

EXERCISING WHEN YOU HAVE PANCREATIC CANCER

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Make sure to speak with a member of your healthcare team before starting any exercise plans. Any physical activity, if possible, can help to maintain or improve your strength. It is also a great way to increase your energy levels and help you feel better in general.

Remaining active will help fight off treatment-induced fatigue, and lead to better tolerance of your treatment.

Any physical activity is better than none, so do not get discouraged and just be as active as you can. Exercise within your limits, some days may be better than others. You may also be referred to an exercise specialist (physiotherapist, kinesiologist, rehabilitation or wellness center, etc.) for more help with a specific exercise plan.





They can also provide simple, clear exercise instructions, if needed, to ensure you are performing the exercises properly and safely.







This information was developed and approved by an expert panel of healthcare professionals in the field of pancreatic cancer.



BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

-  More energy, less tired
-  Stronger muscles, improves balance
-  Better appetite and better sleep
-  Reduces anxiety and depression
-  Feel better overall

CAUTIONS

-  It's important to exercise within your own limits – don't push yourself too hard.
-  Be cautious if you have neuropathy, as this can change your grip strength or balance (watch your balance and avoid heavy lifting).
-  Avoid gyms and pools if your immune system is low (low white blood cells).
-  Stop activity when you feel pain, weakness, off balance or dizziness.

GETTING STARTED



Start slowly.



Start with light exercises (walking, yoga, gardening, housework).



For example, you can go for a walk up and down your hallway, walk around the block or in the garden.



You can incorporate home-based exercises, like walking up and down steps.



Other exercise you can do include using a stationary bike or swimming.



Do short sessions (5-10 minutes at a time) spaced throughout the day.



Go at your own pace.



If you can, increase activity over time, such as walking a longer distance or at a faster pace (as tolerated).



As you build strength, you can also mix aerobic and strength training activities.



Try upper and lower body exercises with light weights (or using tins of food or bottles of water) or resistance bands.



If weights are too difficult, you can try gravity-only resistance (such as raising your arm or leg while sitting in a chair or lying on the floor, holding it for a few seconds, then lowering it – and repeat).



Make sure to cool down and lightly stretch after you exercise.



Drink water before and after you exercise to stay hydrated (it is important to restore fluids and electrolytes lost during activity).

