Being active during treatment

This factsheet is for people receiving cancer treatment. It promotes an active, safe, and adapted lifestyle during treatment. It is also meant to support people’s autonomy, especially if they do not have access to an exercise professional specialized in cancer.

Never hesitate to contact us, we’re here to help!
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To properly measure intensity, observe your ability to speak as well as your physical symptoms. For example:

- Is it really easy for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Is it a little difficult for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Is it very difficult for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Is it very, very difficult for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Is it maximal exertion?

- Does it take little effort for you to do the physical activity?
- Does it take some effort for you to do the physical activity?
- Does it take a great deal of effort for you to do the physical activity?
- Does it take a maximal exertion for you to do the physical activity?

END OF FLOOR PLAN

Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

Effort (RMH)

Exercise level

0 nothing
0.5 very, very low
1 very low
2 low
3 moderate
4 somewhat high
5 high
6 very high
7 very, very high
9 very, very high
10 maximal exertion

To properly measure intensity, observe your ability to speak as well as your physical symptoms. For example:

- Is it easy for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Does it take little effort for you to do the physical activity?
- If so, the intensity is light
- If so, the intensity is moderate
- If so, the intensity is vigorous

- Is it a little difficult for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Does it take some effort for you to do the physical activity?
- If so, the intensity is moderate

- Is it difficult for you to speak during the physical activity?
- Does it take a great deal of effort for you to do the physical activity?
- If so, the intensity is vigorous

- Does it take little effort for you to do the physical activity?
- Does it take some effort for you to do the physical activity?
- If so, the intensity is moderate

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- If so, the intensity is light
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Why be active? Being active during cancer treatments is safe and recommended. Physical activity helps to optimize physical and mental health, as well as prevent the development of chronic diseases and certain cancers. By being mindful of your abilities on any given day, you can incorporate physical activity into your routine, even if you do not have access to an exercise professional specialist in cancer centers.

Cancer treatments and surgeries have a significant impact on a person’s body and well-being. Being active helps to maintain or improve physical abilities and alleviate some of the side effects of treatment, such as fatigue, pain, stress, and anxiety. Physical activity can facilitate a return to daily life activities after cancer, and improve quality of life and mental health.

TIP: When you are active during cancer treatment, it is normal for your abilities to be different from before and to vary from day to day. The important thing is to adjust the intensity and type of physical activity to suit your abilities. Even the shortest physical activities can be beneficial to your health. Try to do a little bit each day—this will help you maintain your routine and avoid inactivity.

How to begin? So, where should you start? Here are a few examples of physical activities that you can incorporate into your routine: walking on different types of surfaces (e.g., flat, uneven, forest trails), biking (road or stationary), swimming, strength training, dancing, and yoga. Physical activity that appeals to you the most. This will go a long way in helping you build a habit and have fun at the same time!

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Which intensity? During your treatments, you should choose light to moderate intensity physical activity. Use the perceived exertion scale in this fact sheet to measure the intensity of your physical activity.

To adjust the intensity, you can change the type, duration and/or frequency of the physical activity you do. You can do light intensity physical activities, such as slow walking, every day. During treatment, normal for your abilities, from day to day. A physical activity that was light yesterday may be moderate today. Adjust your physical activity accordingly. To avoid feeling overwhelmed, consider the other things you have planned for the day. Plan to listen to your body.

Safety Physical activity during treatment is safe. However, keep an eye out for specific signs, it is best to stop and perform physical activity if you feel:

- Pain
- Extreme fatigue
- Nausea
- Vertigo or dizziness
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Palpitations or pain (in the chest)

TIP: You can also divide the physical activity time into several short sessions throughout the day.

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Recommendations You should aim for at least three 30-minute sessions of aerobic activity (e.g., walking, dancing, jogging/every two weeks. Two sessions per week of strengthening (e.g., light weight training, yoga, pilates) are also recommended. Light stretching can be done every day.

Always listen to your body and consider these recommendations as a goal that you work towards gradually. Always listen to your body and consider these recommendations as a goal that you work towards gradually.

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