

HEALTHY LIVING FOR
PROSTATE CANCER PATIENTS AND SURVIVORS

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE



NORDIC WALKING



CYCLING



RUNNING



RESISTANCE BAND



GYM



SWIMMING



WALKING FOOTBALL



PILATES



YOGA



TAI CHI



DANCING



**Prostate Cancer
Support Organisation**

HEALTHY LIVING FOR PROSTATE CANCER PATIENTS AND SURVIVORS

Physical Activity and Exercise

'Healthy Living for Survivors of Prostate Cancer' is being developed by PCaSO as an information guide to help persons impacted by prostate cancer. In future it will include other sections such as health of prostate cancer survivors, the immune system, diet and nutrition. It commences here with the section on 'Physical Activity and Exercise'.

Note: This is written for 'normal times', however due to the pandemic some activities will be constrained by whatever Covid-19 restrictions and advice are current, so you will need to interpret the information accordingly.

CONTENTS:

The Benefits of Exercise

Physical Activity – developing an active lifestyle

Choosing exercise activities

Setting Goals

'Pace' of exercise

Types of exercise / sport

The 'Green Gym'

Walking / Hiking

Nordic walking

Cycling

Running

The 'Home Gym'

Gardening

Resistance band exercises

Resistance training – suspension systems

Other 'Home' activities

Exercise your Pelvic Floor muscles

'Leisure Activities and Sports'

Leisure centres

Swimming

Walking Football

Gym sessions

Pilates

Yoga

Tai Chi and Qi Gong

Dancing

Enjoy a fitness lifestyle.

Summary and Links

Principal Contributors

If you have pre-existing conditions or have had recent surgery, check with your GP before commencing vigorous exercise.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE



This section is targeted at prostate cancer patients/survivors, who will typically be middle-aged or elderly. It is primarily for those who are not very fit, as well as those fitter persons wanting to improve their health through physical activity and exercise. It is never too late to make a difference! If, however you are already very fit it may still be helpful, as to reap full benefit your body needs various types of fitness, so you might wish to broaden the mix and type of your exercise activities.

You should take a sensible and gradual approach to exercise, appropriate to your age, health and existing fitness level. For anything new, start gently and recognise that you are trying to make a beneficial lifestyle change that may take time to build up to moderate levels, and accept that trying to achieve 'vigorous' levels of exercise might be unsuitable if you are elderly, under treatment or have pre-existing health conditions. It would be wise to first consult your GP before embarking on any unaccustomed exercise activities. When you do exercise, if you get chest pain or extreme shortness of breath, stop the exercise and consult your GP.

The Benefits of Exercise

Many trials evaluating exercise programmes have concluded that moderate activity can reduce fatigue, improve mood, psychological well-being and benefit body composition. Other trials have linked exercise, especially if combined with other lifestyle changes, with a reduced rate of PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) progression in men on Active Surveillance, and a reduced risk of relapse after radical treatments.

Regular exercise over the long term changes your energy metabolism, lowers inflammation and oxidative stress (excess of free radicals in the bloodstream), and improves immune response. The associated 'movement' of one's body also helps 'pump' the lymph fluid through the lymphatic system around all internal cells and organs - thus reducing the risk of 'stagnation' (akin to areas of still/sluggish water) and so keeping everything healthily flowing. Studies have shown that faster-paced walking or vigorous exercise significantly reduced the risk of prostate cancer recurrence or prostate cancer death, compared with less intense or slower-paced exercise.

Being fitter is beneficial for men before treatment, as well as for 'survivors' of prostate cancer. The fitter you are before treatment the better the recovery time/outcome, especially for chemotherapy or surgery, but also other treatments such as brachytherapy, radiotherapy or hormone therapy. A fit healthy body and immune system can help overcome any trauma to the body caused by cancer treatment. On 27th December 2019 'The Times' newspaper reported that the 'NHS will offer fitness bootcamps to boost treatment' to newly diagnosed cancer patients before they start treatment to boost survival rates, by introducing a 'prehab' exercise regime of high-intensity cardiovascular workouts and strength-based training.

If you really wish to help your body combat prostate cancer, exercise is probably the number one thing you should do to help extend your life and lifestyle.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity throughout the week (or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity) see <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity> The NHS recommend a similar amount, see <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>. If you do, say, 30 minutes exercise per day 5 days per week, this aerobic exercise works your lungs and heart, but be aware that muscle strength is also very important to our health. As we age our muscles get weaker, especially if we are ageing with high cancer risk, or are on hormone therapy. Muscle strength increases rapidly into early adulthood then declines naturally from our 30's at about 5% every ten years and declines even more from our 60's and 70's. We need therefore to also include resistance exercises at least two days a week, for upper-body, lower-body and core muscle strength. Strength, endurance and balance training, even into our 70's, 80's and

90's, can counteract some of the loss of muscle mass as we age, helping to keep older persons on the move and providing some protection against falls and frailty, especially with activities such as running and sports.

