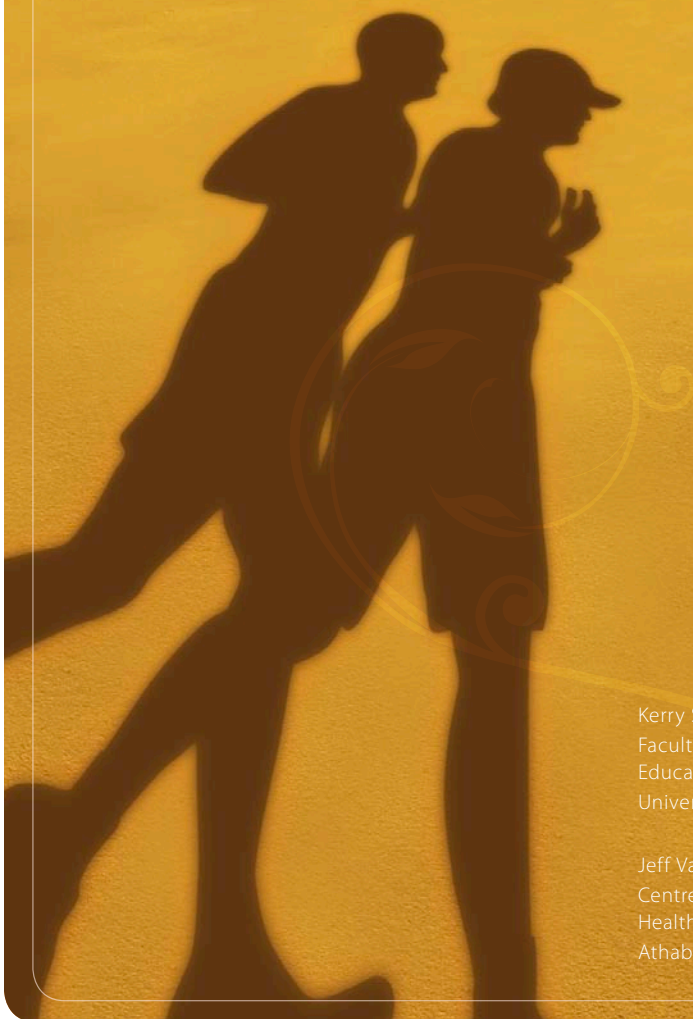


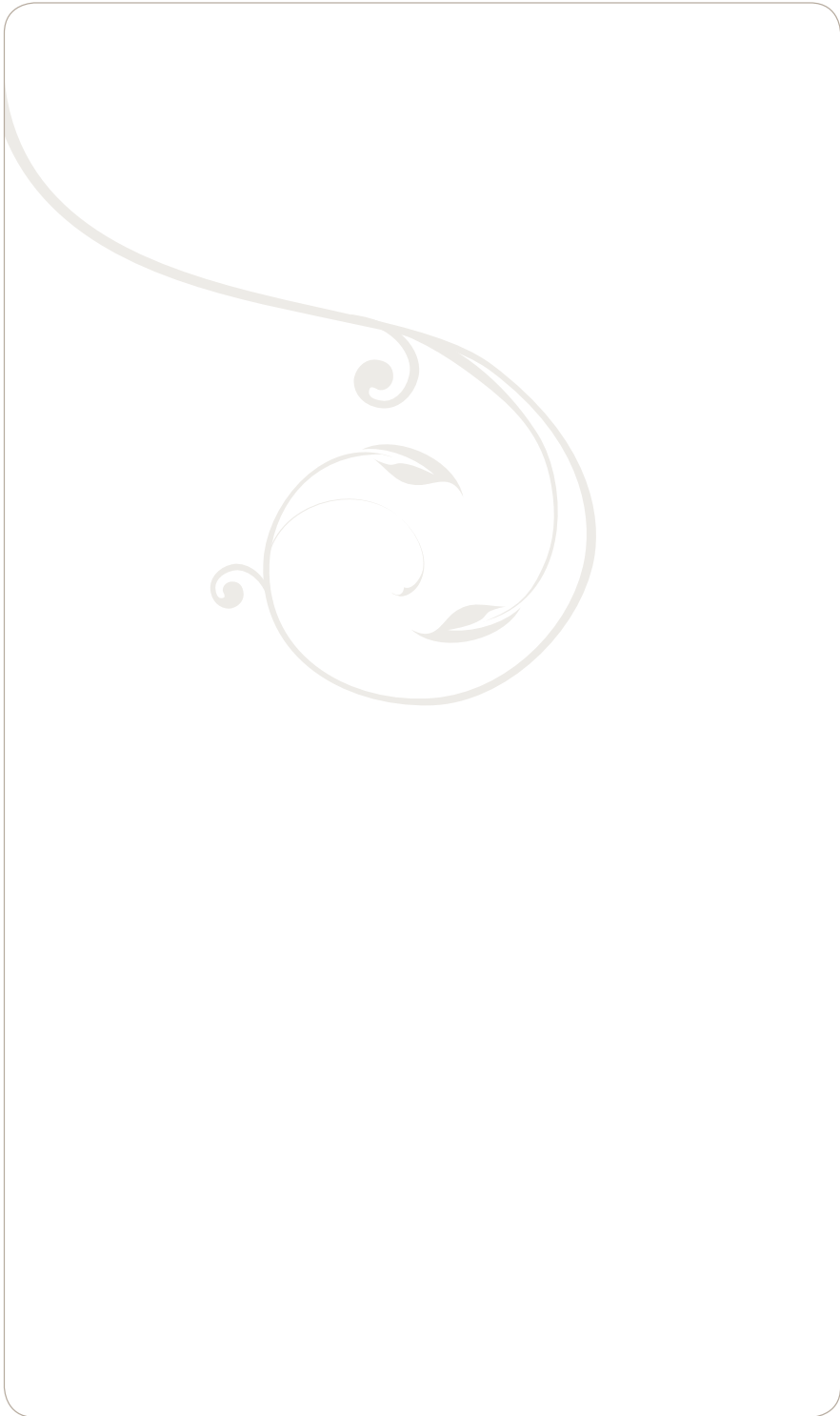
# step up to the challenge

an exercise guide for colon cancer survivors



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# what's inside

Let's get started	1
How can exercise benefit me?	7
Getting support for exercise	21
How much exercise should I do?	29
The way forward	35
Making it happen	43
Before you begin	55
Exercise program	57
Internet resources	60

“May your walls know joy; May every room hold laughter and every window open to great possibility.”

—Maryanne Radmacher-Hershey, 1995



# let's get started

This exercise guide is designed for you

Did you know that over 20,000 men and women are diagnosed with colorectal cancer every year in Canada? More people than ever are surviving colon cancer and living long and healthy lives. But colon cancer treatments can sometimes take their toll on your health and well-being.

