

Lost Temple Fitness

Exercise Guidelines

The following information includes research from:

American Cancer Society - *Physical Activity and the Cancer Patient*

Cancer Research UK - *Exercise guidelines for Cancer Patients*

Benefits for Cancer Patients

- May help to decrease nausea during chemotherapy
- May relieve constipation by stimulating digestion and elimination systems
- Increases endurance due to fatigue
- Help to keep or improve your physical abilities (how well you can use your body to do things)
- Improve balance, which may lower risk of falls and broken bones
- Keep muscles from wasting due to inactivity
- Decrease the risk of heart disease
- Decrease the risk of osteoporosis – helps to strength bones
- Improving blood flow to the legs, reducing the risk of blood clots
- Make you less dependent on others for help with normal activities of daily living
- Lower the risk of being anxious and depressed
- Help you control your weight

What Is your Current Activity Level or Was your Activity Level before Treatment

This makes a big difference in deciding how you will proceed with your exercise program. If you lead a sedentary lifestyle before the cancer, this is not the time to start a moderate aerobic exercise program. This does not mean you should not start an exercise program at all; you will just need to start at a basic level. On the other hand, if you were an athlete before your diagnosis, this will mean you need to cut back during treatment and eventually move forward to regain your strength.

Pain, fatigue and possibly nausea are the most limiting factors during your treatment. Other factors could be peripheral neuropathy, which may alter your balance, dehydration or lymphedema, etc. Some people also have pre-existing or cancer caused comorbidities, (*the presence of one or more additional diseases or disorders co-occurring with a primary disease or disorder*), which could include heart disease, pulmonary disease, obesity, diabetes, neurological conditions or bone disease, among others. In this instance, you will have to speak to the team of doctors to discuss which exercises will be best suited for not only the cancer, but other comorbidity.

What is your current performance level? (Chart adapted from *Clinical Exercise Physiology*, pg. 440)

Activity level	Exercise Duration	Exercise Frequency
Active, no limitations	15-20 min	Daily
Able to walk. Decreased leisure activity. Can perform self care	15-20 min	Daily
Able to walk more than 50% of the time. Moderate fatigue. Limited assistance with ADL's (activity of daily living)	5-10 min	Two sessions daily
Able to walk less than 50% of the time. Fatigue with mild exertion. Requires assistance with ADL	5-10 min	Daily
Confined to bed <i>**Italic not from Clinical Exercise Physiology chart</i>	No exercise – <i>**May be able to do ROM in bed with or without assistance.</i>	<i>**ROM (Range of Motion) Daily</i>

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Risks for Cancer Patients

Avoid Exercise:

- Low red blood cell count (anemia).
- Low white blood cell counts or if you take medicines that make you less able to fight infection and impair your immune system. Stay away from public gyms and other public places until your counts are at a safe level.
- Abnormal level of minerals in your blood, such as sodium and potassium. This can happen if you have had a lot of vomiting or diarrhea.
- Unrelieved pain, nausea/vomiting, or any other symptom that causes you concern. Call your doctor.
- Do not exercise above a moderate level of exertion without talking with your doctor first. Remember, moderate exertion is about as much effort as a brisk walk.
- If you have a catheter or feeding tube, do not do resistance training that uses muscles in the area of the catheter to keep from dislodging it. Talk with your cancer team about what's safe for you. Avoid pools, lakes, or ocean water and other exposures that may cause infections

Modification or Recommendations:

- Skin irritation - people getting radiation should not expose skin in the treatment area to the chlorine in swimming pools. Avoid direct sunlight, even after radiation treatments are over due to burning. For radiation to the upper part of the body, suggest wearing a rash guard (shirt that has UV sun protection).
- Stay away from uneven surfaces or any weight-bearing exercises that could cause you to fall and hurt yourself.
- If you have cancer affecting your bones, you might be more at risk of a break or fracture. You must avoid putting too much strain on the affected bones. You could try swimming or exercising in water, as the water supports your body weight so the skeleton isn't stressed.
- Do not use heavy weights or do exercise that puts too much stress on your bones if you have osteoporosis, cancer that has spread to the bone, arthritis, nerve damage, poor vision, poor balance, or weakness. You may be more likely to hurt yourself or break a bone.
- Watch for swollen ankles, unexplained weight gain, or shortness of breath while at rest or with a small amount of activity. Let your doctor know if you have any of these problems.
- Watch for lymphedema
- Watch for bleeding, especially if you are taking blood thinners. Avoid any activity that puts you at risk for falls or injury. If you notice swelling, pain, dizziness, or blurred vision, call your doctor right away.
- Peripheral neuropathy - Loss of sensation or feelings of pins and needles in your hands and feet due to cancer treatments. Because this puts you at a higher risk of falls, it might be better to use a stationary bike than to do other types of weight bearing exercise. *(Also, see Balance section)*