Some studies have also shown that strength training may provide some protection against cardio-vascular disease, type 2 diabetes and even cancer.

If you can do it safely, a total of three to five hours each week of exercise, moderate and vigorous aerobic, with resistance training for strength on two days per week, plus flexibility and balance training, can be most beneficial for your health. (The WHO advises that doing 300 minutes a week, rather than the recommended minimum of 150 minutes, can bring additional health benefits).

Exercise is also a great way to relieve stress and hence improve mental wellbeing.

Physical Activity - developing an active lifestyle

Physical activity is something we evolved to do from our ancestors: being sedentary is not our natural state. If you are elderly, but do not do some physical activity, you might experience a 'spiral of decline' leading to frailty. If you cannot stand up for long there are exercises you can do whilst seated. Finding ways to incorporate more

movement into your daily life will help keep your muscles engaged. Work on developing an active lifestyle outside of your exercise programme itself. Physical activity improves the flow of blood supply, even gardening or cleaning the house can be beneficial. Try to spend less time sitting down and limit it to 20-30 minutes before getting up for a break. You could move about while you watch TV, or choose active video games. And don't forget to stand up regularly if you sit down to work.

If you are feeling weary, move and get active. It can make you feel better. Get fitter by moving more.

Choosing exercise activities

Find a sport or activity you enjoy, or do several different ones so you don't get bored. You may get more benefit from a mix of activities than just one. Do not try too much at first, build up gradually. You might find it more fun to exercise with other people. Ask a friend or your wife/partner to come with you, or join a sports team, a walking, cycling or a running group.

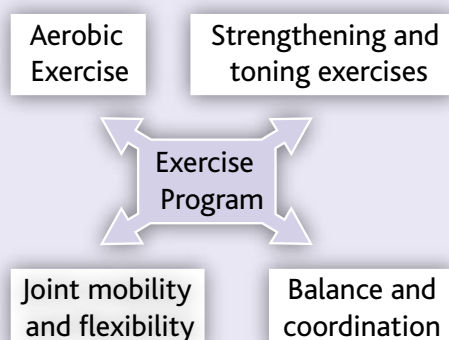
Choose activities and activity levels you can manage safely. Individuals with pre-existing health issues or injuries should check with their GP before starting any new exercise. If you are on hormone therapy or have cancer that has spread to your bones, check with your doctor before doing high impact exercises such as running or contact sports, as you are more likely to break a bone if you fall. If you cannot do some activities or sports because of your prostate cancer treatments or other health conditions you might be able to do another one instead, e.g. swimming or cycling.

If you have recently had surgery to remove your prostate take the advice of your doctor as to when and what activities you can safely do. Any exercise following surgery should be light and gentle so that your body can heal properly. You will probably be advised by your doctor to avoid any heavy physical activity for several weeks.

After prostate cancer treatment you could ask your GP for a referral to a local municipal gym on the National Exercise Referral Scheme for a 12-week supervised programme, see also the later sub-section on Leisure Centres. There are also charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support who can assist your rehabilitation after prostate cancer treatment. Cancer survivors in West Sussex are highly fortunate in having the UK's first 'Anti-Cancer' exercise Gym. This local charity, Cancer United, with its CU Fitter gym <https://www.cancerunited.org.uk/cu-fitter/> organises activities and sports specifically for cancer patients' rehabilitation. A number of PCaSO members have already participated in these. Each course is overseen

Physical activity and impact on Prostate Cancer

- For adults, at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate intensity activity (in bouts of 10 minutes or more) a week... or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week
- or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity
- Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least 2 days a week.



by trainers who have undergone extensive training on beneficial cancer treatment. There are specific training sessions for those with prostate cancer and you gain a sense of community sharing your exercise sessions with others 'in the same boat'.

Studies have shown that supervised exercise programmes can often lead to good results, certainly in the short-term. It has also been shown however that once participants leave or the programme finishes, motivation falls and individual activity can decline.

Setting Goals

For your personal motivation it is good to build your own programme of activities, to set achievable goals and measure your progress towards these against time. Once you have achieved a certain level you can reset your goals for the next higher level. If you have a fitness tracker, sports watch, or even an app on your smartphone you can count your steps and measure your heart rate. Walking 10,000 steps a day is often cited as a useful target, but there is little evidence to support this particular number. Even less can be beneficial if it includes moderate or vigorous intensity exercise, rather than just ambling around the house and supermarket or strolling down the road to get the number up!

