



The Importance of Exercise during Your Cancer Journey

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Staying Active Throughout Cancer

Exercise can support you through all phases of the cancer journey. During treatment, exercise can give you more energy and keep you strong so you can better tolerate conventional therapies. Once treatment is complete, exercise can help minimize long-term side effects, such as lymphedema, and reduce the risk of other chronic conditions, like diabetes and heart disease.

A Little Activity Goes a Long Way

When fighting cancer, it is understandable if you don't feel like exercising. Yet, even a small amount of activity, such as a short walk or gentle stretching in bed, can go a long way toward improving your well-being. Wherever you are in your treatment and recovery, physical activity can help to:

- Decrease fatigue
- Increase strength and endurance
- Improve mood and concentration
- Reduce pain and nausea
- Improve mobility and balance
- Reduce stress, anxiety and depression
- Improve self-image

Exercise During Cancer Treatment

The following are examples of how certain exercises can support you during treatment:

- **Cardiovascular/aerobic exercise** (e.g., walking, cycling, climbing stairs) helps increase stamina and may protect your heart and lungs from some of the toxic effects of chemotherapy.
- **Strength training** (e.g., with resistance bands) helps build muscle strength and tone, and may help protect against chemotherapy-related bone loss or loss of muscle mass during treatment.
- **Stretching** improves flexibility, reduces soreness, and can help improve blood and oxygen flow to the brain, which may help combat some of the neurological effects of treatment.

Get Started With Rehabilitation

Cancer can change how your body looks, feels and performs. You may have difficulty walking, going up and down stairs, getting in and out of bed, or other physical limitations. Rehabilitation can help restore your strength and functional independence so you can continue to stay active and participate in the activities you enjoy most. For example, physical therapy can help you rebuild strength, improve coordination, and alleviate pain so you can be active and independent. Occupational therapy can help you with performing everyday activities, like getting dressed, grooming, bathing, and eating.

See the [Tips for Staying Active during Cancer Care](#) information sheet for more information.

*This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical guidance.
Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to making decisions about your medical care.*