

Physical Activity & Cancer – What you need to know!



Emma Palmer- Physiotherapist in Lung Oncology

Adapted from Presentation delivered by Isla Veal

Being active is important for Cancer

What good things could being more active do for you?



Improves
cancer-related
fatigue



Helps
depression



Helps
anxiety



Improves
sleep
quality



Improves
quality
of life



Improves
cardiorespiratory
fitness



Improves
cognitive
function



Improves
muscle
strength



Helps
joint
pain



Reduces
hormone/metabolic
dysfunction



Helps
body
composition



Reduces
post-operative
complications

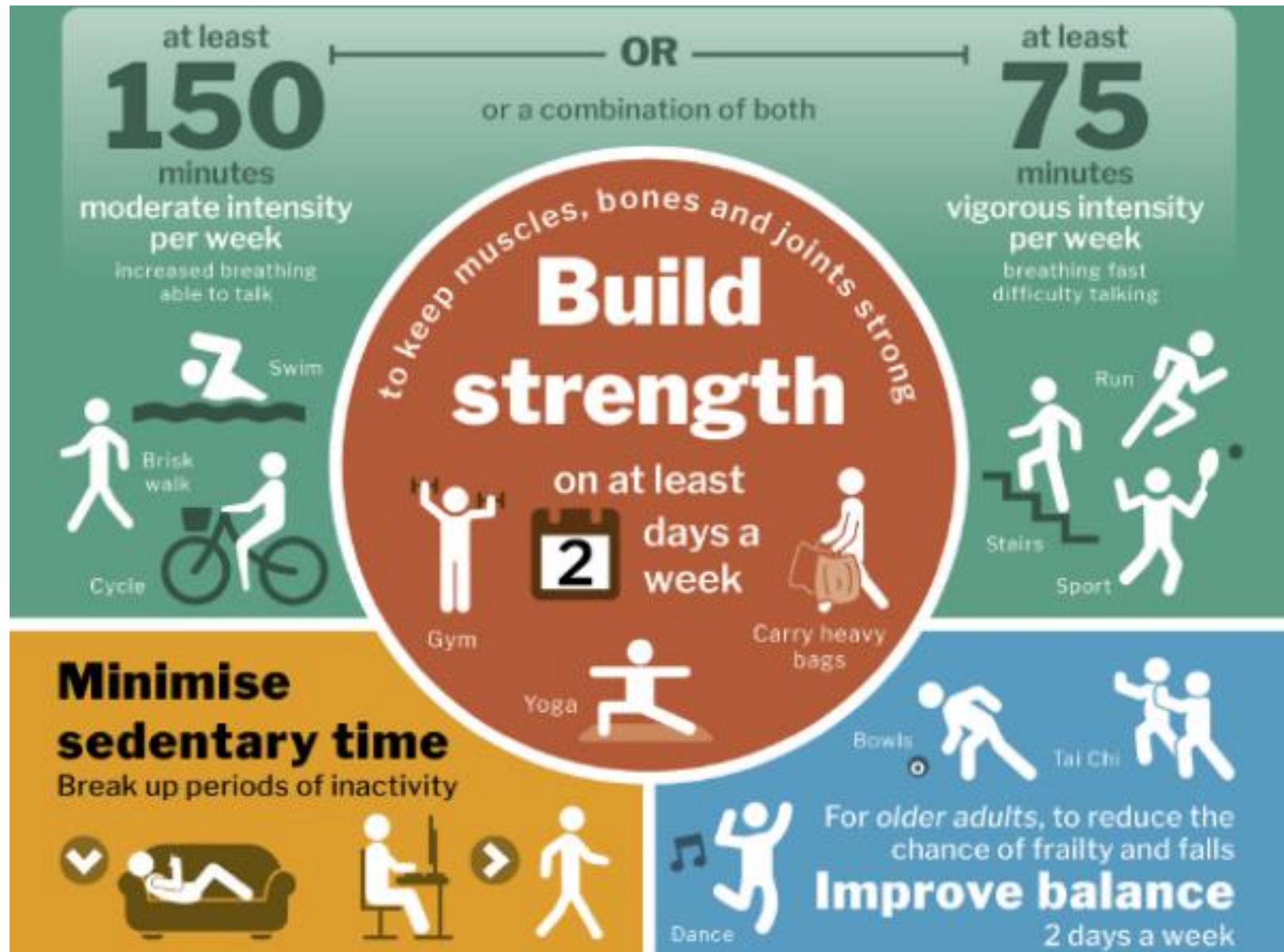


Helps
lymphoedema



Helps
sexual
function

How much exercise do I need to do?