You could download the free Strava GPS cycling and running app (downloadable from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store) which lets you track your cycling and running, share photos and follow friends, etc.



You should also set goals for your resistance training, i.e. number of repetitions and sets. You need to achieve muscle fatigue by the time you complete the number of repetitions. If you find it easy you need to increase the weight or change the resistance band, so as to overload the muscles and improve your strength. As muscles repair they become stronger.

Do not forget to have a rest day once or twice a week, to allow your body to recover. Rest is a vital part of your training programme. Also try and get 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

Pace of exercise

Your maximum heart rate (MHR) can be calculated as 220 minus your age, e.g. if you are 70 years of age, then your maximum heart rate (MHR) would be 150 beats per minute (bpm). You should not exercise at this maximum level, but aim for an optimum zone of 65% to 85% of your MHR, e.g. this optimum training zone would then be 97 to 127 bpm for a 70-year old. You can calculate your own training zone, based on your age.

Constant pace training involves keeping your heart rate within a small working zone, e.g. steady walking. It builds endurance and provides a base level of fitness.

Interval training brings further benefits to cardiovascular health and has been shown to benefit cancer survivors on chemotherapy. It involves alternating short periods (e.g. 2 minutes) of intense exercise (65-80% of MHR) with periods of easy/moderate recovery. A simple example is to run for 2 minutes, then walk for 1 minute, repeated 6 times.

However, on page 13 of Professor Thomas' book, "Keep Healthy after Cancer, 2020 version", he notes that high intensity exercise can lead to post-exertion malaise and oxygen debt. He states the best results came from supervised exercise programmes with Graduated Exercise Therapy, involving a progressive build-up of intensity over several weeks.

What pace of exercise you might choose depends very much on your personal situation, your present health and fitness, your prostate cancer treatment and its side effects. Take advice from your GP/consultant as necessary and speak to other survivors and sports coaches as applicable.

Types of exercise / sport

Here are some exercise ideas - brisk walking, walking football, Nordic walking, golf (without a buggy!), running, trampolining (One metre diameter home variants are ideal), cycling, swimming, dancing, tennis, using fitness bands at home, or attending organised exercise classes such as Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, or gym sessions with a personal trainer, if affordable.

Remember to warm up before you exercise and cool down with some stretches afterwards. Stretching is important as it helps your muscles relax and reduces muscle soreness and stiffness. Stretching and co-ordination exercises are themselves important to maintain balance and avoid falls, which is particularly important for some patients on prostate cancer treatments.

Drink plenty of water, as you must keep well-hydrated, a recommended guide is between two and three litres of 'good quality' water during the course of each day.

Some of these activities are described and grouped below under the following headings 'Green Gym', 'Home Gym' or 'Leisure Activities and Sports', dependent upon where they are mostly carried out.

The 'Green Gym'- what you can do in the great outdoors

The 'green gym' can be very enjoyable and beneficial, not just physically, but mentally too.

WALKING/ HIKING

Walking can be an enjoyable and beneficial exercise. Purposeful brisk walking, say at about 3 miles/hour, 30-minutes daily, is excellent. It can increase cardiovascular fitness and endurance. It is also a weight-bearing exercise so can help to build bone strength and muscle in the lower-body. A simple guide for 3mph, is that you should 'just about' be able to hold a conversation.

Walking is a very popular, relatively safe and flexible outdoor activity which one can do alone, with friends or family or as part of an organised walking group. One can be adventurous and explore new places on foot. There are many local groups, there is also 'The Ramblers' charity which represents walkers' interests and organises free group walks around the country, see www.ramblers.org.co.uk

Nordic walking

Nordic walking provides all the benefits of a brisk walk, but also exercises the upper body, thus helping to meet prostate cancer rehabilitation recommendations for aerobic exercise and regaining muscle strength in arms, back and shoulders.

More calories can be burned when compared with many other activities. Like swimming, Nordic walking is a whole-body exercise – whereas cycling or running are lower-body dominant. Nordic walking combines aerobic (heart and lung) with resistance (muscle strengthening) exercise; put simply, more muscles are actively involved in Nordic walking movement, and the better the technique, the more calories you burn.

You do need to be properly trained though, by a registered instructor. You might think it is just like using two of the normal walking poles, but using the Nordic poles with their special glove-style straps is very different and the technique needs to be learnt to be effective and safe. Nordic poles are not expensive (from about £20 a pair), but if you take lessons or join a group they may supply



poles. Once properly taught by a registered instructor you'll have learned an amazing 'green gym' exercise for life.

