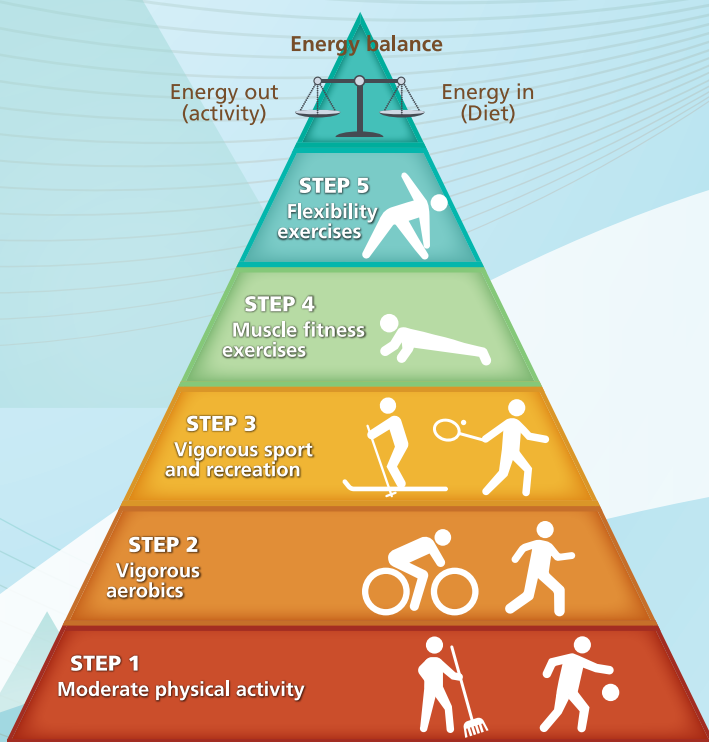


# Staying physically active during and after cancer

"Individuals should avoid inactivity and return to normal activity as soon as possible after diagnosis or treatment."

– American College of Sports Medicine



Avoid inactivity



HKU JCICC

<http://jcicc.med.hku.hk/>

## Why is exercise important?

- Reduces cancer/treatment-related physical symptoms, such as lymphedema, fatigue and anxiety
- Improves quality of life and physical functioning
- Improves psychological well-being
- Lowers the risk of cancer returning

## Is it safe to exercise after cancer?

It is generally very SAFE for Cancer survivors to do exercise. Keeping physically active before, during and after treatment speeds both physical and emotional recovery. Specific precautions may be needed for certain activities.

Safety Precautions:

- Tell your oncologist or surgeon what exercises you intend to do and ask their opinion. Begin exercising gradually if you were previously inactive.
- If you have neuropathy, be careful when performing weight-bearing activities.
- If you have skin irritation, avoid water-based activities like swimming.
- Using compression sleeves during exercise can help prevent arm swelling (lymphedema).
- Stop exercise if you have chest discomfort, fever, anemia, abnormal blood counts, extreme fatigue or pain.
- Take frequent breaks as needed during exercising. Know your limit.
- Be aware of dehydration during and after exercise.
- Ensure the exercise space and equipment is clean to minimize the risk of infection.



## How to start?

- Look for opportunities to exercise in your day; every bit helps. Walk more before taking transportation, take stairs instead of lifts or escalators. Meet friends for a walk or hike and chat instead of always meeting just to eat.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible. Standing for just a few minutes every hour will make a significant improvement to your health.

## Core Physical Activities

### Aerobic Exercise



Take part in aerobic physical activity (any rhythmic and continuous activity)

E.g. walking, jogging, light swimming, light cycling or dancing



At least 150 minutes moderate intensity (fairly light) activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity (somewhat hard) activity per week



Split into short 5-10 minutes intervals, then gradually adding more episodes and/or extending the duration throughout the day.



Start walking 1,000 steps more each day. Gradually build up to 9,000-10,000 per day. No smartphone? No worries. Try to start walking for 5-10 minutes and gradually build up to 30-60mins/day



Outdoor exercise is better than indoors as sunlight is needed for the body to make Vitamin D, which is important for bone health. Avoid exercising in direct sun between 10am-4pm, particularly during the hot months.

## Core Physical Activities

### Strength & Balance Training

Some cancer treatments can weaken bones. To help prevent this, it is essential for cancer survivors to include weight-bearing and balance exercises that target major muscle groups during your strength-training workout (such as yoga poses, using a balance board/ stability balls/ alternate leg balancing).

Start With	Gradually Build Up to
2-3 Sets	2-3
12-15 Repetitions	8-10
Light Intensity	Moderate
4-5 Exercises	8-10



(Exercises Suggestions)

## Other Sports Activities

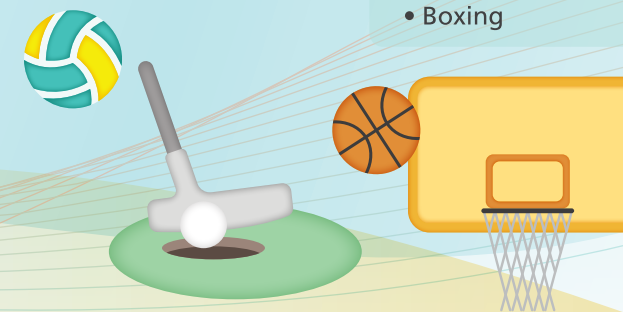
It is always good to engage in sport activities as far as you are functionally able to do. Remember that safety is always the most important issue when you consider doing any activity. Here are some examples -

### Moderate Intensity

- Dancing
- Cycling
- Yoga
- Golf
- Softball
- Doubles Tennis

### Vigorous Intensity

- Running
- Swimming
- Aerobic dance
- Badminton
- Football
- Singles Tennis
- Basketball
- Boxing

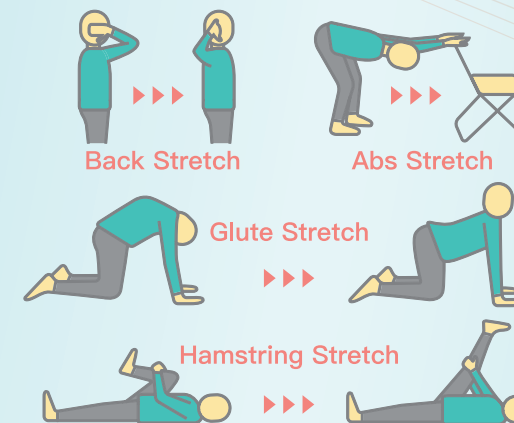


## Flexibility Training (Stretching)

Regular stretching (ideally on daily basis) is recommended. Stretch the target muscle to the point of tightness and hold for 10-30 seconds.



### Shoulder and Chest



## Improving Exercise Habit

### Be ready to go

Get your joggers or workout clothes out the night before. The less you must think about it when about to start an exercise session, the less likely you will change your mind.

### Stay hydrated

Your body loses water through metabolism, sweat and breathing. Drink plenty of water throughout the day will improve metabolism, productivity, exercise performance and brain function.

### Gradually progress your workout

Your body will adapt to an exercise routine. Add variety to your exercise routine or increase resistance every few weeks to prevent boredom.

For further help, please call HKU Jockey Club Institute of Cancer Care Hotline on 3917 9606.

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