The good news is that research is now telling us that exercising after colon cancer may help get your body back into shape, keep a positive outlook on life, and perhaps even live longer.

Exercise is especially important for colon cancer survivors. We created this exercise guide as many colon cancer survivors who have completed their treatments are now interested in exercise.

The scientific research tells us that colon cancer survivors are at an increased risk of:

- Heart disease.
- Recurrence of their colon cancer
- Getting a different cancer
- Fatigue
- Memory problems
- Incontinence

The good news is that by exercising regularly you can reduce your risk, and even prevent some of these problems.

The purpose of this exercise guide is to help you add exercise into your daily life. Inside you will find activities that require you to think about your own exercise habits, setting goals, and some of the barriers that prevent you from exercising. These activities will help you plan an exercise program and help keep you motivated.

## Health benefits

### Preliminary research with colon cancer survivors has shown that exercise may help you:

- reduce the chances of your colon cancer coming back.<sup>†</sup>
- reduce the chances of dying from your colon cancer.<sup>†</sup>
- and increase the chances of living a longer life.<sup>†</sup>

### Exercise may also help you:

- improve your physical fitness and functioning.<sup>††</sup>
- improve your muscle strength and bone density.
- cope with the side effects of your colon cancer treatment.<sup>††</sup>
- reduce your fatigue and increase your energy.<sup>††</sup>
- improve your outlook on life and feel better about yourself.<sup>††</sup>
- manage your weight.
- and keep your memory sharp.

<sup>†</sup> Meyerhardt, J. et al. (2006). Physical activity and survival after colorectal cancer diagnosis. *J Clin Onc*, 24, 3527-3534.

<sup>†</sup> Meyerhardt, J. et al. (2006). Impact of physical activity on cancer recurrence and survival in patients with Stage III colon cancer: Findings from CALGB 89803. *J Clin Onc*, 24, 3535-3541.

<sup>††</sup> Courneya KS, Friedenreich CM. (1997). Relationship between exercise pattern across the cancer experience and current quality of life in colorectal cancer survivors. *J Alt Compl Med*, 3, 215-226.

<sup>††</sup> Courneya, K., et al. (2003). A randomized trial of exercise and quality of life in colorectal cancer survivors. *European Journal of Cancer Care*, 12, 347-357.

## Find it difficult to exercise after your colon cancer treatments?

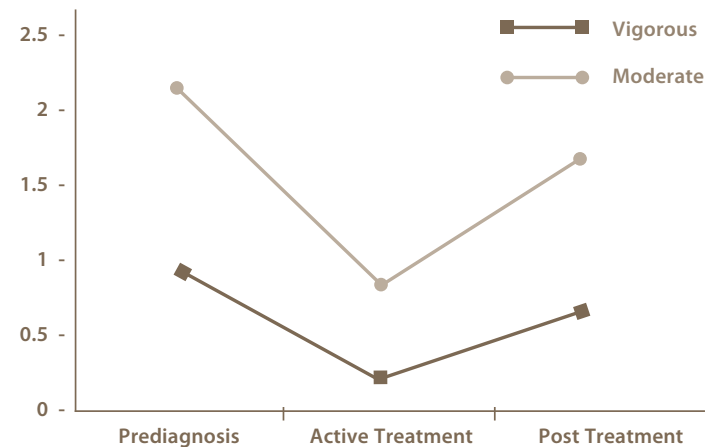
### You are not alone!

Research with colon cancer survivors has shown that many survivors stop exercising during their treatment and don't restart, even after their treatments are finished!

Take a look at the graph below. What it shows is that colorectal cancer survivors engaged in moderate and vigorous exercise about 3 days per week before they were diagnosed with colorectal cancer. As might be expected, the number of times per week they exercised during treatments dropped dramatically.

The really bad news, however, is that these colorectal cancer survivors never really regained their prediagnosis exercise levels after their treatments. It is very important to do your best to at least regain the exercise amounts that you were doing before you were diagnosed. We hope this guidebook will help you do that!

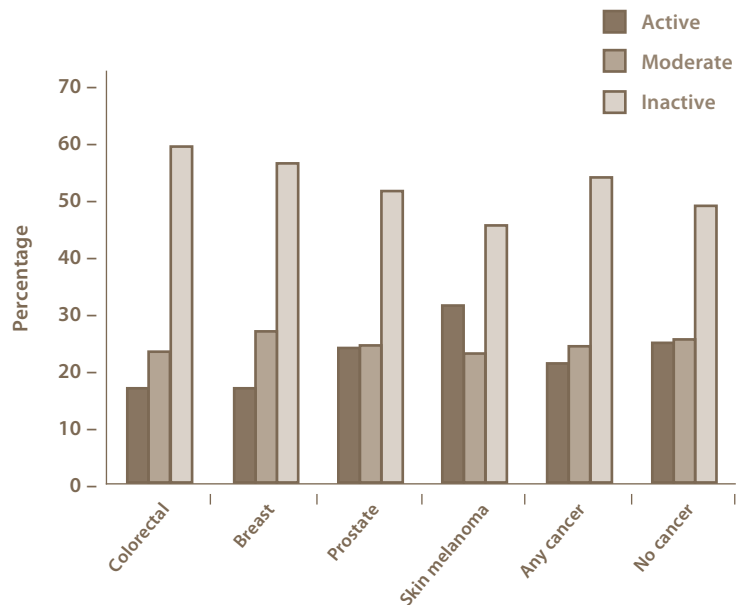
Changes in exercise frequency by intensity level from prediagnosis to posttreatment in colorectal cancer survivors



A population based study of over 114,000 Canadian adults also showed that colorectal cancer survivors have among the lowest rates of exercise in Canada!<sup>†</sup> Even lower than other cancer survivor groups!

This figure shows that more colorectal cancer survivors are inactive when compared to other cancer survivors, as well as people who have never had cancer. It's time for colorectal cancer survivors to get active!

Exercise rates of colorectal cancer survivors compared to other cancer survivor groups



<sup>†</sup> Courneya KS, Katzmarzyk PT, Bacon, E. (2008). Physical activity and obesity in Canadian cancer survivors: Population-based estimates from the 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey. *Cancer*, 122, 2475-2482.

## Myths about exercise

Below are a few myths that prevent people from exercising. Now let's tell the truth!

### Myth #1: No pain, no gain!

**False:** You get many health benefits from moderate level exercises such as brisk walking (like you are late for an appointment). Moderate exercise is any exercise that makes you breathe harder without feeling very out of breath.

### Myth #2: You have to exercise for at least 30 minutes at one time to get any health benefit.

**False:** Getting at least 30 minutes of extra exercise per day is needed to get health benefits. You can exercise for 10 minutes at 3 different times of the day and still get health benefits. For example, you can take a brisk walk for 10 minutes after breakfast, lunch and supper. Exercise can be planned, such as going to an aerobics class. Exercise can also be unplanned, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

### Myth #3: After age 50, there is no point in exercising.

**False:** Exercise is helpful for people of all ages. Exercising after age 50 helps to prevent brittle bones, some cancers, high blood pressure and heart disease. Exercise even helps prevent creaky and sore joints. In fact, exercise may help you live longer and healthier.

