

Exercise

There are many benefits to physical activity and exercise.

Exercise is highly beneficial to our health and wellbeing and is regarded as one of the best medicines for our body and our longevity.

Research shows exercise can reduce the risk of some cancers and help prevent some types of cancer from recurring. Exercise is often included in cancer care to help counteract the adverse effects of cancer treatment.

A recent study of melanoma patients revealed:

- 56% of melanoma patients are physically active
- 77% nominating walking as their preferred activity
- 64% of patients reported immunotherapy affected their capacity to exercise
- Patients described a range of physical and emotional benefits
- Exercise is extremely important for fatigue reduction

Physical activity can help you to increase muscle strength, boost energy levels, improve our balance and mobility, relieve stress, enhance sleep and decrease anxiety, depression and fatigue.

Exercise recommendations for cancer patients

During treatment*

Strength training & Aerobic activity – **90 mins per week**, comprising **3 x 30-minute sessions** of moderate intensity aerobic exercise.



*As individually tolerated

After treatment*

Strength training & Aerobic activity – aiming to build to standard exercise guidelines of **150-300 minutes** per week, with **2 sessions** of structured strength training per week.

Remember, more exercise equals greater benefits for you and your body.

*As individually tolerated

Tips to increase physical activity

- Always check with your treating medical team before commencing physical activity or an exercise program
- Ask a friend to walk with you or join a walking group
- Wherever possible, skip the lift or escalator and take the stairs instead
- Try getting off the train or bus a stop early or park your car further from your destination, then walk to your destination
- Activities around the home, such as vacuuming, gardening and lawnmowing are great physical activities with the added incentive of a positive end result
- If you need to sit behind a screen for long periods, stand up every half hour
- Try a new activity – join a yoga, stretch, dance, Pilates or tai chi class – or join your local gym
- Play with your children or grandchildren, hit or kick a ball around the yard or park.

Steps to getting started

1. Discuss your plans with your GP/doctor or those involved in your care plan
2. Consult an exercise physiologist via your GP, they will develop a plan to suite you and provide any additional support you may require
3. Make an exercise plan, including a commitment to the start date.

Resources

- **Cancer Council Victoria Website** – Exercise resources – cancervic.org.au
- **Peter Mac Website** – Nutrition/Dietetics resources for survivors and carers – petermac.org