Nordic walking uses more major muscles than running, cycling or swimming, so it is a great option for cross-training. However, it doesn't involve the same constant pounding as running (without appropriate footwear), so you can reap the cardio and muscular endurance benefits by using poles, with less impact on your knees and other joints.

After training you will be qualified to Nordic walk on your own anywhere - pack your poles and you are off! More locally, however, there are a number of groups throughout our region, of mixed abilities and experience, who walk together on a regular basis. Refer to the websites at the end of the section.

CYCLING

The majority of us have cycled sometime in our lives, and once learned it's a skill never forgotten. Dust off that old bike, give it an oil, check the brakes, and get pedalling! Cycling is a great aerobic exercise, burns calories, gets the heart working, and is very low impact on dodgy knees and joints. However, it does not have much upper-body benefit, so TRX suspension, exercise bands or even bean tins bicep curls should be used to complement cycling and give balance to your fitness regime.

There's so much useful equipment for cycling available nowadays in major outlets and online but, essentially, all you need to start with is a safe and comfortable bike, a helmet, and comfortable clothing to suit the conditions, not forgetting the suntan lotion on sunny days. Don't forget to take some water if you're trying more than a quick once-round-the-block, and don't overdo it on your first few rides. You could try a fitness tracker for information and target motivation.

Your saddle is your friend and should make the ride a pleasure. Don't use a hard, pointy saddle unless you are comfortable. There are so many different saddles available for leisure cycling use nowadays, including sprung, gel, a man's 'gangly-bits' hole, and droopy nose. Saddle adjustment is also very important, to look after what we have left down below, and you can refer to the links below for how to set it.

Road bike saddles: <https://roadcyclinguk.com/how-to/technique/beginners-guide-set-correct-saddle-angle-road-bike.html>

Off-road bike saddles: <https://www.bikeradar.com/features/how-to-adjust-your-mountain-bike-saddle-angle/>

Main road cycling is not to be encouraged unless there are dedicated cycle lanes. Try to find quiet roads or lanes. Better still, if your bike has suitable tyres, take it to off-road bridleways and tracks. Remember you can cycle on bridleways, but not on footpaths. Try not to push hard gears early on, keep up a good cadence (pedals turning



faster) in an easy gear, this will build muscle strength and increase endurance.

Before venturing out remember:

- Wear a helmet. For road use know the Highway Code, wear a bright yellow or orange tabard. Fit flashing lights. See and be seen!
- Wear suitable clothes for the conditions.
- Take water, basic bike tools and a puncture repair kit.
- Ensure the bike is serviced and roadworthy. Pump the tyres to pressure and check the bell works.
- Be vigilant and aware of your surroundings and other road users. Don't wear earphones.
- Don't ride the bike within 48 hours of a forthcoming PSA test!! (It can massage the prostate and so may cause your PSA reading to be unusually high).

The writer's prostate cancer experience, following two separate courses of hormone treatment, HDR brachytherapy and two separate courses of radiotherapy, left him with severe leg muscle wastage. Unable to cycle up hills onto the South Downs Way, he decided to take the plunge and have a professional electric conversion of his own mountain bike. This conversion has been a lifesaver, as hills never attainable before are now cycled comfortably. The distance travelled has doubled, without doubling the effort. No more tiredness cycling into a headwind, especially on the way home after a long ride.

Brian Holden.

RUNNING

Running is a very flexible outdoor activity, as you can choose when or where to run, your distance and speed, and what terrain - from concrete pavements to country trails. You set your own goals, or just run for fun.

To the mature adult who wants to try running for fitness, please don't be put off by intensive marathon regimes, and there is no obligation to buy expensive Lycra kit! Good footwear is essential though - trainers that fit properly, have good cushioning and good grip (not hard plastic soles). Man-made fibre clothing is preferable to cotton, as it wicks perspiration and feels drier.

So how to start running?

We suggest you follow NHS guidelines, see link: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/> this is a brilliant guide you download to your smartphone/headphones, etc. It is free and designed to take you from absolute zero to 'hero' in about 8 - 10 weeks. Suddenly, it makes running 5k (about 3 miles) achievable.

If you plan to run often and extensively then, if you can afford it, consider buying good quality technical running shoes from a specialist supplier, they are not cheap (around £80 upwards per pair), but it will be money well spent on protecting your feet and joints. Running on hard surfaces like concrete is harder on the body than softer surfaces, like off-road paths and grass.

