



Exercise for People with Cancer

❶ How will exercise help me if I have cancer?

Exercise and being physically active helps people with cancer in many ways. It can make you feel better mentally and physically both during and after treatment.

❷ Will exercise hurt me if I have cancer?

No. Exercise will not hurt you if you have cancer and it can help you feel better.

 Exercise that raises your heart rate will:	 Lifting weights will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Give you more energy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Help you sleep better <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make your mood better <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower body fat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make muscles strong <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower cholesterol levels <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower the risk and effects of diabetes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, anxiety and depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase your muscle size <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make you stronger before, during and after treatment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Help lower some types of pain <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower the risk of broken bones <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower body fat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Help maintain speed, power, balance and flexibility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make you safer at home when you do your day to day tasks

❸ What are some ways I can increase my activity level during the day?

Start simple by “tweaking your week”. Make small changes to do more physical activity each day.

- Take the stairs
- Ride your bike
- Get off the bus a stop earlier and walk
- Walk while you have a meeting
- Walk during a break
- Park further away

Remember, doing something is better than nothing at all!



For more information go to: sunnybrook.ca/exerciseandcancer

4 What do I need to know before I get started?

Please speak to your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

5 Is there anything I need to do when I exercise?

- Remember to start slow. Aim to exercise only 1 to 2 days a week until you get into a routine. The goal is for you to be able to exercise following the guidelines in the table below.
- Your energy levels will be different week to week. If you do not meet your exercise goal one week, it is ok! You can always make up for it the next week.
- When you exercise, make sure you warm up before you start. You can do this by going for a fast 5 minute walk that starts to raise your heart rate. Make sure you cool down after you exercise as well. You can do this by going for a slow 5 minute walk to bring your heart rate back down.
- If you want to make sure you stick to your exercise routine, it is important to choose an activity that you enjoy and will continue to do!

	Exercise that raises your heart rate	Lifting weights
How often	Medium level: 3-5 days a week Hard level: 3 days a week	2-3 days a week (rest for 48 hours in between weight lifting sessions)
How hard to push yourself (on a scale from 0-10)	Medium level: 5-6 out of 10 Hard level: 7-8 out of 10	You can comfortably do 8-12 repetitions
How long	Medium level: 30 minutes per session Hard level: 20 minutes per session	Time it takes to do 8-12 repetitions of exercises that work your arms, legs and trunk.
Examples	Brisk walking, running, biking, swimming, dancing, sports you enjoy such as golf, squash and tennis	Pilates, lifting free weights or dumbbells, using resistance bands, weight machines, community cancer exercise classes

List of community exercise programs for cancer population

There are a number of FREE group exercise programs in the community for people living with cancer in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area. Be sure to ask your doctor, physiotherapist or occupational therapist for a list of these programs.

References:

- Evans M. Evans Health Lab. Make Your Day Harder. 2013 Health Knowledge Works Inc, and Mercury Films Inc.; <http://www.evanshealthlab.com/make-your-day-harder-2/>
- Segal R., Zwaal C., Green E., Tomasone J., Loblaw A., Petrella T. A Quality Initiative of the Program in Evidence-Based Care (PEBC), Cancer care Ontario (CCO): *Exercise for People with Cancer*. June 30 2015; <http://www.cancercare.on.ca>