

# LIVING HEALTHY AS A CANCER SURVIVOR: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A cancer survivor is a person who has been diagnosed with cancer. They are considered a survivor for the rest of their life.

- There are both physical and emotional side effects of cancer and its treatment. They can affect survivors in different ways.
- Choosing healthy behaviors is important. You can lower your risk of getting cancer again through exercise, eating healthy foods and not being overweight.
- This document provides survivors with information on ways to live healthy after treatment ends. The document should not replace consultation with a health care provider. It is important that all survivors see their health care provider for regular medical care.

## Physical Activity Can Be Helpful

Physical activity is a great way to reduce stress and manage cancer treatment side effects. There are many benefits to being physically active as a cancer survivor. It can help you:

- Improve your quality of life
- Improve your sleep
- Lessen effects of “chemo brain” or memory problems related to treatment
- Prevent muscle breakdown
- Increase your strength and energy, decreasing the effects of cancer related fatigue
- Decrease your risk of heart disease
- Decrease joint pain
- Improve confidence and mood
- Manage your weight



## Physical Activity Recommendations

Talk with your health care provider or cancer exercise specialist about what exercises would be safe for you. A physical therapist can create an exercise plan that fits your life and can be changed as needed. Any amount of physical activity that is more than what you usually do during the day is helpful.

- American Cancer Society guidelines for physical activity include 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, like fast walking.
- Try to include strength training (or lifting weights) 2 or more days a week.
- Warm up 2-3 minutes before exercising with knee lifts or shoulder rolls.

## Getting Physical Activity in Everyday Life

Find physical activities that are fun and safe for you.

- Take your dog for walk.
- Ask friends or family to go on a walk.
- Use a pedometer to count your steps.
- Go on a bike ride.
- Use a treadmill or other types of exercise equipment.
- Park in the farthest spot when going to the grocery store to increase your steps.
- Work on projects in your yard, like gardening.



## Helpful Resources for Survivors

- Visit [Cancer.Net](http://Cancer.Net) and [LIVESTRONG at the YMCA](http://LIVESTRONG at the YMCA) for more information on physical activity guidelines and healthy living.
- Call The American Cancer Society's National Cancer Information Center at 1-800-227-2345 for more information and resources.



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