Motivation can be an important factor, so a friend or family member joining you can be a big help. Sometimes you might not feel like running but with the sense of achievement afterwards, you're glad you did! After a run, do walk around for a few minutes to help avoid muscle stiffness in the legs and carry out stretches recommended on the above NHS website.

Choose a safe local route, whether just round the block or in the park. You might be lucky enough to have a seafront or country paths nearby. It's ok to alternate by running a few minutes, then walking, then running etc. After a few sessions you can build up the running distance. Push yourself a little, but stop if you feel dizzy or unwell. Don't run if you feel dehydrated, nor until around two hours after a meal. For a run of thirty minutes or so there's no need for any special sports diet.



See if there is a Saturday morning Park Run near you (www.parkrun.org.uk), these are regular free 5km (3 miles) events for runners of all ages and abilities. In some coastal parts of our region, they are not run in an actual park but along the seaside promenade, e.g. Worthing, Sussex.

Compared with walking running puts more force onto the bones, so if you think running is for you follow a training programme that gets progressively more intense. This can promote bone growth and strengthen the muscles that absorb more force, as well as associated ligaments and tendons. Rest days are important, your bones need a recovery period to create new cells and adapt to the loads experienced, otherwise stress fractures can occur.

As a regular aerobic activity, running will improve your levels of energy and vitality, body mass, self-confidence and general positivity. It is best to balance running with resistance training such as gym workouts, Yoga or Pilates.

To be fit enough to say "It's a nice day, I'll just pop out and do 3 miles" would be an achievement to be proud of. One day you might even run a 10k race for charity, such as PCaSO! Your body and metabolism would be proud of you.

Lance Allen

THE 'HOME GYM'

What you can do in the house, apartment or garden

Gardening

Gardening, whether at home or on an allotment, is a physical activity that can improve the flow of blood supply and aid mental health from being outdoors. It can also provide satisfaction and enjoyment as your work can bring colour and beauty into your garden and bring fresh, tasty organic fruit, vegetables and herbs into your kitchen.

Resistance band exercises

Resistance bands are so beneficial and easy to work with that everyone should use them! Gentle resistance exercises such as with the bands are particularly good if you are on hormone therapy and are at risk of bone thinning, as well as muscle loss. The bands are 2-metre lengths of latex that work like elastic bands, for a range of simple repetition exercises. The bands are usually available from sports shops or online and colour-coded for different strengths of resistance. A basic set of 3 bands, being low, moderate or high resistance, is all that is needed. They can be used in or out of doors, or taken on holiday, and used standing or seated. Many of the bands now come with detachable hand grips.

Exercises are available for upper and lower body strength, or core fitness. For individuals who run, walk or cycle, resistance bands can be complementary, by providing the upper body work-out that the other forms of exercise might lack.

Regular use of resistance bands for upper body, say for 5 minutes twice each day, can soon tone and strengthen a range of muscles in the arms, shoulders, neck, back and, importantly, the abdomen. This improves posture and provides a sense of greater general health.

A sample set of 'starter' upper-body exercises could be:

- Stand holding one end in each hand with the band's centre under your feet. Pull upwards so your hands are level with your eyes. Repeat 10 times.
- Loop the band's centre around a stout door handle, hold the ends at waist level, stand back so the band is in tension, then pull as if skiing. 10 times.

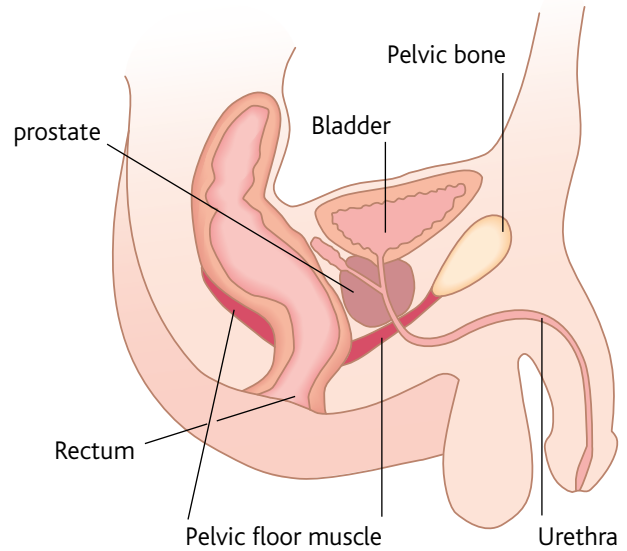


- Turn round and repeat (2) but as if skiing uphill backwards. 10 times.
- Face the door holding the band in tension at chest height. Pull as if rowing. 10 times.
- Turn round and repeat (4) as if rowing backwards. 10 times.

