**The Benefits of Exercise During Cancer Treatment**

According to [Cancer.net](https://www.cancer.net/survivorship/healthy-living/exercise-during-cancer-treatment), exercise is an important part of a cancer treatment plan. A growing amount of research shows that regular exercise can greatly improve physical and mental health during every phase of treatment. Even if you were not active before your cancer diagnosis, an exercise program that meets your unique needs can help you get moving safely and successfully. [The Cancer Exercise Training Institute](https://www.thecancerspecialist.com/) has trained thousands of [Cancer Exercise Specialists](http://ceti.teachable.com/) worldwide who can help customize an exercise and lifestyle program to meet your individual needs.

A [CETI](https://www.thecancerspecialist.com/) [Cancer Exercise Specialist](http://ceti.teachable.com/) can help ensure the safety and efficacy of your individualized workout program that may have the following benefits:

* Lower the chance of having physical side effects, such as fatigue, neuropathy, lymphedema, osteoporosis, and nausea
* Reduce the risk of [depression](https://www.cancer.net/node/30346) and [anxiety](https://www.cancer.net/node/30336)
* Keep you as mobile and independent as possible
* Improve your balance to reduce fall injuries
* Prevent muscle loss and build strength
* Prevent [weight gain and obesity](https://www.cancer.net/node/31046), which are linked to increased cancer risk
* Improve [sleep](https://www.cancer.net/node/34981)
* Decrease the amount of time you need to stay in the hospital
* Make your treatment more effective at destroying tumor cells
* Improve survival rates for certain cancers, such as breast cancer and colorectal cancer
* [Reduce the risk of other cancers](https://www.cancer.net/node/24995)
* Prevent other chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes
* Improve quality of life

A[CETI](https://www.thecancerspecialist.com/)[Cancer Exercise Specialist](https://www.thecancerspecialist.com/user-directory/) will complete a comprehensive physical assessment and health history review to determine the specific frequency, intensity, and duration of exercise appropriate for where you are emotionally and physically. They will develop a specific program that will include the following components as they are deemed appropriate for you:

Breathing exercises – You may experience shortness of breath or difficulty breathing during or after cancer treatment. This may make the idea of exercise unappealing and downright challenging. Breathing exercises can help to improve your endurance as well as improve lymphatic flow and minimize your risk for lymphedema. Breathing exercises combined with relaxation, meditation, and mindfulness, can also help reduce stress and anxiety.

Stretching – Following cancer surgery, reconstruction, and/or radiation you may notice tightness and difficulty with movement in the affected area.  Specific range of motion exercises and regular stretching can improve your flexibility as well as your posture. Muscle imbalances may contribute to poor posture and ultimately lead to pain, joint degeneration, and injury. Stretching increases the flow of blood and oxygen to the muscles and speeds recovery. It is important to regain full range of motion and identify and correct muscle imbalances with the appropriate combination of strength and stretching exercises as prescribed by your [Cancer Exercise Specialist.](https://www.thecancerspecialist.com/user-directory/)

Balance exercises – Loss of balance can be a side effect of cancer and its treatment. Peripheral neuropathy may cause you to experience tingling, numbness, and/or pain in your feet that can increase your risk of falling due to balance challenges. Balance exercises can help you regain the function and mobility you need to return to your daily activities safely. Maintaining good balance also helps prevent injuries and falls.

Cardiovascular exercise – Chemotherapy and radiation may have a negative effect on your heart and lungs. Cardiovascular exercise strengthens your heart and lungs and can decrease the fatigue you may experience during and after treatment. It will also help you to burn calories and help you to lose any weight that you may have gained from cancer treatment.

Strength training – Muscle loss, or cancer [cachexia](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3227249/#:~:text=Cancer%20cachexia%20is%20a%20wasting,prognostic%20parameters%20in%20cancer%20patients.), often happens when a person is less active during cancer treatment and recovery, or from long-term cancer treatment. Certain treatments may also cause muscle weakness and increase your risk of osteoporosis. Strength training, or resistance training, helps you maintain and build strong muscles and decreases your risk of [osteoporosis](https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/osteoporosis#:~:text=Osteoporosis%20is%20a%20bone%20disease,of%20fractures%20(broken%20bones).). Increasing lean muscle mass can also improve your balance, reduce fatigue, make it easier to perform daily activities, and increase your [basal metabolic rate](https://www.active.com/fitness/calculators/bmr) (the amount of calories you burn in a day). It can also help fight osteoporosis, a weakening of the bones that some cancer treatments can cause.

It is important to take precautions while exercising if you are having side effects from your cancer or its treatment. If your blood counts are low, it. may increase your risk of bleeding, bruising, and infection. During these times, it is best if you avoid crowded places as well as public swimming pools, rivers, lakes, or oceans due to the increased risk of infection.

If you have had vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24-26 hours, you should avoid exercise and opt for rest, hydration, and replenishing your electrolytes.

A [CETI](http://www.thecancerspecialist.com/) [Cancer Exercise Specialist](https://www.thecancerspecialist.com/user-directory/) will ensure that you progress slowly and safely, according to how you are feeling on any given day. Even if you were an Olympic athlete prior to your diagnosis and treatment, you will need to build up your level of activity slowly to prevent injury and/or lymphedema. You should always feel more energetic after your exercise session. If that is not the case, you are probably doing too much.

Make sure that you always have water on hand so that you can stay hydrated. If you are struggling with weight loss, or gain, find a registered dietician in your area who specializes in oncology. This is important because certain herbs and foods may interfere with the efficacy of your treatment.

If you experience any unusual side effects, or feel like you are running a fever, consult with your physician right away.

**Always get permission from your doctor to begin exercising during or after cancer treatment.**

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Registered Yoga Teacher (200 hour)

Certified Cancer Exercise Specialist

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