

# Cancer & Exercise

Quick links and references to get you started

## Introduction

Cancer and its treatments may cause side effects that could affect your well-being, quality of life and your ability to do daily activities. There is **strong evidence** that exercise before, during and after a cancer diagnosis can help manage and improve your quality of life.

Regular exercise can help to:




- Reduce cancer-related fatigue and improve your energy levels
- Reduce anxiety and depression symptoms
- Improve your ability to do daily activities
- Improve your ability to tolerate treatment
- Manage lymphedema (swelling in the body because of the build up of lymph fluid)



Talk to your healthcare team before starting any **new** exercise programs.

You may already have some types of exercise in your daily life, like household chores or yard work. Any movement you can add to your daily routine is great!

Weekly exercise recommendations for people living with and beyond a cancer diagnosis are:

Type of Exercise	Aim For	Examples
 Moderate intensity aerobic or cardio exercise	At least <b>3</b> times per week for <b>30 minutes</b>	Walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, dancing, hiking
 Resistance training	<b>2</b> times per week	Using a resistance band, body weight exercises like squats or push-ups, lifting weights
 Flexibility training	<b>Most</b> days of the week	Stretching, yoga, tai chi

Starting and keeping up with exercise can be tough, but we are here to help! On the next page, we have listed links to exercise education, programs, and studies for people with cancer. These programs for adults are free, available across Alberta, and accept people with all cancer types and stages.

## Cancer-specific exercise resources:

**Please note:  
bit.ly links are  
case-sensitive!**

### Alberta Cancer Exercise (ACE) Program – [bit.ly/aceStudy](https://bit.ly/aceStudy)

- A free community-based exercise program in Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Lethbridge.

### Exercise for Cancer to Enhance Living Well (EXCEL) – [bit.ly/EXCELstudy](https://bit.ly/EXCELstudy)

- A free online exercise program for people living in rural or remote areas across Canada.

### Exercise for Your Life: Physical Activity for Cancer Patients and Survivors – [bit.ly/ucexercise](https://bit.ly/ucexercise)

- A free class hosted on Zoom, which provides information about how exercise helps your body during treatment, and how to start or improve an exercise program. No physical activity is performed during the class. Click the link to register for a session.

### Exercises for People with Cancer: 3 minute movement videos – [bit.ly/3MinMove](https://bit.ly/3MinMove)

- A collection of 3-minute videos of simple exercises that can be done sitting in a chair.

### Thrive Health – [thrivehealthservices.com/survivors/](https://thrivehealthservices.com/survivors/)

- A free library of online resources related to cancer and exercise, including the Thriving With Exercise manual.

### Wellspring Cancer Support – [portal.wellspring.ca](https://portal.wellspring.ca)

- Free online and in-person strength and mobility programs. Select the 'Exercise & Movement' category in the portal to find classes.

### Bone Metastases and Exercise (BME) Hub – [cancerexercise.med.ubc.ca/bmehub](https://cancerexercise.med.ubc.ca/bmehub)

- Free online resources on exercise recommendations for people with cancer who have bone metastases.

## Still have questions about cancer and exercise?

Talk to your cancer care provider about your specific situation, additional resources, and a possible referral to CCA's Rehabilitation Oncology program. This program helps people with cancer keep and restore their physical, functional, and emotional well-being. Cancer rehabilitation is available before, during and after cancer treatment.

To learn more about Rehabilitation Oncology, visit [ahs.ca/cancer/Page17173.aspx](https://ahs.ca/cancer/Page17173.aspx)