“Every day you may make progress.  
Every step may be fruitful. You  
know you will never get to the end  
of the journey. But this only adds  
to the joy and glory of the climb.”

—Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)



# how can exercise help me?

Colon cancer survivors are now being encouraged to exercise.<sup>†</sup> In this section, we will talk about the most recent scientific studies that have looked at the benefits of exercise for colon cancer survivors. Knowing the benefits of exercise may motivate you to be more active.

## Exercise improves your health

Exercising regularly provides you with many health benefits.

Exercise:

- Improves how well your heart works. Doctors believe that heart disease can be reversed through exercise.
- Improves muscle strength. This improves your balance and helps prevent falls.
- Helps control your blood pressure and prevents high blood pressure.
- Helps reduce arthritis aches and pains.
- Helps maintain healthy bones and joints. This may prevent osteoporosis and arthritis.
- Improves your flexibility.
- Can make daily activities feel easier and less tiring.

### activity 1

Choose two benefits that mean the most to you or would help you to become motivated. Write these two benefits down on a piece of paper. Put this piece of paper in a place you will see them every day.

<sup>†</sup> Doyle, C., et al. (2006). *Nutrition and physical activity during and after cancer treatment. An American Cancer Society guide for informed choices. CA A Cancer Journal for Clinicians, 56, 323-353.*

## Exercise helps you feel good about yourself

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Several research studies tell us that exercise helps colon cancer survivors feel better about themselves.

Survivors in these studies reported that exercise helped them:

- Improve their quality of life.
- Feel more able to perform daily routines and activities.
- Feel satisfied and happy with their body weight, shape, and appearance.
- Increase their self-esteem.
- Reduce their depression.
- Reduce their anxiety.

Exercise helps you do things to improve your health, and this will help you feel more positive about yourself.



## Exercise helps you get your mind off cancer

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Do you ever find yourself worrying about whether your cancer will come back? Exercise is a great way to distract yourself from the day-to-day worries about your cancer coming back and to feel like you are doing something to help yourself.

Choose an exercise setting that stimulates you. For example, you may feel more motivated to walk outside than on a treadmill.

Some excellent areas to walk include the local park or even a shopping mall. Some of the local running stores may even provide you with maps of local walking trails around your neighborhood. They may also have walking programs that will help you to find walking partners. Your physical activity consultant in the CHALLENGE trial can also help you with these ideas.

## Exercise helps you relieve stress

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Exercise is also a great way to relieve any stress you have. Exercise can distract you from the challenges that you might face during the day.

Other colon cancer survivors agree that exercise relieves stress. A recent survey told us the majority of colon cancer survivors believe exercise helped them to cope with the stress of cancer and cancer treatment<sup>†</sup>.

Also, research studies have found that regular exercise actually reduces stress and anxiety<sup>††</sup>.

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<sup>†</sup> Courneya KS, Friedenreich CM. (1997). Determinants of exercise during colorectal cancer treatment: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Oncol Nurs Forum*, 24,1715-1723.

<sup>††</sup> Petruzzello, S.J., et al. (1991). A meta-analysis on the anxiety-reducing effects of acute and chronic exercise: Outcomes and mechanisms. *Sports Medicine*, 11, 143-82.

## Exercise improves your energy level

Surviving colon cancer and enduring treatments can cause survivors to experience fatigue and a lack of energy. This lack of energy may limit your ability to do the daily activities that you found easy to do prior to your treatments. In other cancer survivor groups, we have found exercise to be one of the most effective ways to improve your energy level. To notice an increase in your energy level, you don't have to do very hard exercise all the time. It is as simple as walking on a regular basis.

Exercise helps reduce feelings of tiredness in many ways. Exercise helps your red blood cells work better. The red blood cells carry oxygen through your body. When you are not active, oxygen is not used very well in the body. When you exercise, you are increasing the ability of the body to use oxygen in the blood. This helps your body use oxygen more effectively, and helps you feel more energized.

One large experimental study found that colon cancer survivors that increased their cardiovascular fitness also reported decreased fatigue levels. On the other hand, survivors that decreased in their fitness reported more fatigue!

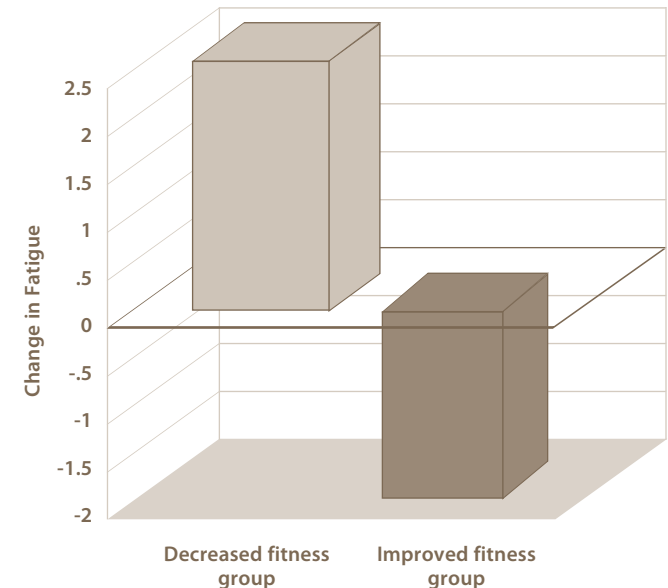
**And the good news is that research studies suggest that as little as 30 minutes of brisk walking per day may reduce your feelings of tiredness.**



## Study: Reducing tiredness

A recent study examined how fitness levels affected fatigue in over 100 colorectal cancer survivors<sup>†</sup>. This chart shows that survivors who improved their fitness during the exercise intervention reported significantly less fatigue than survivors whose fitness did not improve. Survivors who did not increase their fitness actually reported higher fatigue levels than they did at the beginning of the study.

Impact of fitness changes on fatigue

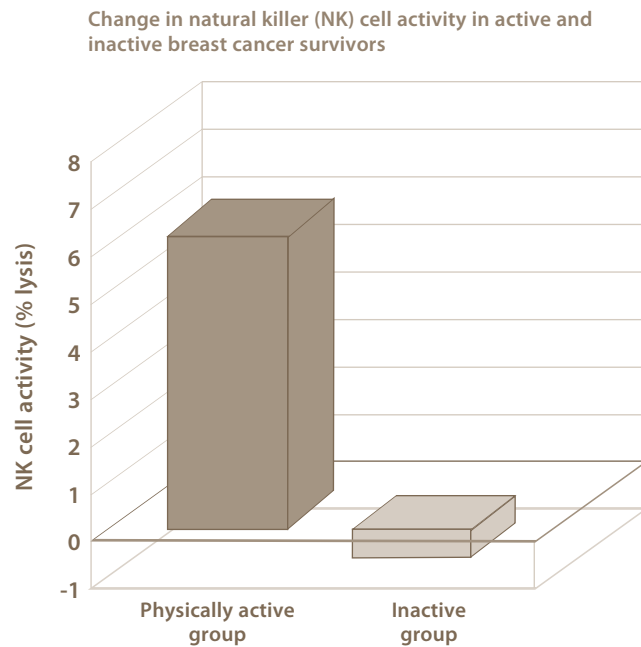


<sup>†</sup> Courneya, K., et al. (2003). A randomized trial of exercise and quality of life in colorectal cancer survivors. *European Journal of Cancer Care*, 12, 347-357.

