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## HNA Prompt Sheet: Physical Activity

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Physical activity, or exercise, has benefits for people with a cancer diagnosis both during and after treatment. The benefits include improved fitness, reduced cancer reoccurrence, reduced cancer and general mortality, reduced risk of cancer spread, improved quality of life, improved bone health and body composition, reduced fatigue and reduced risk of developing other conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity.

### Recommendations for moderate physical activity

It is recommended that people do moderate physical activity for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. This may include some forms of housework, walking, sport and gym use; as long as it makes you feel slightly breathless, so you can talk, but couldn't sing.

If not able to meet the recommendations, people should be encouraged to do several small bouts of activity which total 30 minutes a day. Over time people should aim to increase these small bouts of physical activity to equal 10 or 20 minutes of activity in one session to work towards fitness.

If there are medical issues, e.g. a low immune system or having had recent surgery, it is still usually safe to recommend walking as a form of exercise.

### Have you considered?

- What physical activity they are doing now
- How much moderate activity they are doing – see above for definition of moderate activity
- Will their treatment impact on their ability to be active, i.e. low immune system, stoma, recent surgery
- Are they receiving enough nutrition
- Are there any other medical or mobility issues which may hinder physical activity
- What physical activity they enjoy
- What they used to do
- Is fatigue limiting their physical activity?

### Services which may be able to help

- Physiotherapy for exercise or mobility assessment, advice as to appropriate exercise, referral to exercise classes
- Exercise programmes via the GP, e.g. exercise on referral
- Dietetics for nutritional support
- Hospital or hospice symptom rehabilitation programmes
- Macmillan information centre
- Local exercise programmes for specific issues, e.g. falls, balance, pulmonary or cardiac rehab, chronic conditions

## Patient information

Macmillan Cancer Support: Physical activity after cancer treatment

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/index.html>

Guy's and St Thomas': Physical activity after your cancer diagnosis

<http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/resources/patient-information/therapies/physiotherapy/physical-activity-following-cancer-diagnosis.pdf>

## Want to know more?

[http://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/Fulltext/2010/07000/American\\_College\\_of\\_Sports\\_Medicine\\_Roundtable\\_on.23.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/Fulltext/2010/07000/American_College_of_Sports_Medicine_Roundtable_on.23.aspx)