

Thinking about the future

Cancer often causes people to think about their lives and their priorities. Some people make big changes, such as changing their job. Other people start a new hobby. Doing something new may help you feel better and more in control.

Having something to look forward to can help you feel less worried and [more positive about life](#).

The things you did before cancer may slowly start to fit back into your life. Going [back to work](#) or starting to do the things you did before can be important steps forward.

You may rethink what is important to you. You may focus more on your relationships with family, friends or a partner. Or you may decide to do things you have always wanted to do.

It is important not to ignore your feelings after cancer treatment. They are a natural response to what has happened. But there are things you can do to look after yourself as you recover. You might want to take time to think about what you have been through. Or you may find it more helpful to think about the future.

Tips for thinking about the future

- Doing something new can help distract and relax you. Some hobbies help you express your feelings – for example, playing a musical instrument or painting.
- You may decide to [be more active](#). You could start cycling, doing yoga or dancing. Or you could join a walking group. You do not have to be good at these activities to enjoy them. Look out for any groups or classes in your area. Find something you enjoy and feel comfortable with.
- When you feel ready, you may decide to do some volunteer work. You could try to find something that matters to you or makes you feel part of your community.
- [Set yourself small goals](#) that you know you can meet. For example, if your goal is to be able to enjoy a holiday without feeling anxious, you could start with a day trip. It can be somewhere you know well and can travel to easily. You may only stay for a short time. The important thing to remember is that this is a step in the right direction.
- As you achieve each goal, your confidence will start to grow. Remember to notice every success, no matter how small it seems. You might want to celebrate or reward yourself somehow.
- You may not know how cancer will affect your work, now or in the future. It is a good idea to talk to your manager early on.
- You may decide not to go back to work. You may choose to do something different. Going back to work may depend on the type of work you do or how much your income is affected.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on be.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer](#)
- [Your feelings after cancer treatment](#)
- [Worrying about cancer coming back](#)
- [Your feelings and cancer – easy read](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Further Macmillan 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 where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

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.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

Other useful contact details

- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) – visit www.bacp.co.uk or call **01455 883300**
- Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) – a licensed programme developed by Coventry University and Macmillan Cancer Support to help people who have or have had cancer to get on with their lives – visit <https://learnzone.org.uk>
- Mind – visit www.mind.org.uk or call **0300 123 3393**
- UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) – visit www.psychotherapy.org.uk or call **020 7014 9955**

Notes and questions
