

Moving Around and Staying Active

You may be concerned that you are not moving around as well as you like following the diagnosis or treatment for cancer. Things like walking, climbing stairs, lifting things may feel harder to you now. Some of these limitations may be temporary and some might be more long-lasting. Either way, it is important that you talk to your doctor if you are concerned that you are not moving around as well as you like. There are some things that you can do to stay active that will help you feel better both physically and mentally.

Exercise or physical activity can be an important part of improving your physical and emotional health during and after 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