



DANA-FARBER/BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S CANCER CENTER

Exercise and Cancer

Exercise offers far-reaching benefits for young women with breast cancer. It can help reduce fatigue, increase energy, improve quality of life, and even help manage certain side effects of treatment. Research shows that exercise can be safe both during and after cancer treatment. We encourage all patients to live an active lifestyle.

How much exercise should I get?

Exercise recommendations may vary depending on your age, energy levels, side effects from treatment, and other health concerns. **Please talk with your physician before beginning an exercise program.** For most patients there is no need to wait for a specialist or specific program. However, you may need a personalized exercise plan if you have: extreme fatigue, osteoporosis, or peripheral neuropathies. You should also consider seeing a specialist if you are particularly interested in upper body strength training. Some general recommendations from the American Cancer Society and American College of Sports Medicine:

- **Every week get 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity**
- Exercise for **at least 10 minutes per session**, preferably spread throughout the week
- Aim for **at least two weekly sessions** of strength training

To find a **Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer** in your area, visit <https://certification2.acsm.org/profinder>, and select "ACSM/ACS Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer" in the dropdown menu on the search page.

Types of exercise:

Type of Exercise	Examples	Benefits
Aerobic Exercise	Walking Running Biking Swimming	Increased energy, improved mood, improved blood sugar control Improved cholesterol Weight management/loss Decreased blood pressure Reduces the risk of developing heart disease
Strength Training	Weightlifting Bodyweight exercises	Increased lean body mass Decreased risk of osteoporosis
Flexibility Training	Stretching Yoga/Pilates	More relaxed Improved mood Better balance and flexibility



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How to get started if you are not already exercising

- Start slowly and progress slowly
- Exercise in several 10-minute increments throughout the day
- Build up to 30 minutes of exercise every day
- Choose an activity that you enjoy

How can I fit exercise into my day?

- Walk or bike to your destination
- Use a stationary bike or treadmill while you watch TV
- Exercise with family, friends, or co-workers
- Take a short walk on your lunch break
- Wear an activity monitor (like a Fitbit) or use your phone to track your steps. Try to get 10,000 steps per day.
- Take the stairs instead of using an elevator or escalator

Is it 'moderate' or 'vigorous' exercise?

A great way to tell the difference between whether you are engaging in **moderate** or **vigorous** exercise is to see how your body is responding to the activity.

- **Moderate:** If you still have the ability to hold a conversation while engaging in a particular exercise, that exercise would generally be considered moderate.
- **Vigorous:** If you are only able to say one or two words due to shortness of breath, that exercise would generally be considered vigorous.

Moderate exercise	Vigorous exercise
Ballroom and line dancing	Biking faster than 10 mi/hr
Canoeing	Aerobic/fast dancing
General gardening (raking, trimming shrubs)	Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing)
Sports where you catch and throw (baseball, volleyball, softball)	Hiking uphill
Tennis (doubles)	Jumping rope
Walking briskly	Jogging or running
Water aerobics	Sports with a lot of running (basketball, hockey, soccer)
	Swimming laps
	Tennis (singles)

Source: www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/factSheetAdults.aspx

Exercise Programs available at Dana-Farber:

To make an appointment with Dana-Farber exercise physiologist Nancy Campbell, call The Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living at 617-632-3322. Learn more online at www.dana-farber.org/exercise.