



EXERCISE AFTER A CANCER DIAGNOSIS

If you are being treated for cancer or recovering, you may have thought it was important to rest, but research shows that tailored exercise benefits most people with cancer before, during and after treatment.

Being active can help manage some of the common side effects of treatment, speed up recovery, and improve quality of life. Research suggests exercise may help lower the chances of cancer coming back in some people by as much as 50-60%.

EXERCISING SAFELY

Exercise for people living with cancer is best when it's tailored to suit the individual. This ensures that the type and stage of cancer and any side effects of treatment are considered and managed. Some side effects of prostate cancer treatment need extra care and planning for safe exercising. You should talk with a qualified exercise professional and inform your general practitioner (GP) or medical specialist or your cancer nurse about your exercise plan.

HOW EXERCISE CAN EASE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF TREATMENTS

Fatigue

Feeling tired, even when rested, is common in people with cancer. Sometimes this can last for months after treatment ends.

Action: Staying active can help ease fatigue. Even though it sounds counterintuitive, doing some low intensity exercise not only helps you maintain your fitness and strength, but can also lead to a reduction in cancer-related fatigue.

Sarcopenia (loss of muscle strength)

If your muscles aren't being used as much as usual during and after treatment, they can get weaker. Loss of muscle strength is a side effect of some types of hormone therapy and steroid treatment.

Action: Strength training will help maintain your current strength and can make your muscles stronger.

Loss of bone strength

Cancer and its treatments, particularly radiation therapy, can have long-term effects on bone strength. Some types of hormone therapy, such as Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT), may also cause bones to weaken and break more easily.

Action: Exercise that requires you to support your own body weight, including resistance training or weight training, will help keep your bones stronger and healthier.

Incontinence

Incontinence is common after some surgeries and cancer treatments.

Action: Pelvic floor exercises will help mitigate the symptoms of incontinence. Seeking assistance from professionals and specialists who are experts in pelvic floor exercises, may be helpful. Continence NZ have a list of specialists across NZ (contact information over page).

Mental health

Feeling anxious or depressed during and after prostate cancer and diagnosis is common.

Action: Exercise encourages the brain to produce chemicals (endorphins) that can improve your mood by reducing circulating cortisol.

Quality of life

A good 'quality of life' means that you are able to do those activities that make your day-to-day life enjoyable.

Action: Studies have shown that physical activity, at any level, can help individuals enjoy their lives more.

ALREADY EXERCISING – WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

If you already walk, cycle, swim or are active with golf or gardening etc – that's great – don't stop. As you will have seen above, there are some side-effects of prostate cancer treatment that can be alleviated or even resolved completely through targeted exercise.

If you have your own exercise routine right now, consider talking to a professional or joining a Prost-FIT group to see if you can achieve improved results by ensuring you are exercising in a way that will specifically help you.

WHAT IS PROST-FIT?

The Prostate Cancer Foundation Prost-FIT programme is a nationwide network of exercise classes for men to help them before, during and after prostate cancer treatment. It has been designed in partnership with Exercise as Medicine NZ, a charitable trust that specialises in exercise for people with long-term conditions, like prostate cancer.

Prost-FIT classes are built around the aspects of training that research has shown are beneficial for men with prostate cancer. They include pelvic floor strengthening exercises, cardiovascular fitness and strength training routines. The programme also combats fatigue, facilitates mental well-being, provides social support and is, most importantly, fun!

All the Prost-FIT trainers are trained to guide men living with prostate cancer so that they exercise safely and achieve great results. They will tailor your training plan to your specific circumstances. In some instances, they will recommend that your general practitioner (GP) or medical specialists are informed about your exercise plan.

FIND OUT MORE & SIGN UP

If you are keen to find out more about Prost-FIT, take a look at the Prost-FIT page on the Prostate Cancer Foundation NZ website:

prostate.org.nz/prostfit

You can get in touch
by email at prost-fit@prostate.org.nz
or by phone on 09 414-6100.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Prostate Cancer Foundation NZ

The Prostate Cancer Foundation has volunteers across NZ who are available for a chat: they are there to listen and can offer advice as needed: prostate.org.nz/support-groups.

Find a Prost-FIT class near you:

prostate.org.nz/prostfit

Information Line 0800 477 678

Continence NZ

Continence NZ provides services directly to people with continence problems, as well as supporting caregivers, health professionals and the general public by providing information and education on continence topics. They have a dedicated helpline (0800 650 659) where a qualified nurse is available to talk to you www.continence.org.nz

Dry July NZ Trust

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of NZ gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of the Dry July NZ Trust for their support of the Prost-FIT program. www.dryjuly.co.nz