

## Exercise and Cancer



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1 in 3 people develop cancer during their lives. Early detection and treatment means that the number of cancer survivors will continue to grow. Recent evidence suggests that moderate exercise may assist in recovery, improve quality of life and help prevent the return of the cancer.

It is estimated that an inactive lifestyle could account for up to 5% of all cancer deaths, 13-14% of all bowel cancer cases and 11% of breast cancer cases. (**Cancer World, Sept/Oct 2008**)

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### Benefits of exercise during treatment

Previously it was recommended that cancer patients should not participate in exercise. However, it's now been shown that exercise and physical activity can improve the quality of life and can begin during treatment in some patients. Research suggests that moderate intensity exercise during treatment will still improve functional capacity, body weight and composition, flexibility and general physical wellbeing. Furthermore it may also help alleviate the symptoms of fatigue and nausea associated with cancer therapies.

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### Benefits of exercise after treatment

Following treatment exercise can increase exercise capacity and improve lean body mass. There are also positive effects on mood, depression, self-esteem and quality of life.

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### How much should I do?

For people who are already living with cancer, 30 minutes of moderate exercise or physical activity on 5 days of the week has been shown to half the risk of colorectal or breast cancer in comparison to someone who is sedentary. Physical activity could be incorporated into everyday routine at home or as part of a group or class. Group exercise with people in a similar situation has the advantage of creating a positive dynamic where the participants can support each other and help to build their confidence. This has been well documented in other forms of rehabilitation. Suitable exercise or physical activity could include walking, circuit exercises, dancing, muscular strength and endurance exercises and aerobics.

For further information on exercise based cancer rehabilitation see; [www.canrehab.co.uk](http://www.canrehab.co.uk)