

# Physical Activity

Physical activity is an important part of your daily routine. Staying active is safe during cancer treatment and can make you feel better and improve your quality of life. While too much rest can lead to muscle loss and soreness, physical activity helps to maintain your lean body mass, prevent fatigue, and reduce treatment side effects.

There are a number of ways to continue being physically active.

- Set short- and long-term goals.
- Focus on having fun.
- Do something different to keep it fresh, such as yoga, dancing, or tai chi.
- Ask for support from others or get friends, family, and co-workers to exercise with you.
- Use a chart to record your exercise progress.
- Recognize and reward your achievements.

## How to Remain Active

Always check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. When exercising, start slowly and build up to 30 minutes of light aerobic activity every day or at least 150 minutes per week. Aerobic activities include walking, jogging, biking, and swimming.

Add 10 minutes of strength-training exercises at least two times per week. Strength training includes working with free weights (dumbbells), resistance bands, and ankle and wrist weights.

**Tiredness does not get better with rest.** Set up a daily routine that lets you be active when you feel your best. Get regular, light- to moderate-intensity exercise and try to get fresh air. Eating a balanced diet that includes protein and keeping a regular, adequate sleep schedule is important as well.

There are other ways to remain active:

- Use an exercise bike or treadmill, or do arm curls, squats, lunges, and crunches while watching TV.
- Walk around your neighborhood after dinner.
- Ride your bike.
- Mow the grass or rake the leaves instead of using a blower.
- Scrub your bathroom.
- Wash and wax your car.

- Walk a dog that can be controlled so you don't trip or get pulled off balance.
- Weed your garden.
- Take a friend dancing or dance in your own living room.
- Park your car in the farthest parking space at work and walk to the building.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Get off the bus several stops early and walk the rest of the way to work.
- Form a walking club of co-workers or neighbors to help you stay motivated.

## How Physical Activity Helps

Physical activity can help you:

- Keep or improve your physical abilities (how well you can use your body)
- Improve balance, lower risk of falls and broken bones
- Keep muscles from wasting due to inactivity
- Lower the risk of heart disease
- Lessen the risk of osteoporosis (weak bones that are more likely to break)
- Improve blood flow to your legs and lower the risk of blood clots
- Reduce dependence on others for help with normal activities of daily living
- Improve your self-esteem
- Lower the risk of anxiety and depression
- Improve your ability to keep social contacts
- Lessen nausea and symptoms of fatigue
- Control your weight
- Improve your quality of life
- Decrease the incidence of constipation
- Reduce the risk of a second cancer as well as other chronic diseases