

Exercise During and After Cancer Treatment

As long as your doctor says it is safe, you can exercise during or after cancer treatment.

Routine exercise can help:

- Reduce fatigue (tiredness) and stress
- Make you stronger and more flexible
- Improve bone and heart health
- Improve your sleep and mood
- Give you more energy

Include in your exercise routine:

1. **Aerobic activities** to get your heart pumping like brisk walking, swimming, or riding a bike. The goal is to do 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity at least 5 days a week.
2. **Strengthening exercises** to tone and build muscles. These exercises use resistance from free weights, bands or weight machines. Do this type of exercise two days a week.
3. **Stretching exercises** to keep you flexible. Do a few stretches before aerobic activity.

Getting started

- Talk to your doctor if you have questions, concerns or need help setting goals.
- Make a wellness plan for yourself. Invite family and friends to join you.
- Use a fitness tracking device, like a pedometer, to keep track of how many steps you take each day.
- Some exercise is better than none. If needed, start slowly. Each person has their own starting point and progress at their own pace.
- Follow the safety guidelines on the next page.



Be safe!

- Do not exercise if you're not feeling well or if you have a fever. Do not exercise if you feel sick to your stomach (nausea), are throwing up or have pain that is not controlled with medicine.
- Stop exercising if it's hard to breathe, you have chest pain, or new or worsening pain elsewhere. Call 911 if you think any of these problems are a medical emergency.
- If you have swollen ankles, weight gain you cannot explain or feel short of breath when resting, call your doctor.
- If your immune system is weak, avoid public gyms until your white blood cell count returns to a safe level. Your doctor or nurse can tell you your white blood cell count.
- If you have peripheral neuropathy, which is pain, numbness or tingling in your hands and/or feet, a stationary bike may be safer than brisk walking.
- If you have a mediport or central line, avoid contact sports. Do not do activities that could bump or dislodge your port or line, such as playing baseball, basketball or tennis. Do not swim or do other water activities unless your doctor or nurse says it is ok.

Resources

- **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA – a 12-week program designed to help survivors improve strength and quality of life. Offered at little or no cost at YMCAs throughout Ohio. To learn more, call 1-855-220-7777, visit livestrong.org/ymca or call your local YMCA.
- Strong Women, Strong Bones – at the UH Landerbrook Women's Health Center. To learn more, call 216-831-8311.
- The Gathering Place – in Beachwood and Westlake. To learn more, call 216-595-9546.
- Silver Sneakers – free wellness program offered to people with certain Medicare plans. To learn more, call 1-866-584-7389 or visit silversneakers.com.
- [Survivorship Care for Healthy Living](#) – from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. For a printable copy, visit nccn.org/patientguidelines

This info is a general resource. It is not meant to replace your doctor's advice. Ask your doctor or health care team any questions. Always follow their instructions.