This factsheet is for people who have completed their cancer treatment. It promotes an active, safe, and adapted lifestyle after treatment. It is also meant to support people’s autonomy, especially if they do not have access to a fitness professional specializing in cancer.

**Being active AFTER CANCER**

Never hesitate to contact us, we’re here to help!
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**Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)**

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

- **0** is nothing
- **0.5** is very, very low
- **1** is very low
- **2** is low
- **3** is moderate
- **4** is somewhat high
- **5** is high
- **6** is very high
- **7** is very, very high
- **8** is maximal exertion

**Effort level**

- 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

**Exercise level**

- 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

**Sources:**
After the treatments, several symptoms can arise. Some people have additional or new health conditions due to cancer and surgery. Physical activity is safe and recommended during and after treatment. By being mindful of your abilities on any given day, you can incorporate physical activity into your routine, even if you are not under the care of a fitness professional specializing in cancer.

Being active gradually improves your abilities and helps you return to daily activities. Physical activity can also help reduce your fatigue and improve your quality of life and mental health.

**TAKEAWAY:** Physical activity after cancer is safe and makes it easier to return to daily activities.

Cancer treatments and surgeries have a significant impact on a person’s body and well-being. Being active can help maintain or improve physical abilities and allow 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.

How to begin?

What physical activities should you add to your routine? Here are a few examples: strength training, cycling, walking, team or individual sports, dancing, yoga, and tai chi. Choose physical activities that appeal to you. The important thing is for you to move and listen to your body.

**TAKEAWAY:** The important thing is for you to move and listen to your body.

Which intensity?

When you are active, you should choose light to vigorous intensity physical activities. Use the per cent exertion scale in this factsheet to measure your intensity of physical activity.

To adjust the intensity, you can change the type, duration and/or frequency of the physical activity. You can aim for light intensity physical activities, such as slow walking, every day. Even after the treatment, it is normal for your abilities to vary 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. Listen to your body.

There are a few examples of physical activities, by intensity:

- **Light:**
  - Fishing
  - Household chores (e.g., cooking, cleaning)
  - Walking (slowly, on a flat, smooth surface)

- **Moderate:**
  - Walking (briskly, on a trail, on an uneven surface)
  - Cycling
  - Baseball
  - Yoga
  - Dancing
  - Weight training (e.g., doing laps)
  - Aerobics class
  - High intensity physical activities, such as slow walking, every day.

- **High:**
  - Running
  - Swimming
  - Running (e.g., doing laps)
  - Aerobics class
  - High intensity physical activities, such as slow walking, every day.

**TAKEAWAY:** Physical activity during and after treatment is safe. However, keep an eye out for specific signs. It is best to stop and proceed physical activity if you feel:

- Pain
- Extreme fatigue
- Nausea
- Vertigo or dizziness
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Palpitations or chest pain

**Safety**

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**Doctor’s guidance**

It is important to talk with your attending physician about other recommendations for you and adopt the level and type of physical activity that you can do. If possible, meet with a cancer and exercise professional specialist for support that is adapted and specific to your needs.

**Minimize sedentary activities**

As much as possible, limit screen time to no more than three hours per day and take frequent breaks during long periods of sitting.

To reduce sedentary periods, try walking or cycling when you’re on the phone, standing at the computer, and putting up during TV commercials or for the duration of your favorite shows.

**Active transportation**

Active transportation is one way of increasing your daily amount of physical activity. Try walking or cycling to get around, or take the bus or subway, and if you can, get off one station earlier. You can also take the train or bus when you’re going to the elevator or park one block further away from your destination.

**Drink water**

Try to always have a water bottle on hand. It is important to stay hydrated, especially when you are active.

**Sleep**

Sleep during and after treatment, it is normal to need a lot of sleep, even during the day, and even with a full night’s sleep (seven to nine hours). Feel free to take naps if you need to.

**TAKEAWAY:**

Physical activity after cancer is safe and makes it easier to return to daily activities.

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