This writer now does 50 repeats of each type, twice daily. A wide range of suggested exercises is available online, such as on the British Heart Foundation website www.bhf.org.uk As with all exercises it may seem difficult at first so don't over-exert yourself. - but to be effective the exercise should increase the heart rate and breathing. You should soon see benefits, and increase the number of repetitions (reps). There are no 'rules', you could vary the number of repeats or add further elements for core or lower body strength. Lance Allen

Resistance training – suspension systems (e.g. TRX)

TRX is one brand name, but there are various others. In simple terms, TRX suspension training is a system comprising strong webbing straps which can be attached to a suitable fixed hook on the wall or, much more simply for the home user, can be safely slid down the gap between a suitable door and its frame, used for exercising, and then easily removed after the session. It uses gravity and your body weight to allow you to do different workouts.



Exercise your pelvic floor muscles

Below is a typical guide of what to expect, however, your Doctor or Cancer Nurse Specialist (CNS) should guide you on the specific regime of the exercises they wish you to do.

- Either sit upright with your feet touching the floor, or lie down - legs slightly apart
- Tighten and pull up the muscle around your anus (back passage) Imagine that you are trying to stop from passing wind, or to stop your flow of urine mid-stream.

If you are not used to doing them, gradually build up.

Slow exercises, to build stamina:

- Slowly tighten your pelvic floor muscles, hold tight for as long as you can, (up to 10 seconds).
- Rest for four seconds then repeat the slow exercise (up to 10 times)

Fast exercises, to build quick reactions, e.g. to coughs and sneezes

- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles as quickly as you can, hold tight for one second before relaxing.
- Repeat the fast exercise up to 10 times.

Repeat both slow and fast exercises three times per day for several months, to enable your pelvic floor to get stronger so your muscles will be able to work harder for longer. You should still do them once or twice daily, thereafter.

You're in control of how much you want to challenge yourself on each exercise, because you are able to adjust your body position to add or decrease resistance. It is ideal when you are undertaking rehabilitation from treatment, or when preparing for it.

To start off chose a few different exercises that suit your specific fitness level and needs, do 10 repetitions of each. Remember 10 minutes of activity is much better than nothing at all.

TRX suspension training:

- Delivers a fast and effective total-body workout
- Helps build your core muscle groups
- Increases your muscular endurance
- Is suitable for all levels of ability

Other 'Home' activities

There are many other exercises one can do at home, either without equipment e.g. press-ups, crunches, squats or lunges or with simple inexpensive equipment, e.g. using small weights.

Grip Strength involves both hand and forearm muscles, and is an important area to work on as it tends to get weaker with age. There are inexpensive hand exercisers and massage balls to help strengthen one's grip. Weight training is also useful.



‘LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS’

LEISURE CENTRES

Leisure centres are vibrant and motivating health and exercise facilities, often run by local authorities. They are not just Lycra and muscle men environments and, particularly at off-peak times, you will be with many others of your own age and fitness level.

Before going along, you could see your GP and ask for a referral to your local centre. A GP referral gives you three months’ reduced membership fee, and the major benefit of having a dedicated team of experts who will give you the right instructions on how to use the equipment to aid your pre-treatment, or recovery from cancer treatment. You will have an induction session, be reviewed midway and at the end of the course, after which you may be offered a long-term reduced-rate fee to carry on the good work.

Various facilities may be available to you, including:

- Gym – full, personalised instructions for your course will always be given
- Instructed rehabilitation therapy classes in the pool
- Free swimming, and possibly a health suite with steam room, sauna, jacuzzi



- Squash courts, Tennis courts, Badminton
- A variety of classes including specialised referral classes, yoga, Pilates, stretching, weights, etc
- Walking football, and lots more, depending on your local centre facilities.

It might sound exhausting, but you’ll be surprised how quickly your fitness improves, and how many other people are also rehabilitating from illness alongside you!

Brian Holden

SWIMMING

Regular swimming is a great fitness activity that exercises a wide range of muscles, some of which would not otherwise enjoy a workout! There is certainly no age barrier to learning to swim, or returning after many years away. If there is a pool near you, there will probably be lessons for all abilities, and aqua-aerobics or aqua-fit sessions also. Lessons would help to build confidence in the water, if needed.

Swimming builds cardiovascular strength and improves all the major muscles, not least because water provides around 10 times a much resistance as air - yet without causing undue stress to bones and joints. If you have trouble with walking or running then swimming might be a good alternative for you. There would be a slight trade-off in not contributing to bone density strengthening, but you can complement swimming with say resistance bands exercises at home, see earlier.

