

Exercising and Being Physically Active

Exercise or physical activity can be an important part of improving your physical and emotional health during and after treatment. Most people can do some exercise even if they have physical limitations or side effects from treatment. It is important to set realistic goals based on your treatment schedule, time available, how you feel on any given day and other factors. By making this a priority and setting reasonable goals, you can feel stronger, sleep better and improve your mood.

Remember that you don't need to run a marathon. Some days even sitting in a chair instead of lying in bed will be as much activity as you can do. Cleaning the house, walking the dog or stretching are also forms of exercise. Recent information shows that physical activity may even lower the chance of your cancer coming back. Before you resume or start a new exercise program you should talk with your doctor.

Here are 4 steps you can take to make a personalized plan for making sure you are physically active:

Step 1: Get started with something you like

- Talk to your doctor about any possible restrictions on your physical activity
- Set short-term and long-term goals
- Ask for support from others, or get friends, family, and co-workers to exercise with you
- Reward yourself when you reach your goals
- Start slowly and pace yourself

Step 2: Keep going

- The goal is to find a way to do some form of activity, rather than nothing at all
- Adjust your exercise to match your energy level; some days you will be able to do more than others
- Determine the amount of time and effort you can put into physical activity each day

Step 3: Notice how you feel

- While you exercise, take a moment to notice if you are working too hard
- If you can talk in full sentences without getting short of breath, you are working at a safe level

Step 4: ACE Your Workout:

After finishing your workout, use this test to decide whether you aced your workout. When you ACE your workout, you will feel:

- Alert – mentally
- Calm – emotionally
- Energized – physically

Remember that old proverb that says “the journey of a thousand steps begins with the first step?” The goal should be to keep up as much activity as possible throughout your cancer experience. Be safe, set reasonable goals and try to have fun.