What does “intensity” in physical activity mean?

Sedentary

*To not moving,
working at a desk*



Light

*Cleaning, carrying
out rubbish, yoga*



Moderate

*Walking, cycling,
shopping*



Vigorous

*Playing football,
dancing, swimming*



Very vigorous

*Sprinting up hills, weight
exercises, press ups*



Are we like the sloth?

- Many adults spend >7 hours being sedentary every day
- On average, people with cancer spend >10 hours being sedentary a day
- 4th leading risk factor for mortality is Physical inactivity (WHO)
- Break up periods of inactivity and reduce the time being sedentary (UK Chief Medical Officer)



Top Tips!

Where do I start?

- Anything is better than nothing! Break up sedentary tasks with walks, sit to stand or stairs.
- Frequent bouts of activity rather than weekend warriors
- Build yourself up to 10 minutes at a time, then aim for 20 or 30 in one go. Once you are able to walk for 20-30 minutes in one go, then you can increase the intensity (ie walking faster)
- If you are new to activity build up slowly over 3-6 months.

I am on treatment though...

- During chemotherapy cycles you'll recognise days when you are less and more tired. Plan for higher levels of activity on your good days and lower level of physical activity on "not so good" days.
- During radiotherapy, tiredness can build up through treatment and in the immediate weeks following treatment completion. Keeping active will still be helping your health and improving your ability to tolerate your treatment even if you are tired.

Top Tips!

How do I do exercise?

- Warm up before and cool down afterwards (5-10 minutes) minimise discomfort, especially if you have joint pain due to disease or treatment.
- Have a mix of aerobic (activities that get you out of breath- walking, jogging, skipping, marching on the spot)
- Include some strength exercises- cover all the major areas of the body- bum, tum, arms, legs.
- You do not need specialist equipment - try press ups against the wall/floor, sit-to-stand, lunges, squats, arm curls or arm lifts with bottles of water.
- I have a stoma/just had surgery/have chemo induced peripheral neuropathy eg kick boxing post surgery. Speak to an cancer physiotherapist

What should I be aware of?

- It's common to lose muscle strength during and after cancer treatment.
- Some muscle soreness is normal after doing activity. Over time as your body adapts and strengthens this will reduce
- Breathlessness - If you have lost fitness, it is normal to find you are more breathless doing activities than you were previously. Do not worry about breathing a little harder during an activity because it will help get your heart and lung fitness back to where it used to be

Top Tips!

How do I talk about exercise?

- You can talk about it anytime during a cancer journey - and it should happen several times.
- Link cancer to treatment side effects. “I’m sorry to hear about your fatigue, did you know that regular walking can help with this symptom?”
- Ask about your normal activities during the week – “Are you able to go walking throughout the week?”
- Do you have the energy to do your normal tasks? Would you like to know about how to manage your energy levels?
- Speak to an cancer physiotherapy & occupational therapist

I need motivation...

- Keep in mind the benefits of being active and what you hope to achieve
- Set goals you can achieve at your own pace. Don’t be disheartened if you don’t achieve a planned goal. Think about what went wrong and set a new goal
- Keep a record of how active you’ve been how you feel so you can see your progress
- Share your plans with others who are supportive
- Being active in a group or class can give you social support.
- Do activities which are fun and enjoyable

Mini work out time!



But what about Fatigue?

- Physical activity is the #1 treatment for fatigue
- Plan, prioritise and gradually increase physical activity

Exercise recommendation for fatigue:

- 30 minutes a day, 3 days a week activity at a moderate level
- 2x week strength training 12-15 reps at moderate intensity

7 Tips to Help Fight Fatigue

- 1** Stay as active as you can. Walking and, if you're able, regular exercise are beneficial.

