

## Are there any limitations?

### Avoid:

- Chlorine to avoid skin irritation if receiving radiation
- Heavy weights or exercises that stress bone structures If battling osteoporosis, bone cancer, arthritis, nerve damage, poor vision, poor balance, numbness or weakness

### Caution:

- Watch for bleeding, especially when taking blood thinners
- Exercise has not been proven to increase lymphedema and needs to be gradually progressed. Seek guidance from an exercise specialist

### Do Not:

- Exercise if you have unrelieved pain, nausea/vomiting, or other symptoms of concern
- Exercise above a moderate level of exertion without approval from your doctor
- Use pools, lakes, oceans, ports, and other exposures that may cause infections If you have a catheter, pick line, or feeding tube

The primary goal is to avoid inactivity both during and after treatment. However, it is important to be safe, listen to your body and seek guidance from an exercise specialist who can create a balanced fitness plan and monitor your progress.

## What considerations should I be aware of?

- *Side effects can occur both during and after treatment. It is important that an exercise regimen is designed by a specialist to meet your individual needs..*
- If you are participating in exercise program before radiation or chemotherapy, exercise may have to be scaled to a lower intensity, modified and increased as tolerated
- If you were inactive before your diagnosis, low-intensity exercise such as stretching or brief, slow walks should be implemented and slowly progressed as tolerated
- Those with bone disease or peripheral neuropathies should practice care with balance safety during exercise routines and consult with their specialist for balance training

## Resources:

1. <http://www.cancer.org>
2. <http://www.livestrong.com>
3. <http://ww5.komen.org>
4. <http://www.acsm.org>

# Physical Activity & Cancer Survivorship



*Current research on the effects and role of physical activity and cancer survivorship*

Ithaca College  
Student Physical  
Therapy Association  
(ICSPTA)

  
**CANCER  
RESOURCE  
CENTER**  
OF THE FINGER LAKES

## So how does physical activity help me? It can...

- Improve quality of life, endurance, muscle strength, and mood
- Relieve symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, pain, difficulty sleeping and diarrhea associated with treatment
- Improve bone mineral density and body composition in many individuals
- Increase survival rates and decrease the risk of recurrence for different types of cancers

## What if I am still in treatment? It is important to...

- Continue exercise, even during treatment, but **only as tolerated!**
- Discuss exercise with your doctor, as all treatments have very different side effects



## We hear it everyday – exercise is good for you!

*But what if you have a diagnosis of cancer? Is it OK to exercise?*

**YES!**

In fact, current research shows that exercise during and after cancer treatment provides overwhelmingly positive results.

## Can you give me some ideas?

Exercise regimen should be prescribed by a fitness specialist or physical therapist to address individual needs, but here are some ideas:

- Walking at a moderate pace
- Biking, swimming or using the elliptical
- Strengthening exercises designed for you by an exercise specialist
- Gentle stretching and yoga
- Other aerobic conditioning such as: Mall walking, housecleaning, gardening

## OK, so exercise is good! But how much?

- Before starting an exercise program, consult an exercise specialist or ask your doctor for a referral
- If your **doctor gives you medical clearance**, walk as much as you are able and gentle strengthening 2x per week. **Listen to your body!** If you are experiencing a lot of pain, fatigue, or nausea, then take a break
- Gradual progression up to **150 min/week of moderate intensity** (walking, for example) with **strength exercises 2x/week** is recommended by the American Cancer Society for those going through treatment or post treatment, *unless advised otherwise*
- Possible benefits: natural killer cell activity boost; improved kidney function, blood cell counts and lymphocytes; increased hemoglobin function, and decreased hospital stay