## Exercise helps you improve your immune system

The immune system reacts to invaders that you don't want in your body, such as when you catch a cold. If your immune system is working well, it has a better chance of getting rid of these invaders.

In different cancer groups (and in people without cancer), research studies<sup>†</sup> have examined this question. The graph below shows results from a study that found that exercise can improve natural killer cells in breast cancer survivors. Natural killer cells are the cells that fight off cancer tumors.



<sup>†</sup> Fairey, A., et al. (2005). Randomized controlled trial of exercise and blood immune function in postmenopausal breast cancer survivors. *Journal of Applied Physiology*, 98, 1534-40.

<sup>†</sup> Allgayer, H. (2004). Decreased interleukin-1 receptor antagonist response following moderate exercise in patients with colorectal carcinoma after primary treatment. *Cancer Detection and Prevention*, 28, 208-213.

Exercise has been found to be beneficial to the immune system in both breast and colorectal cancer survivors.<sup>†</sup> In these studies, it is very important to note that survivors who did not exercise did not get these immune system benefits.

The good news is that you can help your immune system by exercising. Moderate level exercise such as brisk walking is very helpful. You might experience fewer colds during cold season!



## Exercise may help you live longer

You're never too old to increase your level of exercise. If you don't exercise your body ages faster.

Consider these facts:

- The more you move, the better you feel.
- More active older adults have the same function and fitness of those much younger.
- More active people continue to be independent as they age.
- There is strong research evidence that people who exercise live longer and have fewer illnesses. And the good news is that you don't have to exercise for the entire day. Some studies have found that even doing some exercise may help you live longer.<sup>†</sup>

In a recent study, researchers found that women who exercised after their colon cancer diagnosis and treatment lived longer than women who did not exercise. This study showed that those survivors that increased their exercise after their colon cancer diagnosis lived longer than those survivors that decreased their exercise levels.

The bottom line is that exercise adds years to your life!

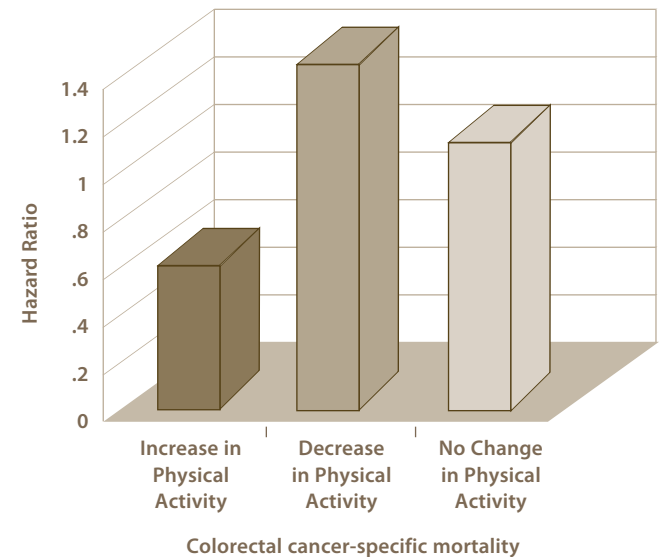
<sup>†</sup> Leitzmann, M. et al. (2007). Physical activity recommendations and decreased risk of mortality. *Arch Intern Med*, 167, 2453-2460.

<sup>†</sup> Meyerhardt, J. et al. (2006). Physical activity and survival after colorectal cancer diagnosis. *J Clin Onc*, 24, 3527-3534.

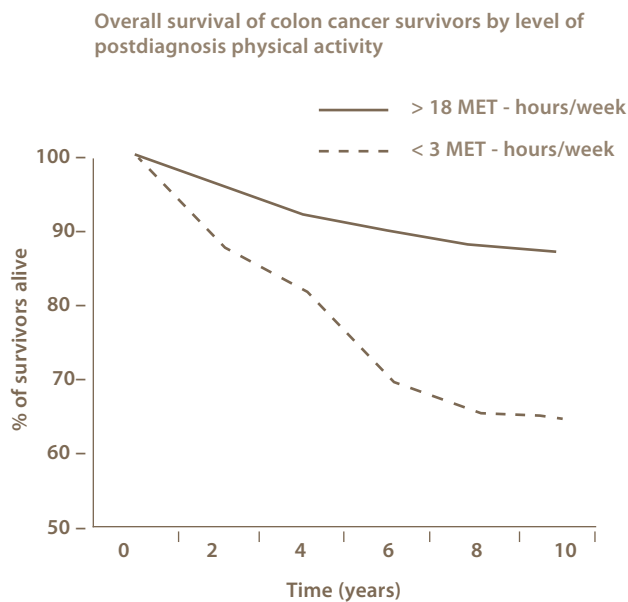
## Study: Exercisers live longer after colorectal cancer

Take a look at this chart below. In this study, the researchers followed almost 600 women that had been diagnosed with colorectal cancer. The graph looks a bit complex, but what it is telling us is that those colorectal cancer survivors who increased their exercise after their diagnosis had a 52% lower chance of dying from the disease compared to those who did not change their exercise. As well, those who decreased their exercise after their diagnosis had a 32% increase in their risk of dying from their colorectal cancer. Which category would you like to be in!

Impact of change of physical activity before and after colorectal cancer diagnosis



This same study also found that colon cancer survivors that did more than 18 metabolic equivalents of exercise per week (approximately 6 hours of walking per week) were more likely to live longer than colon cancer survivors doing little or no activity. Look at the graph, the curves speak for themselves!



† Meyerhardt, J. et al. (2006). Physical activity and survival after colorectal cancer diagnosis. *J Clin Onc*, 24, 3527-3534.

