

## Tips and Resources: Exercise

### Tips

1. What is the difference between physical activity and exercise?

Physical activity is any movement carried out by your skeletal muscles that requires energy. This can include activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, meal preparation, moving about your household) and exercise. What is different about exercise is that it is planned, structured and repetitive movement that ALSO has the aim of improving or maintaining physical fitness.

2. Why exercise?

Overall, exercise improves brain and body health by reducing fatigue, anxiety, depression as well as improving cardiovascular health, and the strength and function of your brain, muscles and bones. Exercising can also help you manage stress and sleep better. Additionally, regular physical activity reduces the risk of several types of cancer and reduces the risk of recurrence in cancers of the breast, prostate and in colorectal cancer.

3. How much exercise?

A sedentary lifestyle (doing little to no exercise and sitting down a lot) is associated with a wide range of serious health problems as well as premature death. If you are not exercising, even 5 minutes of exercise a day can benefit your health.

The 2019 Exercise Guidelines for Cancer Survivors recommended working towards a goal of 150 minutes a week of moderate level intensity aerobic exercise AND 2 days of muscle strengthening activities.

Be sure to check with your health care provider before starting an exercise program.

### Resources

**MGH Cancer Rehabilitation Program:** this program helps patients who need help regaining function and independence with activities of daily living after treatment for cancer. The physiatrist (doctor of physical medicine) works closely with a team of physical and occupational therapists to improve pain, function and quality of life.

<https://www.massgeneral.org/cancer-center/treatments-and-services/cancer-rehabilitation>

Call: 617-726-5130

**MGH Lifestyle Medicine:** Exercise Videos

<https://www.massgeneral.org/cancer-center/patient-and-family-resources/supportive-care/lifestyle-medicine/exercise-videos-for-cancer-patients>

There is even a sample exercise plan link to help you get started.

**Livestrong at the YMCA:** a physical activity program designed for cancer survivors

<https://www.livestrong.org/what-we-do/program/livestrong-at-the-ymca>

**Yoga 4 Cancer:** take a free oncology yoga class designed for cancer survivors

[y4c.com](http://y4c.com)

**Maple Tree Cancer Alliance:** Exercise Videos

<https://www.mapletreecanceralliance.org/workouts/>

Book

*Moving Through Cancer: An Exercise and Strength Training Program for the Fight of Your Life – Empowers Patients and Caregivers in 5 Steps*, by Dr. Kathryn Schmitz (2021).

Website

American Institute for Cancer Research: [Be Physically Active](#)