- 2** Get adequate rest, but not too much. Take short naps of 30 minutes or less if needed.

- 3** Save your energy and prioritize which tasks are most important each day.

- 4** Ask for help when needed. Friends and family want to help you.

- 5** Eat healthfully and drink plenty of water.

- 6** Beat stress via relaxation exercises, counseling and stress management training.

- 7** Talk to your cancer care team if fatigue persists.


What about my bone health?

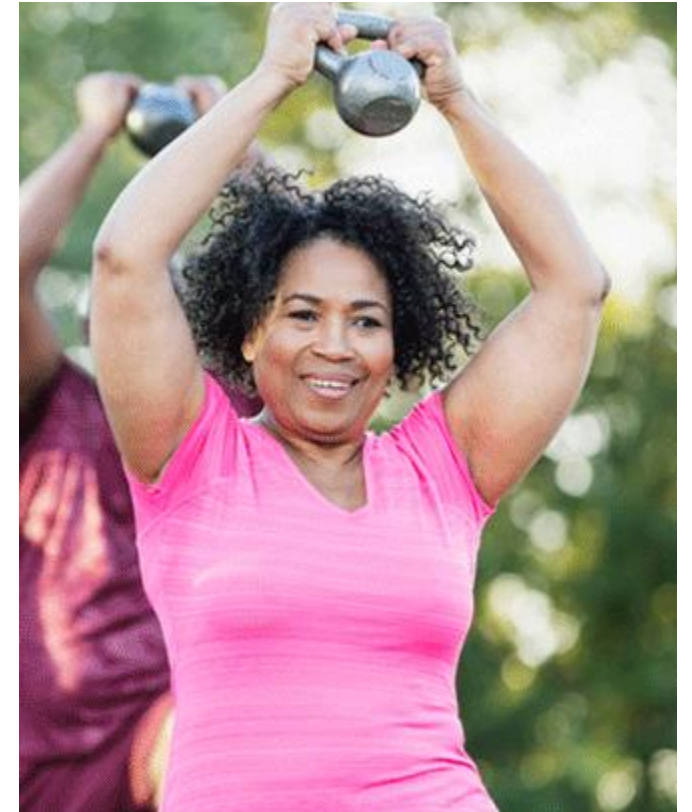
As we age, we have natural age related bone loss, however some common treatments like hormone therapy or long term steroid therapy can have a negative impact on our bones.

Over years, reducing bone health means that we are at more risk of having a fall and breaking bones.

In addition to recommendations, we follow osteoporosis exercise recommendations of weight bearing exercise with impact and further muscle strengthening exercises.

If you have secondary bone disease...

Exercise can be safe and is beneficial - if you have a risk of fracture or bone disease or are concerned, please ask to speak to an cancer physiotherapist for guidance



Do I need to ask my Dr before I can exercise?

- Most physical activity is generally safe for most people.
- You are encouraged to start with low intensity aerobic exercise and strength training.
- It may be wise to check with a GP or oncologist if you have any of the following conditions:

CVD	Pulmonary	Metabolic	Musculoskeletal	Medication
Cardiac	COPD	Diabetes Type I	Low back condition	Anti-convulsant
Peripheral	Asthma	Diabetes Type II	Osteoporosis	Anti-anginal
Cerebrovascular (stroke, TIA)	Interstitial	Thyroid disorder	Osteoarthritis	Antihypertensive
		Renal/ hepatic	Hernia	Beta Blocker
				Diuretic
				Antiarrhythmic

- There are side effects of treatment or cancer where you do need to seek guidance from an oncologist or GP- this may include but not limited to Bone disease, Blood counts, blood sugars, lymphedema, severe fatigue, cardiotoxicity.
- It may that specific advice or clearance will be given if you have these conditions or you may benefit from starting off with a specialist in exercise, like a physiotherapist.