## Exercise may help prevent your colon cancer from coming back

Researchers have also found that exercise may also reduce the risk of your colon cancer from returning. It was found that survivors who walked as little as 6 hours per week at an average pace had a 47% improvement in disease-free survival time when compared to those colon cancer survivors that did not exercise.†

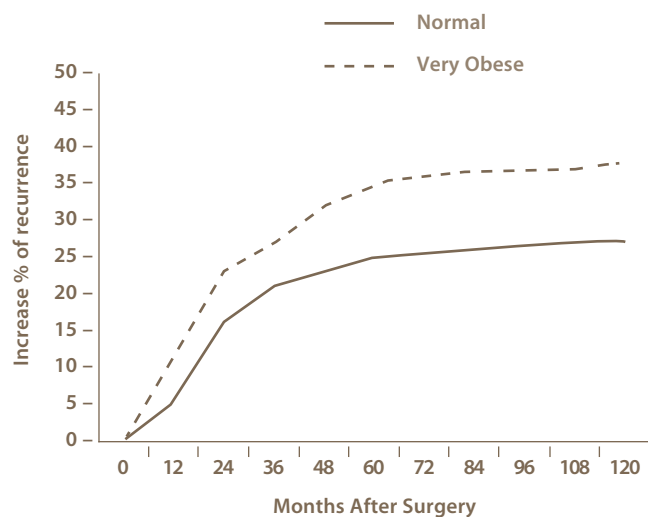
These studies also found that the amount of exercise you did before you were diagnosed is not nearly as important as the amount of exercise you do after your diagnosis and treatment. Starting exercise after diagnosis is very important. Your timing is perfect!

And remember, eating a healthy diet will also help you achieve a healthy body weight. Exercising regularly combined with eating healthy are the best ways in which you can keep a healthy body weight.

† Meyerhardt, J. et al. (2006). Impact of physical activity on cancer recurrence and survival in patients with Stage III colon cancer: Findings from CALGB 89803. *J Clin Onc*, 24, 3535-3541.

Exercise also helps you achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. And recently, it was discovered that colon cancer patients that had a healthy body weight were less likely to have their colon cancer return.<sup>††</sup> Take a look at the graph below. This graph shows that colon cancer survivors that maintained a normal body weight were less likely to have their colon cancer return than survivors that were obese. These people were also found to live longer. So exercising and maintaining a health body weight is something you can do to potentially help yourself in the fight against cancer!

Colon cancer recurrence or second primary tumor by body mass index



†† Dignam, J. et al. (2006). Body mass index and outcomes in patients who receive adjuvant chemotherapy for colon cancer. *J Nat Cancer Inst*, 98, 1647-1654.

If you feel you are overweight, try not to worry. The latest research says that people can still be overweight and fit. People who are overweight may get even more health benefits from being fit. Moreover, colon cancer survivors who exercise had a low risk of their disease coming back regardless of their body weight. That means that healthy weight, overweight, and even obese colon cancer survivors all benefited from exercise!

## Exercise helps you get things back to normal

Colon cancer and its treatments may cause lasting changes in your life. You might find yourself thinking about your colon cancer experience quite often. This may affect other areas of your life, such as your relationships or your job. Sometimes you just want things to get back to normal.

Our research over the years has indicated that survivors believe that exercise helped them to maintain a normal lifestyle as well as regain control over cancer and their lives.<sup>†</sup>

Exercise is one activity you can do to help maintain a normal lifestyle. By learning to plan exercise into your day, your planning and time management skills might even improve. This can help your days go a little smoother.

† Courneya KS, Friedenreich CM. (1997). Determinants of exercise during colorectal cancer treatment: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Oncol Nurs Forum*, 24,1715-1723.

“Sometimes I think a lot about the cancer I had. Sometimes I also don’t feel very healthy. But exercise allows me to feel like I am doing something positive for my well being. Also, getting out to do my exercises helps me physically as well as emotionally.”

—Joy, Lethbridge (Age 59)

# getting support

What do colon cancer doctors think about exercise?

Many oncologists now encourage their patients to do regular exercise. Here is what some medical oncologists in Canada who treat colon cancer patients say about exercise.



*“I am often asked by my patients with colon cancer what they can do to improve their health and contribute to their own treatment program. Over the past few years there is more evidence that regular exercise may have substantial*

*benefits for patients. It is well known that regular physical activity reduces many of the side effects associated with treatment from cancer including fatigue and low blood counts. Furthermore, exercise has a multitude of other benefits for all of us including improved heart health and quality of life. Studies that are coming out suggest that regular exercise can be a simple, inexpensive, and healthy component of cancer treatment recovery programs.”*

—Dr. Christopher Booth, Medical Oncologist,  
Kingston Regional Cancer Centre

*"Exercise is a very powerful and effective way to stay fit and healthy. Especially in cancer survivors, the benefits of exercise are even more evident. And it's not just hard types of exercise like lifting weights or running. We're finding that cancer patients and survivors can get these benefits simply by walking. . . and that is something that everyone can do. I think what is most exciting is the research that is now showing that colon cancer survivors that are active are more likely to live longer, healthier lives than survivors that are not as active. Because of this research, I now try to encourage all colon cancer survivors to get out and be active. It is as simple as taking the stairs more often, walking to the grocery store, or taking the dog for a longer walk. The benefits are enormous!"*

—Dr. Sharlene Gill, Medical Oncologist,  
British Columbia Cancer Agency



*"I regularly encourage my patients to exercise during and after completion of chemotherapy for colon cancer. There is now a lot of research that has been done in the area of exercise and cancer survivorship. We now know that it is both safe and effective to be active both during and after your cancer treatments. This research also shows that survivors that are active can recover quicker from their treatments and live longer and healthier lives. I also inform my patients that "no pain, no gain" is not true. They can see the benefits with simple activities like walking, rollerblading, or even riding a bike. When being active, I encourage my patients to listen to their body. When you need a rest, take a rest. And if something is hurting you should try a different activity. I challenge my patients to take steps to be more active. It is another thing they can do to get back on the road to recovery."*

—Dr. Heather-Jane Au, Medical Oncologist,  
Cross Cancer Institute

*"I feel better, I feel less sleepy,  
and I have more energy  
after I exercise!"*

—Catherine, Medicine Hat, (Age 34)

## Getting support can help you exercise

Your spouse, partner or a friend can help motivate you to get out and exercise. When you go for your exercise, encourage your spouse or friend to exercise with you. Then you can both get the benefits of exercise. You can even challenge each other to exercise more. Have your support person use the goal setting activity on pages 35. Set at least one goal together. Hey, 2 for the price of 1 is a great deal!

Use each other to help set exercise goals and hold each other responsible for meeting these goals. Remember to celebrate when you achieve your goals.

Is your spouse or partner willing to exercise with you?

### activity 2

What are some of the activities that you and your support person enjoy doing together?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

“If you worried about falling off the bike, you would never get on.”

—Lance Armstrong, testicular cancer survivor, 7 time ‘Tour de France’ Champion

## Other family members can also help

Getting the support of your family to do exercise is very helpful in starting and maintaining your program.

Now is your chance to become a role model for healthy living for your spouse, kids, and even your grandkids.

