

Exercise and activity

Being more active is a positive change when you are living with or after cancer. It is safe for you to be active before, during and after treatment.

Being active has many benefits when you have cancer. It can:

- reduce tiredness (fatigue)
- reduce anxiety and depression
- help you keep to a healthy weight
- strengthen your muscles
- improve bone health
- improve your flexibility and ability to stretch
- improve balance.

Being physically active can mean doing simple, daily activities, such as housework, gardening or walking to the shops. But it can also mean exercising more energetically, for example dancing, running or cycling.

The type of exercise you do will depend on what stage you are at with cancer treatment. It will also depend on which activities you enjoy. Your level of fitness will also affect the amount of activity you can do.

The Department of Health (DoH) recommends that adults do one of the following every week:

- 2½ hours (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity activity. This means activity that makes you breathe deeper and faster, but you can still talk. Your heart may be beating faster, but it is not racing.
- 1¼ hours (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity activity. This means activity that makes you breathe very hard, so you cannot have a conversation. Your heart will be beating very fast.

The recommendations are the same for adults of any age. But if you have not been active for a while, it is important to build up slowly at a pace that is comfortable for you. The guidelines recommend that if you have not been active for a while, a little activity is better than no activity at all. This includes doing some very light activity. Light activity means you can talk and breathe easily at the same time.

Tips for being more active

- To do 150 minutes of activity in a week, you could do 30 minutes of activity on 5 days of the week.
- On the 5 days of physical activity, you could do three 10-minute sessions during the day.

If you are doing exercise sessions run by a professional, it is still important to make physical activity part of your daily routine. You could:

- choose the stairs rather than the lift when possible, even if it is only part of the way up
- stand up and stretch your legs every 30 minutes if you work sitting down
- reduce the amount of time you spend sitting or lying down
- walk or cycle shorter distances rather than use the car
- get off the bus a stop earlier or later and walk the extra distance.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resources:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health – physical activity guidelines for adults and older adults • Cancer Rehabilitation • Later Life Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines • www.canrehab.co.uk Tel 0345 459 4618 • www.laterlifetraining.co.uk Tel 0183 830 0310

Further information

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/maintaining-a-healthy-lifestyle/keeping-active

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- **Coping with fatigue (tiredness)**
- **Move more**
- **Physical activity and cancer**

More information and support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, or visit macmillan.org.uk

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.

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