Aqua aerobics is an increasingly popular fitness activity for retired people, and even non-swimmers can safely take

part in these organised sessions. Aqua fitness is a little more advanced, where participants use weights or resistance bands in the water, and even engage in 'aqua jogging'.

Regular exercise is key, and swimming could be used as one of a number of exercise types - in fact up to triathlon standard, for the very fit! Swimming could contribute to the NHS-approved minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise.

Swimming would certainly be an enjoyable, varied and satisfying contribution to your exercise portfolio.

Lance Allen



WALKING FOOTBALL

Walking football is aimed at keeping people aged over 50 involved with football if, due to a lack of mobility or for other reason, they are not able to play the traditional game. The sport can be played both indoors and outdoors. Walking football is a unique sport, different to regular Association Football in many ways. Tournaments are now catering exclusively for not only over 50s, but the over 60's and over 70's age groups.

There are 52 rules listed on the Walking Football Association's website, see <https://thewfa.co.uk/>, but the one rule that everyone is agreed on, is that one foot must remain on the ground at all times. "If it looks like running," notes the WFA, "it probably is" Nevertheless, the rule is frequently broken when players get excited and break into a light jog, the penalty for which is a free kick to the other team. Other key rules are - no physical contact between players, over-head height restrictions and indirect free kicks ensure that the sport is played safely with full consideration to the participants' age. Teams are either 5 or 6-a-side, dependent on the size of pitch being used.

As a result of these rules, games are played at a slower pace, often on state-of-the-art third generation (3g) artificial grass pitches (which include some rubber), thus

reducing the threat of pain, discomfort and injury, with players briskly walking through matches, maintaining contact with the ground at all times. This allows people who have loved football all their lives to once again safely get back to playing and also introduces the sport to people who perhaps have never considered playing before.

There are now over 1,100 walking football clubs in the UK and 170 teams entered the three age-group categories of the WFA National Cup. (The walking football World Cup was due to take place in Manchester in May 2020 but was cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak).

One of the major benefits of taking part in walking football, whatever your ability, is the exercise it provides, played on a regular basis it is surprising how much fitter you can become. While playing a match, which can last anything from 10 minutes to half an hour, you are constantly moving and turning in different directions and this does challenge you physically. It must surely be one of the best cardiovascular exercise regimes with a competitive edge.

Roger Bacon

GYM SESSIONS

If you choose to use a gym, but also do other aerobic activities or sport, then you could focus your gym work on strength exercises, to build your core, upper-body or lower body. They should be able to advise you at the gym what are the best routines for you.

PILATES

Pilates is increasingly popular but probably little understood by those who don't already practice this mind and body exercise programme. Pilates will develop a range of posture muscles for a healthy back and, importantly for prostate cancer patients, strong abdominal muscles.



The exercises can be tailored to different levels and needs, with new challenges built in with experience. By working to balance both sides of the body, areas of weakness are identified, and those muscles will become stronger with progress. Each Pilates session should result in a sense of being refreshed and invigorated. The exercises are easily built into daily life, and can be complementary to other aerobic activities such as walking, running or cycling.

Pilates can be suitable for all ages and abilities. Look for a beginners' class if you haven't tried Pilates before, and let the instructor know about your condition and any injuries or weak areas. They'll be happy to tailor the stretches to suit your ability. As is always recommended, those with pre-existing health conditions may need to check with their GP before taking up any new or increased form of exercise.

Demonstration videos can be seen on YouTube, and a quick internet search will identify Pilates groups in your area

Lance Allen

YOGA

Yoga is not just for women; many men attend the same classes. Although we men are usually less flexible, the benefits are equally as good. Yoga, as exercise, is a physical activity consisting mainly of postures, flowing sequences, and breathing exercises, ending with relaxation lying down. Yoga helps to relieve fatigue, build muscle strength and core stability. Flexibility and stamina improve, and it helps sleep quality. The overall purpose of yoga is to connect body and mind so as to engender peace, power and clarity.

To learn correct technique and postures, it is best to attend local classes, before doing some postures at home. Classes are held in some Macmillan Cancer Support centres, some hospital rehabilitation facilities, leisure centres, church halls, schools and dedicated yoga centres.

A good instructor is essential, and an excellent source for finding one, and much more detailed information on yoga, can be found at the British Wheel of Yoga, <https://www.bwy.org.uk/>

All you need to wear are light loose clothes, suitable footwear, socks or bare feet and, once keen, your own soft yoga mat.

There is a special type of yoga called hot yoga, which is carried out in rooms at a temperature of 30° – 50°. Hot yoga has similar benefits to other forms of yoga, but they are further enhanced by the heat. The writer spent three years attending these classes, and would recommend that those who are able to enjoy heat give it a try.