Here are some tips to help get your family active:

- Take lessons together in a new sport, such as tennis or golf.
- Go for a walk or bike ride in your neighborhood.
- Go to the nearest park and play ball games, such as softball, soccer or volleyball. Bring along a frisbee.
- Go for a hike in a nature preserve or park. Bring a book about local birds or flowers, so you and your kids can spot birds and plants on your hike.
- Jump rope. It’s a great exercise and it can be done almost anywhere.



## activity 3

Pick 3 activities you can do with your family over the next month:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## How your friends can help

Your friends can be great motivators for exercise. If your friends do not exercise, share this guide with them. Tell them that exercise is also one of the best ways to avoid getting colon cancer in the first place! If some of your friends already exercise, see if you can join them. They can be a great source of encouragement

Have fun with your friends by forming a walking group. Meet once or twice a week at a central location. Walk around your favorite park. Remember, there is scientific evidence showing exercise that is as simple as walking may help you live longer, and prevent your colon cancer from returning.

Gather your friends and join in a Learn to Run class. For example, walking and running stores offer several programs to suit what you are looking for. They offer clinics on walking, jogging, and marathons. They have general clinics and clinics specifically designed to help you train for the "Run for the Cure". These programs usually go once a week for 10 weeks. Your physical activity consultant in the CHALLENGE trial will have many other ideas for group activities!



“The path to our destination is not always a straight one. We go down the wrong road, we get lost, we turn back. Maybe it doesn’t matter which road we embark on. Maybe what matters is that we embark.”

—Barbara Hall, 1993



# how much exercise should I do

As one of the distinguished leaders in exercise science always says: “When people ask me how much exercise they should do, I tell them more!!!”

This quote underlies an important scientific finding in exercise research. The relationship between exercise and health outcomes is what scientists call “linear” or “dose-response”. That means that the more exercise you do, the more benefits you get!

Nevertheless, there are some good guidelines that are helpful.

## The recommended goal

Experts recommend that you exercise:

- 3-5 days a week or more depending on how hard you are exercising (for example, really sweating or just lightly sweating).
- at least at a moderate intensity level (like a brisk walk with a light sweat).
- for 30 minutes or more each day.
- you can achieve the 30 minutes by exercising in three 10 minute sessions during the day.

These next few pages will give you some more detail about the recommended goal.

## How often should I exercise?

---

Exercise should be performed at least 3-5 days of the week depending on the intensity level. If you choose moderate intensity exercise (like brisk walking), exercising every day is even better. This might seem hard, but we will give you some helpful tips in this guide on how to exercise everyday.

If you are doing vigorous exercises, you should try and do these exercises on at least 3 days of the week. Vigorous exercises involve any exercise that makes your heart beat fast and makes you feel as though you are out of breath. If you are exercising with someone else, it would be difficult to talk to them because your breathing is very heavy. Examples of vigorous exercises include running, squash, or hard cycling (up a hill!).

“I find exercise to be very beneficial to me, both physically and mentally. It keeps me going each day. My body feels good and my self-esteem is higher. By exercising, I can maintain a fairly good energy level.”

—Patricia, Grande Prairie (Age 75)

## How hard should I exercise?

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Try to exercise at least at a moderate intensity. Moderate level exercise is any exercise that makes you breathe harder without feeling out of breath. If you are exercising at a moderate level you should start to sweat after 10 minutes. If someone were to see you walking at a moderate intensity, they would think you were late for an appointment.

Walking quickly (like you were late for an appointment) is a moderate level exercise.

When you are feeling like more of a challenge, you can progress up to more intense exercises, like hard cycling or running. Try these exercises for at least 20 minutes each time, on 3 days of the week.

## How much should I exercise?

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The primary goal is to help you increase your exercise level by at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week. This 150 minutes is above and beyond what you are currently doing right now. So for example, if you already do 90 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise, the goal of this program is to help you do 240 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise.

If you are interested in vigorous intensity activities such as running or weight lifting, the goal of this program is to get you doing an extra 60 minutes of vigorous exercise per week.

But don't be afraid, you do not have to do 30 minutes at once! The benefits of exercise can be gained by doing as little as 10 minutes at a time.

For example, if you go for a 10 minute walk after breakfast, lunch and supper you will meet the recommended goal of 30 minutes a day. If you already get 30 minutes a day, we'll show you how to increase your exercise minutes even more.



## activity 4

Adding any type of exercise, like brisk walking, will give you health benefits. Write your five favorite types of exercise below. Some ideas might be golfing, walking with friends, walking at home on a treadmill, dancing or gardening.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

If you don't have a favorite exercise, start with walking. You can walk anywhere and at anytime. Try the exercise program on page 57. The exercise program was developed by the U.S. National Institutes of Health. Thousands of people have used this exercise program to help them walk a minimum of 30 minutes a day.

This next section will help you plan your own exercise program.

“Obstacles are those  
frightful things you see  
when you take your  
eyes off your goal.”

—Henry Ford



# the way forward

## Setting “SMART” physical activity goals

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The next step is to set some exercise goals. Research has shown that setting goals will help you start and maintain your new exercise program. Setting goals will also help you monitor how much exercise you are doing. Write down your goals and put them on the refrigerator so that your family can see them and help you achieve them.

### Use the following “SMART” guidelines when setting goals.

- Specific** Determine exactly what you are going to do and how. Your physical activity consultant can help you with your goal.
- Measurable** Measure your progress. We will help you track your exercise with an exercise log.
- Attainable** Set a goal that is within your reach, not an impossible dream. Your physical activity consultant can help you determine what is realistic for you.
- Realistic** Set a goal that is realistic, relevant, and rewarding.
- Time Frame** Set a time frame and allow enough time to reach your goal.

Remember to reward yourself when you have met a goal. Treat yourself with something that you enjoy, like taking a long hot bath, buying that book you have been wanting to read or buying a new pair of runners. Now is the time to set your first exercise goal in Activity 5.

## activity 5: Time to set a goal

### step 1

**Write a goal for this next week by filling in the blanks below.**

Starting on \_\_\_\_\_,  
(day of the week)

I am going to \_\_\_\_\_  
(kind of exercise)

for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

I am going to do this \_\_\_\_\_ days this week.

**There is space in the next few pages to write out your own goals for exercise.**

### step 2

Write down what else you need to do to be able to meet this goal. For example, you may need to buy some walking shoes or call a friend and ask them to start walking with you. Maybe you need to buy an exercise video or call your local fitness centre and sign up for a class.

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### step 3

Write down how you will reward yourself if you meet your goal this week.

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## Example of a walking goal

*Starting on Monday, I am going to walk for 30 minutes. I am going to do this 5 days this week (Monday to Friday). I am going to phone my friend Kari to see if she will walk with me after work or at lunch time. If I can do this for 2 weeks I will buy myself a new pair of walking shoes.*



## Continue to set goals

**Continue to set weekly goals until you are meeting the recommended goal of exercising:**

- at least 5 days a week or more.
- at least at a moderate level.
- for at least 30 minutes or more.  
or
- at least 3 days a week or more.
- at a vigorous intensity level.
- for at least 20 minutes or more.

