Physical Activity Recommendations for Cancer Care

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Important!

- Consult your attending physician for the best time to start physical activity.
- It is important to listen to your body – some days, rest may be more beneficial than exercise.
- After surgery (3-6 weeks), avoid prolonged, monotonous movements during strength training.
- Regular physical activity with no extended breaks (over 2 weeks) is recommended.
- A 6-minute warm-up phase is essential!

Potential of Physical Activity

- Contributes to the efficacy of therapy, improves physical performance
- Reduces side effects of therapy
- Reduces fatigue and boosts energy
- Reduces risk of depression
- Improves sleep quality
- Fascilitates daily activities and maintains working capacity
- Strengthens immune system
- Improves quality of life
- Reduces risk of cancer recurrence
- Helps to maintain brain health
- Helps to control body weight
- Reduces risk of lymphoedema

Start slowly and increase gradually over time

1.Warm-up phase = 6 minutes

Preparation of the body for transition from rest to higher/more intense physical activity by raising the body temperature until you feel warmer.

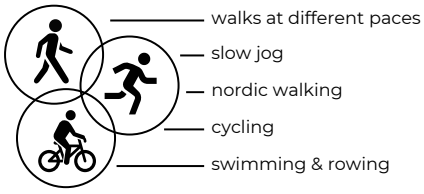
Set a timer for 6 minutes and start with a slow or dynamic walk.

If physical activity makes you feel worse that day, listen to your body, take it easy, and try again tomorrow.

If you feel well, proceed to the main workout – either aerobic endurance and/or strength training.

2. Aerobic exercise

Endurance training and cardiovascular exercise engage your entire body. The recommended amount for **moderate-intensity** workouts is **150–300 minutes per week** or **75 minutes** of **higher-intensity exercise**. Moderate intensity means you can breathe through your nose and speak in short sentences during the workout.

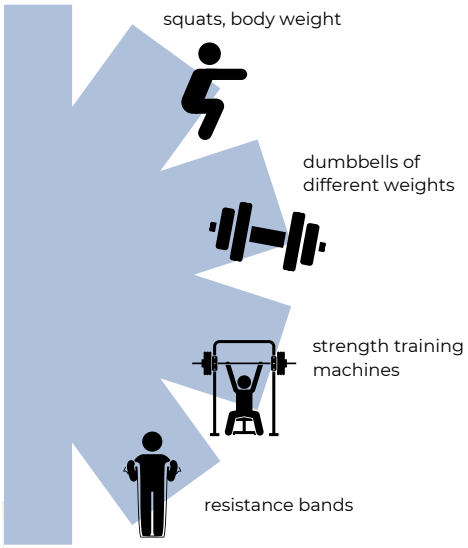


POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- 15-30 min. 5 x per week
- 40-60 min. 4 x per week
- 20 min. 7 x per week
- 2x interval sessions per week: **4x4 Aerobic Endurance Training:** 4min fast / 3min slow - 4-times

3. Strength training

2-3 sessions per week with strength training for large muscle groups: back, shoulder girdle, arm and leg muscles.



Inclusion of 3-6 different exercises that involve several joints is preferable

Use free weights like dumbbells, bars of different weights, exercise machines, resistence bands or your own body weight (squats, chair sit-downs/sit-ups)

Start each exercise with a light weight – one you can comfortably lift 10 times.

Perform 2-3 sets with 6-12 repetitions per set with a heavier weight, for the respective muscle group

Take 1-3 min. breaks between sets

Raise and lower the weights in a controlled manner (raise the weight for 2 seconds and lower it for 2 seconds)

You can gradually increase the resistance and velocity - **4x4 Maximal Strength Training**

4. Cool-down phase

The purpose of the cool-down is to stabilise the body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure by gradually reducing intensity

Example: Slow or dynamic walk, alternatively - jogging on the spot for 3-6 minutes

Easy, pleasant mobility & stretching (rotate shoulders, hip joints, ankles - pay special attention to the joints and muscles that have been involved in the activity)

During systemic treatment and/or radiotherapy - "Warm-up" is key

Starting to exercise is usually the hardest part. The 6-minute warm-up phase helps to assess whether activity feels right for you that day.

- Be gentle with yourself -