Brian Holden



TAI CHI AND QI GONG

Whether you're an 'energetic' exerciser, an 'average' or even a 'sedentary', I wish to share with you an area of exercise that you may well have heard of, but never tried, Tai Chi (pronounced tie-chee) and/or Qi-gong (chee-gong).

This is truly an amazing way of complementing any exercise regime. As a simple explanation - if you held a wet towel in your hand - how would you best dry it? well, as you'll know; wringing it is far better than simply squeezing and this is the secret of how Tai Chi works so well both on and in your whole body - it exercises deep into your muscles, tissues, fibres and ultimately deep into the cells of your body and your essential Lymphatic system. It is also proven to help reduce stress, mental anxiety and has many therapeutic qualities too.

Tai Chi, meaning 'great energy', has its origins over 5000 years ago in China and was originally the foundation of martial arts (Kung Fu, etc). Tai Chi is now refined to be the main exercise of 80% of retirees in China. In addition to



gently 'massaging' your whole internal body structure, it is fantastic for maintaining flexibility, balance and keeping all your joints 'well-oiled' too. You can do it standing or sitting down, there is no grade to attain (although there are proficiency levels to aspire to) and you can practise it even in quite a small room. Once you 'attune' to it, you will then feel the holistic benefits too - suddenly you're aware of the breath deep in your body, the birds singing, the waves crashing on the foreshore, the heat of the sun on your body and so much more! It is also proven to help reduce the risk of dementia! See <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/guide-to-tai-chi/>

Qi Gong, meaning 'inner energy' goes together with Tai Chi like salt and pepper; Chinese in origin too and even more ancient. Softer than Tai Chi, it incorporates a more meditative approach. It can be practiced on its own, or more often in conjunction with Tai Chi.

When I attended the Royal Marsden for my 37 daily Radiotherapy sessions - I always practiced these for half an hour before each treatment and fortunately was one of the lucky ones with absolute minimal side-effects from radiotherapy!

For beginners' keen to learn more YouTube has many 'exploratory/beginner videos, but to really "feel" Tai Chi - it is difficult to learn from just watching a video - an experienced Teacher really is a must. There will be places locally where you can attend, the classes are inexpensive and no special clothing or equipment is needed.

Two recommended books, "*Tai Chi for Dummies*", and "*Tai Chi - Health for Life*" by Bruce Frantzis.

For more info - please feel free to contact me. I've been practising for over 7 years now and it is still a joy to embrace it.

Mark Giddings



DANCING

Last, but not least there are the many forms of dancing. Whereas a slow waltz could be deemed light exercise, many other dances would fall into the category of beneficial moderate or even vigorous aerobic activity, such as the Quickstep, the Jive or Cha-cha-cha. Dancing can provide excellent aerobic exercise and also contribute to improving balance, posture and flexibility. Dance at home or join a dance class, or, if you have previous experience, dust off your dance shoes and, with your dance partner if you have one, enjoy the music while you dance!

ENJOY A FITNESS LIFESTYLE

Try out different activities so you can find and develop a personal selection of physical fitness activities that you enjoy and that work for you. They need to be ones that keep you motivated and become over time a natural part of your regular lifestyle.

Hints and Tips – Physical Activity and Exercise

- Take regular, moderate activity / exercise to safely suit your own circumstances.
- Spend less time sitting down. If weary, get up and do something.
- Being fitter is beneficial for men before treatment, as well as for survivors.
- Target 150 minutes of moderate, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week.
- Two days per week of exercise for upper/lower body and core muscle strength.
- Stretches to warm up, and after exercise.
- Keep well hydrated.
- Have a rest day once or twice a week to allow your body to repair.
- Choose your own mix of activities.
- Find what motivates you best.
- Set achievable goals
- Seek an exercise lifestyle you can enjoy
- If you have pre-existing conditions or have had recent surgery, check with your GP before commencing vigorous exercise.

LINKS

NHS exercise

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/

Walking / hiking

www.ramblers.org.co.uk

Nordic walking clubs and instructors

<https://britishnordicwalking.org.uk/>

<https://nordicwalking.co.uk/>

How to start running

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/

Find a Saturday morning Park Run near you

www.parkrun.org.uk

British Heart Foundation exercises

www.bhf.org.uk

Yoga

www.bwy.org.uk/

Tai-Chi

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/guide-to-tai-chi/

Prostate Cancer UK – Diet and Physical Activity:

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information/our-publications/publications/diet-and-physical-activity-for-men-with-prostate-cancer>

Cancer Research UK

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/exercise-guidelines>

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<http://nordicwalkingforhealth.co.uk/>

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