When you meet the goal of 30 minutes a day, on at least 5 days a week, set goals that will help you get even more exercise per week. The more the better!

You can even set goals that will help you start moving more and sitting less. Remember, you can get even greater health benefits by doing above and beyond the recommended increase of 150 minutes of moderate intensity per week.

If you want to build more exercise into your day, in addition to your 30 minutes of exercise, try making these changes:

- Instead of getting coffee from the coffee machine at work, I am going to walk 5 minutes to the coffee shop and get a coffee on my coffee break.
- I am going to take the stairs up 5 flights and get on the elevator on the fifth floor instead of getting on the elevator on the main floor.
- I am going to put some music on and dance with my kids for 10 minutes instead of watching their TV show.
- I am going to jump rope during TV commercials instead of sitting for a whole hour.



“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.”

—Mahatma Gandhi (1869 - 1948)



# making it happen

**The next part of this guide talks about strategies for living a lifestyle that includes exercise.**

## Busy Body

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Not surprisingly, time is the #1 reason that prevents people from exercising. We all have reasons for not fitting our daily exercise into our busy schedules.

### **Exercise experts propose the 10-minute solution:**

You don't have to set aside an entire half-hour to do your exercise. On those especially busy days, try building in 10 minutes of exercise 3 times a day. For example, you can do some simple exercises for 10 minutes in the morning, take a 10-minute walk during lunch, and work around the block for 10 minutes in the evening. It's that simple and now you have your 30 minutes of exercise.

### **Here are a few time management strategies that will help you exercise more:**

- Combine exercise with other activities (e.g. walking/running on a treadmill while watching TV or reading).
- Use exercise as transportation (e.g., walking to the store to get groceries, biking to and from work).
- Exercise when you have to wait at a doctors appointment (e.g., your oncologist says your appointment will be an hour late. Rather than sit for an hour, go for a walk!
- Exercise at your grand child's sport practice or game.

For example, rather than stand on the sidelines to watch your grand child play soccer, walk around the field while you are watching. Not only do you get your exercise, but you get to see the game from every angle!

- Wake up 30 minutes earlier or go to bed 30 minutes later.
- Schedule exercise into your day rather than waiting to see if it fits in.

**Are you at work all the time?**

**Try these work-friendly tips:**

- Start by walking to work a few days a week if it is feasible for you.
- Invite a group of co-workers to start a lunchtime walking group.
- Carry letters or parcels to the post office or overnight delivery box rather than having them picked up.
- Use the restroom on a different floor and take the stairs to get there.
- Taking the bus to work? Get off the bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way to work.



**Here are some time saving tips to build exercise into your day:**

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
Meeting a friend for coffee	Meet a friend for a walk
Going to a movie	Try a new fitness class
Watching TV for 1 hour	Watch a 30-minute program and then go for a 30-minute walk
Taking the elevator up to your 15th floor apartment	Take the elevator to the 10th floor and walk the remaining 5 floors
Driving a short distance to work	Walk to work
Starting a restaurant club	Sign up in a learn to walk program with your friends
Trying to squeeze exercise in at night	Wake up 30 minutes earlier in the morning and exercise

## Can't quite achieve the recommended goal?

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Don't forget that you can contact your qualified exercise consultant at anytime! Either when you visit the exercise centre or via the phone. These physical activity consultants are there for you and they are there to help you reach your exercise goals.

There are several other groups of people that can help you with your exercise program. These include your family physician, your oncologist, and colon cancer support groups.

Never be afraid to ask. Exercising when you have not exercised that much in the past can be a hard step!

## Still experiencing some side effects?

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Colon cancer survivors often report that many of the side effects from chemotherapy and other treatments stay with them even into their survivorship. You as well might still be having some of these lingering side effects. Common side effects include nausea, fatigue, and fecal incontinence which can prevent you from exercising.

The good news is that exercising may help reduce some of these side effects related to treatment. Are there certain times during the day that your side effects seem to limit you? You can try to exercise when the side effects are not present. So for example, perhaps you only feel fatigue in the evening. If so, try doing your exercise in the morning.

Another strategy is to start off your exercise very slowly. Once you get moving and active, you may find that the side effects you are experiencing may go away the more active you get.



## It's cold!

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If you live in Canada, you are no stranger to cold weather. This does not mean that you can't still get your daily exercise. Try these tips:

## Cold weather survival tips

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**Ease into it.** Start slowly to give your muscles a chance to warm up.

**Walk at a moderate or slow pace.** Winter roads and paths can be icy. The bigger your walking strides, the higher risk you have of falling.

**Bring water.** Don't assume you only need water in summertime. Dry winter air is dehydrating, and you do sweat away water in the winter.

**Wear three layers of clothing.** It's better to overdress. You can always take the clothes off if you get too hot.

**Avoid cotton.** Try clothes made out of material that will keep sweat away from your skin.

**Wear gloves.** Wear ski gloves, a hat, and a scarf for your neck to help you keep warm. If your ears, hands or head get really cold, go inside.

**Try outdoor walking shoes.** Lightweight hiking boots are a good option. Stay away from heavy hiking boots that are for mountaineering.

**Check with your physical activity consultant.** Remember, your consultant will have many ideas for winter exercise including helping you find a facility where you can exercise at little or no charge.

## activity 6

Think of some places where you can exercise when it is too cold outside for you, and write them down here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## Too tired?

Feeling tired is one of the main reasons colon cancer survivors do not exercise. Being tired has been described as a “vicious cycle”. When you feel tired, you usually want to rest and lie down. But studies show that this only makes you more tired. The trick is to break the tired cycle with exercise. In research studies with breast cancer survivors, walking and other forms of exercise have been found to reduce tiredness. **Studies suggest that as little as 30 minutes of brisk walking per day reduces symptoms of tiredness. Remember, the 30 minutes can be broken into three, 10-minute sessions.**

If you are tired, here are a few strategies to maintain your exercise:

- Notice the days and times of the day when you feel fatigued. Then exercise at a time when you feel the least tired.
- Try reducing the level at which you are exercising. If you are walking at a very fast pace, try slowing down your walk or decreasing the distance of your walk.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Take short naps.

## Other health problems?

Individuals with osteoporosis (brittle bones), diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, menopause symptoms, cancer, and high blood pressure are all encouraged to start exercising. Exercise can help you prevent and manage many of these conditions.

If you have any other medical or health problems, you should ask your doctor before starting your exercise program. Otherwise, start exercising at a level that you can tolerate. If you have pain or aches in a particular spot on your body, avoid doing exercises that cause pain in that body area. With exercise, there are so many types of exercises to do.

Various forms of exercise are recommended for people with:

- cancer.
- diabetes.
- hypertension.
- heart disease.
- overweight/obesity.
- arthritis.
- fibromyalgia.

