

Exercise and activity

[Being more active](#) is a positive change when you are living with or after cancer. It can:

- reduce [tiredness \(fatigue\)](#)
- help look after your [heart](#)
- reduce [anxiety](#) and [depression](#)
- help you keep to a healthy weight
- strengthen your muscles
- improve [bone health](#)
- improve your flexibility and ability to stretch
- improve balance
- increase your confidence.

Being active can mean doing simple, daily activities, such as housework, gardening or walking to the shops. But it can also mean exercising more energetically, for example dancing, running or cycling. The [type of exercise](#) you do will depend on what stage you are at with cancer treatment. It will also depend on which activities you enjoy and your level of fitness.

UK guidelines advise that healthy adults do one of the following every week:

- At least 2½ hours (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity activity. This means activity that makes you breathe deeper and faster, but you can still talk. Your heart may be beating faster, but not racing.
- At least 1¼ hours (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity activity. This means activity that makes you breathe very hard, so you cannot have a conversation. Your heart will be beating very fast.

It is important to build up slowly and at a pace that is comfortable for you. If you have not been active for a while, a little activity is better than no activity at all. Light activity means you can talk and breathe easily at the same time.

Tips for being more active

- To do 150 minutes of activity in a week, you could do 30 minutes of activity on 5 days of the week. On the 5 days of physical activity, you could do three 10-minute sessions during the day. You could use our [Move More videos](#) to get you started.
- If you are doing exercise sessions run by a professional, it is still important to make physical activity part of your daily routine. You could:
 - choose the stairs rather than the lift when possible, even if it is only part of the way up
 - stand up and stretch your legs every 30 minutes if you work sitting down
 - reduce the amount of time you spend sitting or lying down.
- It is important to make sure you do any physical activity [safely](#). Ask your cancer doctor or specialist nurse for advice. They might refer you to a physiotherapist or cancer exercise specialist.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on be.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [Coping with fatigue \(tiredness\)](#)
- [Physical activity and cancer](#)
- [Stay healthy – exercise – easy read](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Further Macmillan support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Or visit macmillan.org.uk where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

Other useful contact details

- Department of Health physical activity guidelines for adults and older adults – visit www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines
- Cancer Rehabilitation – visit www.canrehab.co.uk or call **0345 459 4618**.

Notes and questions
