlifting e.g., deadlifts can put a significant strain on your heart and should be avoided. Similarly, high-intensity exercises like sprinting, and high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can increase your heart rate quickly and dramatically, which can be dangerous for those with heart conditions.

Other exercises to avoid include those that require significant amounts of isometric or static contraction, e.g., ab planks, as they can increase your blood pressure and heart rate, putting extra stress on your heart.



**Deadlifts** can put a significant strain on your heart and should be avoided.

# When to stop exercising

When you have a heart condition and an ICD, it's important to be mindful of your body and know when to stop exercising. Engaging in physical activity is essential for maintaining overall health and wellbeing, but it's equally important to recognize when you need to take a break.

One of the most significant signs that you need to stop exercising is chest pain or discomfort. This can be a sign that your heart is under too much stress and may indicate a serious heart issue.



## Other signs to watch out for include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Fatigue
- Pain or discomfort in your arms, neck, jaw, or back

If you experience any of these symptoms while exercising, it's crucial to stop immediately and seek medical attention if necessary.



## Safe Exercise Practices

To avoid putting too much stress on your heart, it's important to engage in safe exercise practices. Always warm up before exercising and cool down afterward and be sure to stretch your muscles properly.

It's also important to stay hydrated and avoid exercising in extreme temperatures or humidity. Listen to your body and don't push yourself beyond your limits. Start slowly and gradually increase the intensity and duration of your workouts.

In conclusion, knowing when to stop exercising is just as important as knowing which exercises to engage in. Always be mindful of your body and the warning signs that indicate it's time to take a break. Engage in safe exercise practices and consult with your healthcare provider to develop a plan that's right for you.