These ones listed are only a few. Check with your doctor, oncologist, or physical activity consultant for more information.



## What if my cancer comes back?

Some people may experience a return of their colon cancer. Sticking to your exercise program may be very hard during this time.

Studies have found that exercise has a positive effect on physical and mental functioning in cancer survivors receiving treatment. These benefits include:

- Increased ability to do regular activities.
- Decreased body fat and more muscle.
- Decreased nausea, vomiting and tiredness.
- Improved immune system.
- Improved mood, happiness and self-esteem.

Be sure to consult your oncologist or physical activity consultant before continuing your exercise program if your cancer comes back and you are scheduled to receive more treatments.

## Exercise makes my body sore

Soreness from exercise is very common. Exercising too much may cause a dull, achy feeling in the muscles that may occur 24-48 hours after exercise. To prevent this:

- Start your exercise program slowly.
- Don't exercise too hard in a short period of time.
- Try some gentle stretches before and after you exercise.
- Give your muscles a day to relax by doing some lighter exercises (walking).

Most muscle soreness is a result of resistance training (lifting weights). If you are lifting weights, always lift the weights every other day. Always give your body a day in between each weight lifting session to relax. Believe it or not, the muscles have to repair themselves after a day of "pumping iron".

## Make it fun

Exercise does not have to occur in a gym or on a running track. There are other ways to get the health benefits of exercise. Try these tips to make exercise more enjoyable:

- Lower your exercise level but exercise for a longer amount of time. For example, if you don't like walking briskly for 30 minutes, try walking at a slower pace for 45 minutes.
- Start moving more and sitting less. It's as simple as taking the stairs, walking to the store, walking through the mall or even enjoying some work in your garden. All these activities add up to give you health benefits.
- Take up a new hobby that involves exercise. Rollerblading, speed walking, and hiking are all relatively cheap exercises that have a lot to offer. Exercising more can simply be a matter of spending more time on things you already do.

We always seem to forget that fun activities are forms of exercise as well. If you have gone ice skating, played soccer, skied, or swam, you are also exercising!

### activity 7

What are two ways you can increase your daily activity? For example:

1. *I can walk to get milk instead of driving.*
2. *I can take the stairs at work.*

Now it's your turn:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## I'm always booked

Our daily routines are full of things that prevent us from exercising. Here is an activity for you. Make a list of the barriers in your daily life that affect your exercise. Barrier #1 being the barrier that will most likely stop you from exercising. Then think about some strategies on how you can overcome these barriers. Discovering these barriers is the first step in overcoming them.

### activity 8: overcoming barriers

Barrier 1:

*The kids always need my attention after work so I can never get out to do any exercise.*

Barrier 2:

Barrier 3:

Barrier 4:

### strategies

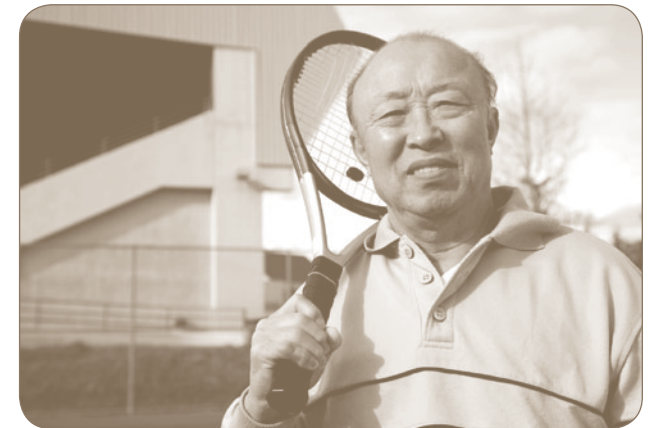
Strategy 1:

*Ask my husband if he can look after the kids for 30 minutes on weeknights while I go for a walk with the girls.*

Strategy 2:

Strategy 3:

Strategy 4:



“I finally realized that being grateful to my body was key to giving more love to myself.”

—Oprah Winfrey, O Magazine



# before you begin

If you notice any of the following stop your exercise and call your doctor or local Health Link.

- An irregular pulse (heart seems to skip a beat).
- Extreme tiredness.
- Unusual muscle weakness.
- Joint or bone pain (besides the everyday aches and pains we have).
- Leg pain or cramps.
- Chest pain.
- Sudden onset of nausea (feel like you are going to vomit) during exercise.
- Dizziness, blurred vision, fainting.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Fever or shaking with chills.
- Numbness or loss of feeling in hands or feet.

Proper stretching and drinking plenty of fluids can prevent many of these symptoms. It is important to drink fluids before and after exercise so you don't get dehydrated, especially when the weather is warm and humid. Try to drink 1 extra cup of water for every 15 minutes of moderate exercise. Take a water bottle when you exercise and keep sippin'.

“Exercise for me is extremely beneficial. I feel like I am able to achieve something even on days when I don’t feel so well because of the cancer treatments I had.”

—Deborah, Edmonton, (Age 48)



# exercise program

If you are looking for a structured program to get you up and walking, this is the one for you. This program was developed by the National Institutes of Health. It’s easy to follow and very effective at helping people get active. The goal of this program is to get you walking briskly for at least 30 minutes.

If you are already an expert walker and would like more of a challenge, you can use this program, but just substitute walking for jogging.

For more types of exercises that you can do, remember to ask your physical activity consultant. They will have lots of ideas for you.

Give it a try and good luck! (Program on next page.)





# internet resources

## **American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)**

<http://www.acsm.org>

*For all the latest research in sports and exercise science.*

## **Canadian Cancer Society (CCS)**

<http://www.cancer.ca>

*The CCS has some great links and articles about exercise and cancer.*

## **American Cancer Society (ACS)**

<http://www.cancer.org>

*For all the latest information including the popular "Relay for Life".*

## **Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca>

*The CDC is devoted to improving the health and quality of life of individuals through physical activity*

## **Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI)**

<http://www.cflri.ca>

*The CFLRI site has information on everything you need to know about exercise.*

## **Public Health Agency of Canada**

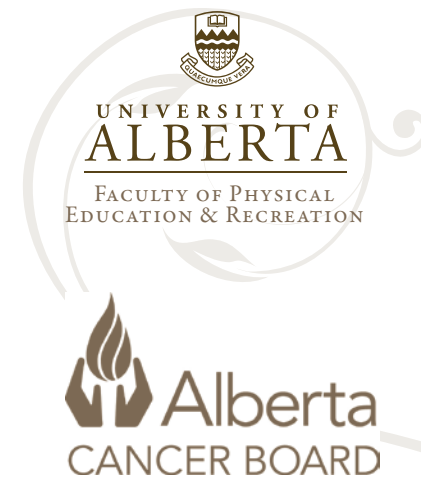
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/index.html>

*This website will teach you how to make choices that will help you prevent disease, stay healthy, and enjoy life to its fullest.*

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