

## Physical Activity and Cancer

### What you can do to help improve your health

Please begin exercise as soon as you get home

Please begin exercise 6 weeks after your operation



## Why exercise?

There is a significant amount of evidence that physical activity is very beneficial to your health; even if it does not affect your body weight.

Exercise in general (including this programme) can improve your heart & lung function, reduce disease risk, improve general health, reduce stress & tension, improve your self esteem, improve depression. It can also improve your fatigue, improve shortness of breath, increase muscle strength, reduce joint pain

You do not need any special equipment. You can perform exercise inside or outside, alone or in a group.

## Can I exercise during treatment?

Although you might feel tired, it is important to exercise as best you can during treatment. Evidence suggests exercise can reduce some side-effects of treatment, including fatigue, poor sleep, depression and muscle wasting.

## What if I have no access to a gym?

These exercises can be done at home and with no specialist equipment.

## Is there anything I shouldn't do?

If you have any specific movement precautions, your surgeon or physio will let you know. If any of the exercises attached are not recommended, they will be crossed out for you.

## What if I'm too tired to exercise?

It is important to pace yourself when suffering from fatigue. Having a consistent level of exercise and slowly increasing it will help prevent you from doing too much on "good days" and too little on "bad days". It is unlikely that your fatigue will improve if you do not exercise at all.

## What should I do if I'm unsure about anything?

Please contact your cancer doctor or nurse if you are concerned about anything. If you have an questions regarding this booklet, please call the "burns therapy team" at qvh.

## How much should I do?

150 Minutes of moderate exercise per week is recommended, in bouts of at least 10 minutes. Moderate exercise should make you feel a bit warmer, but not mean you are so out of breath than you cannot maintain a conversation.

You can start exercise immediately after you go home and continue them for as long as you wish.

150 Minutes of moderate exercise is recommended throughout your life, not just after your operation

Examples of common moderate exercise are:

Walking, gardening, housework, swimming

If you like, 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise will give you the same health benefits as 150 minutes of moderate exercise. It is important not to begin vigorous exercise until 6 weeks after your operation.



Vigorous exercise will mean you will not be able to maintain a conversation because you will be too short of breath.

Vigorous exercise may include:

Jogging, sport, stairs, cycling etc.

## Cautions

If you normally walk with an aid, please do so to maintain your balance. Hold onto a strong surface during the exercises if your balance is poor.

None of the exercises should be painful. If they are, go slower or don't do as many. If pain is limiting your ability to exercise, please seek physio or gp advice.

Please seek medical advice if you are concerned you should not exercise.

## Exercise after surgery

Moving after surgery reduces your risk of blood clots. You may have some movement precautions after surgery; your physio or surgeon will let you know what these are. You may also be given specific exercises after surgery, if so it is important to do these as well as general exercise.

## Exercise advice

It is important to build up your exercise slowly and at a pace that is comfortable for you

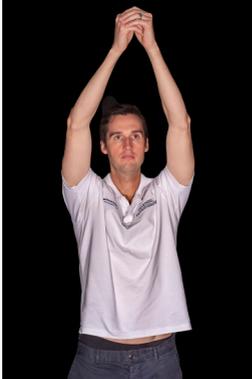
- Slowly increase the amount that you do
- See if family & friends want to join you
- Set yourself some short & long term goals
- Keep a record of how active you have been, so you can track your progress

## Exercise Plan

- Aim to do these exercises twice per day.
- Do not push into any pain.
- Aim to get slightly breathless, but still able to maintain a conversation; this might mean you can only do a few of each to begin with.
- Try to increase the number you do as your fitness improves.

If you have any questions, please call the physio Team - 01342414255

## Flexibility



Standing with hands clasped in front of you.

Lift both arms straight forward over your head.

Return to the start position

## Strengthening



Stand facing a wall with your arms straight and hands on the wall.

Do push-ups against the wall keeping your body in a straight line.

Stand as close to the wall as you need to feel safe



Sitting on a chair.

March your feet on the spot

Lift your knees as high as is comfortable

Stand in front of a table or chair holding on to the support with both hands.



Slowly crouch keeping your back straight and heels on the floor.

Push up through your legs, back into upright standing.

Do not bend so low that you lose control

Sit with your hands on your waist, or using the arm of the chair if you need.



Stand up and then slowly sit down on the chair. The exercise can be made easier or more difficult by changing the height of the chair. Do not let your knees turn in or out.



Stand.

Push up onto your toes.

slowly lower yourself down.

## Balance



Stand. Gently hold onto a firm surface if you need.

Lift your leg and point your foot forward.

Stand. Gently hold onto a firm surface if you need.



Lift your leg and point your foot to the side.

Stand. Gently hold onto a firm surface if you need.

Lift your leg and point your foot back.



MacMillan – Physical Activity and Cancer booklet



Cancer Research UK – Exercise Guidelines



Cancer.gov information page

Please ask if you  
would like this leaflet  
in larger print or an  
alternative format.

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