

General Exercise Guidelines for Cancer Survivors



This handout provides cancer survivors with general guidelines for physical activity during and after cancer treatment.
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Why should I exercise? Exercise may help you to

- feel better
- lift your mood and ease some worries
- sleep better
- return to enjoying everyday activities and interests sooner
- improve your physical health
- tolerate cancer treatments better
- improve overall quality of life

Is it safe?

YES! Yes!

Studies show that moderate exercise (exercise that raises your heart rate, makes you break a sweat, but not so hard that you cannot talk) is generally safe for people with cancer. *Start slow but try to go!*

How should I exercise?

Try a step-by-step approach. Think about the activities you like to do and that fit into your day.

Step 1: Pick an exercise

- Ask yourself, what kind of exercise do I enjoy, or would be willing to do?
- What kind of exercise fits into my day?

For example: “I like to walk and could do that around my neighborhood in the evening.”

Step 2: Set a short-term goal

“This week, I will walk for 10 minutes on 3 days.”

Step 3: Set a long-term goal

“Six months from now, I want to be able to take a brisk walk for 20 min, 5 days of the week.”



TIP: Consider using a pedometer to count your steps and write your daily step count on a calendar.

What if I don't feel like I can exercise on some days?

That's OK!

- ✓ Adjust your daily exercise routine
- ✓ Stay as physically active as you can
- ✓ Return to your short-term goal as soon as you are able
- ✓ Stay focused on your long-term goal

“I have chemotherapy on Monday, so I will walk for 10 min on Sunday, rest for 3 days, and try my walk again on Thursday. I will try to walk 3 times the following week”.

“I know I'm going to have good and not-so-good days during treatment but I'll do what I can to reach my six-month goal.”

TIP: If you have symptoms that concern you, consult with your health care provider.



What's a good long-term exercise goal?

The basic exercise recommendations for all adults in the U.S. include doing one of these:

- At least 150 minutes of reasonable aerobic activity/week *and* muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days/week, **or**
- 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity a week *and* muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days/week

TIP: You can add up exercise time in short periods throughout the day. Walking for 10 minutes morning, noon, and evening equals 30 min of walking.



For more information, see the Centers for Disease Control website
www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity

Physical Activity Log Sheet (make additional copies):

Name:

My physical activity goal is:

Tracking your weekly physical activity

- Steps: the number of steps taken if using a pedometer (step counter)
- Physical activity: record activity and time spent moving the body for at least 10 minutes at a time
- Intensity: on a scale of 1 to 10 below, how hard did you feel you were exercising?
- Before exercise: how did I feel before exercising today?
- After exercise: how did I feel after exercising today?

DATE	Steps	Physical activity & time (min)	Intensity	Before Exercise	After Exercise
1-Jun	2000	walked 5 min in AM and PM	4-5	sluggish in AM, better in PM	better in AM, the same in PM

Did you meet your goal(s)? Yes, I met my goal(s) this week. Not yet. I'm still working towards my goal(s).

Is it time to change my physical activity goal(s)?
 Not yet; keep this plan and goal(s) for another week
 Yes, I am ready to change my goal(s)

My new physical activity goal(s)

