



A CANCERHOME PUBLICATION, PROVIDING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON HEALING

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE BENEFITS CANCER PATIENTS DURING AND AFTER TREATMENT

A concept known as therapeutic exercise promises a host of healthful benefits for cancer patients – both during and after treatment.

Of course, exercise of any kind may be the last thing on your mind while receiving chemo or radiation treatment, but low-threshold cardiovascular work, gentle range of motion exercises and basic strength training can go a long way toward getting you back on your feet, says Matt Poe, MS, a Cancer Exercise Specialist.

“Cancer exercise can combat (reduce) persistent effects such as low confidence and independence levels, fatigue, musculoskeletal weakness and dysfunction, side effects of medication, ‘chemo brain,’” Poe explains. “Exercise is also an effective mood enhancer because it stimulates the release of pain eliminating endorphins.”

“If you haven’t worked out in a while, it’s probably a good idea to have a professional trainer prepare an exercise program for you,” says Reim Fehringer, PT and a Lymphedema Therapist.

The type and level of exercise depends on the patient, Fehringer adds. For those still in therapy or completing it, a daily walk around the block can be a good start. Fehringer recommends a recumbent bike for patients who have balance issues.

“These types of exercise will help with endurance. However, they do not contribute to the general strengthening of a patient,” Fehringer notes. “For that, a patient would most benefit from basic weight training.”



But don’t overdo it. “Moderation is the key,” Fehringer says. “It’s very important for patients to avoid pushing themselves too hard. Otherwise, they may become too fatigued to participate in daily activities. It is also important to stay adequately hydrated in the summer heat if exercising outside.”

Poe suggests talking with your oncologist or someone at your hospital physical therapy center when looking for a professional who specializes in therapeutic exercise. “Cancer exercise is an art, so be careful,” he advises. “Cancer-related exercise specialists are often hard to find.”

Don’t worry if treatment issues make it difficult to get to the gym – exercising at home can be just as effective, Poe says. “I would suggest exercising at home for the convenience and controlled cleanliness factor,” he adds. “Exercising at home can also build confidence.”

“Above all, get a release from your doctor and then take it slowly and keep the resistance low,” Poe concludes. “Before each exercise session, take into consideration levels of strength, fatigue, balance, medication, pain, nausea and swelling. If these feelings are extreme, do not exercise.”

RECIPE CORNER SUMMER WATERMELON SLUSH

For cancer patients, watermelon seems to be the most tolerated fruit. It’s light, cool, refreshing and goes down easy. It’s a great source of potassium and Vitamin C, and this recipe is especially helpful if the patient is experiencing a sore mouth or throat.

Ingredients:

1 cup of ice
3 cups watermelon chunks
2 tablespoons honey

Directions:

Blend all ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth.

Nutritional information per serving:

Calories 137, protein (g) 2, carbohydrate (g) 34, fat (g) 1, calories from fat (%) 6, saturated fat (g) 0, dietary fiber (g) 1, cholesterol (mg) 0, sodium (mg) 5. Diabetic exchanges: 1 fruit, 1 other carbohydrate.



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF EXERCISE DURING CANCER TREATMENT

Interview with Martin Holzman, MD, Radiation Oncologist at the Community Cancer Center of North Florida.

Q: How does exercise benefit cancer patients?

A: From a purely physiologic sense, it stimulates the cardiovascular and endothelial systems to make uptake, transport and delivery of oxygen more efficient. From a psychosocial sense, it provides distraction, stress reduction and meditation. It also engenders friendship.

Q: Is it okay for me to exercise during my treatment?

A: Absolutely, especially in moderation as endorsed by your oncologist. A simple walk down the driveway, around the yard or around the block can slowly bring up your speed and intensity from one of meager energy consumption to a brisk workout breaking a sweat.

Q: What kinds of exercise would you recommend?

A: Walking, wading, water walking, swimming, cycling, stretching, bending, light weightlifting (10-15 lb).

Q: My treatment was physically draining. How long should I wait before resuming my regular exercise routine?

A: If physical problems aren't an issue, you can resume exercising right away. Walking is the best medicine and its inexpensive; do a little every day and slowly build on your routine. Incorporate it into your goal for wellness.



Q: Is it okay for me not to exercise if I'm experiencing extreme fatigue or other side effects?

A: "You don't have to exercise much. Take a three-minute walk the first day and add an additional minute each day. By the end of the week you'll be walking seven minutes a day! If you experience chest pain, lightheadedness, pain of difficulty breathing, seek medical attention right away."

Q: Is there anything I can do instead?

A: If you can't walk comfortably, see your doctor to find out why. You may need assistive devices including portable oxygen.

Q: How can I find an exercise program that's suited to my limitations?

A: Talk to your doctor to learn what those limitations are. Once you find you have limitless opportunity to exercise, sign up for an introductory training session with a physical fitness trainer at your local gym. He or she can show you routines that maximize your functionality. Remember, the only limitation is your mind!

Healthy Connections is a publication of Community Cancer Center of North Florida and is published for the general public to disseminate health-related information. This information is not to be used for diagnosing or prescribing. Please consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment, diet plan or exercise regimen implied in this publication.

SUMMER SCHEDULE 2012

JULY

MASSAGE

LAKE CITY
THURSDAY
7/5, 7/12,
7/19, 7/26
9AM - 3PM

GAINESVILLE
FRIDAY
7/6, 7/13,
7/20, 7/27
9:30AM - 1:30PM

ART THERAPY

GAINESVILLE
TUESDAY
JULY 17
11AM - 1PM

LAKE CITY
THURSDAY
JULY 19
11AM - 1PM

SUPPORT GROUP

LAKE CITY
THURSDAY
JULY 12
11AM - 1PM

GAINESVILLE
TUESDAY
JULY 17
5:30PM - 7PM

AUGUST

MASSAGE

LAKE CITY
THURSDAY
8/2, 8/9, 8/16,
8/23, 8/30
9AM - 3PM

GAINESVILLE
FRIDAY
8/3, 8/10, 8/17,
8/24, 8/31
9:30AM - 1:30PM

ART THERAPY

GAINESVILLE
WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 15
11AM - 1PM

LAKE CITY
THURSDAY
AUGUST 16
11AM - 1PM

SUPPORT GROUP

LAKE CITY
THURSDAY
AUGUST 9
11AM - 1PM

GAINESVILLE
TUESDAY
AUGUST 21
5:30PM - 7PM

**ACS LOOK GOOD
FEEL BETTER
HOPE LODGE
GAINESVILLE**

MONDAY, JULY 16
1PM - 2PM

**ACS LOOK GOOD
FEEL BETTER
HOPE LODGE
GAINESVILLE**

MONDAY, AUGUST 20
1PM - 2PM

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