Cancer rehabilitation & exercise at Guy's

Guy's Cancer Class

- 10 week exercise class or 1:1
- Led by specialist cancer physiotherapists & technical instructors
- Cover a range of rehabilitation needs too !
- Access to other symptom programmes & therapists- OT, Speech and Language, dieticians, lymphedema



May interest someone who:

- Would benefit from an assessment
- Side effects limiting physical activity
- Low in confidence in physical activity

Other Classes held in Guys cancer centre:

- Mindful Movement
- Mindful Fatigue
- Supervised Exercise Class (SEG)
- Hydrotherapy
- Sleep Workshop
- Thinking Caps (cognition)
- Fatigue & Breathlessness Group (FAB)

Love to walk?

Counting steps

- Active 10 app
- Step counting apps
- Walking groups - see next page



May interest someone who:

- Would like to walk during or after treatment
- Wants to progress or monitor the amount of walking they can do with app feedback
- Would like to find out exactly how active they really are.

How to refer or join:

- Walking programme - [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)
- Walking/step diary



Walking groups – local to you!

Walks

- Wellbeing walks - for people with health conditions to walk about 20-30 minutes
- Ramblers- Longer walks/hikes
- Nordic walking - use of walking poles for confidence and a whole body work out!



May interest someone who:

- Loves walking and enjoys a social group
- Would like try walking with Nordic sticks - good for lymphedema and balance issues
- Wants more of a work out

How to refer or join:

- Wellbeing walks & longer walks: www.ramblers.org.uk
- Nordic walking: nordicwalking.co.uk

Exercise on Referral

Exercise on Referral

- 12 week programme available in most South East London boroughs (soon to be available in Lambeth)
- Assessment by personal trainer with an understanding of cancer
- Cost: Variable Free – £5 a session



May interest someone who:

- Enjoys a gym / leisure / swim environment
- Needs some confidence to exercise
- Has minimal treatment side effects (or moderate side effects but confident)

How to refer or join:

- Ask for a referral from the GP
- In Southwark a CNS can make a referral – Google 'Southwark Exercise on referral'

Want to exercise at home, and love a workout?

Home exercise support

- NHS Exi App
- Couch to Fitness app
- NHS website exercises
- Marsden exercise videos

 **COUCH TO FITNESS**

**GET FIT
FOR FREE**



Arm raises



May interest someone who:

- Wants to do exercise at home
- Would like a range of exercise programmes to choose from
- Would benefit from either sitting or standing exercises

How to refer or join:

- [nhs.uk/live-well/exercise](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise)
- [couchtofitness.com](https://www.couchtofitness.com)
- Royal Marsden website- search 'Exercise'
- activeagainstcancer.org.uk
- Age 20s or 30s? [Trekstock.com/RENEW](https://www.trekstock.com/RENEW)

Running

Apps for running

- Couch to 5K app
- '5K your way' Park Run - for anyone affected by cancer - every last Saturday of the month
- Park Run - for everyone!

Couch
to
5K 



May interest someone who:

- Would like to walk/run with others affected by cancer - 5K your way
- Would like to start or return to running during or after treatment
- Enjoys running with other people or on their own

How to refer or join:

- Couch to 5K app on your app store
- 5K your way: 5kyourway.org
- Park Run: parkrun.org.uk

Cancer Care Map



cancercaremap.org

Helping find the support you need



Cancer Care Map

SUPPORT SERVICES



WHAT IS CANCER

BLOG

ABOUT



ADD A SERVICE

FIND SERVICES



DONATE

Find cancer support services near you

By postcode, city or region

Physical activity

By keyword

where you live!

Include National Services 

FIND SERVICES



What will you do now?



If you would like to have further input from the Guy's Cancer Centre Physiotherapy team, please call **0207 188 9654** or email **active.you@gstt.nhs.uk**

You can also send questions to **emma.palmer1@gstt.nhs.uk**

Acknowledgements

With thanks to...

Isla Veal (original presenter)

Stuart Spear, Nicola Peat & Gareth
Jones- Guy's Cancer Centre

Sam Tordesillas, Ciara McDonagh,
South East London Cancer Alliance

London Sport