

If you would like information and ideas on how to get active in your area, contact your Regional Sports Trust. Their contact details are available on the Sport New Zealand website:

<http://www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/our-partners/Regional-Sports-Trusts/List-of-all-RSTs/>

or visit Sport New Zealand's website  
[www.sportnz.org.nz/](http://www.sportnz.org.nz/)

This leaflet was reviewed in 2014 by the Cancer Society of New Zealand. The Cancer Society's leaflets are reviewed every four years.

## Being active when you have cancer



A guide for people affected by cancer

For more information phone the Cancer Information Helpline 0800 CANCER (226 237) or visit these websites:

**Link to the World Health Organization's global recommendations on physical activity for health**

<http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/leaflet-physical-activity-recommendations.pdf>

**Link to Health Ed website**

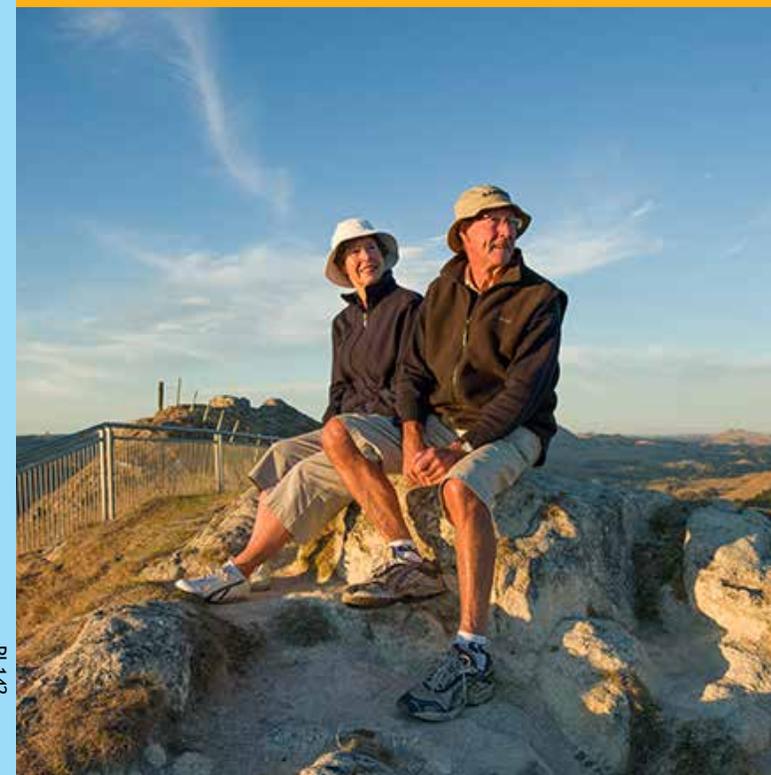
<https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/be-active-every-day-physical-activity-adults>

**Link to the Ministry of Health website for physical activity**

<http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/physical-activity>

**Link Green Prescriptions website**

<http://health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/physical-activity/green-prescriptions>



In the past, people with cancer were advised to rest and limit their daily activity to help avoid fatigue (extreme tiredness).

Research shows regular exercise can increase energy.



## Benefits

In addition to reducing fatigue, regular exercise can:

- improve your immune system
- relieve pain and help you cope with the side effects of treatment
- relieve stress and reduce anxiety and depression
- stimulate your appetite and improve your digestion
- help you relax and sleep more soundly
- improve your mood and heighten your sense of wellbeing
- improve physical fitness and help you achieve a healthy weight.

There are many ways you can become more active. A formal programme where you set aside time for exercise is one way. Simply including more activity in your daily routine is another.

Your doctor may suggest an exercise specialist or give you a Green Prescription to support and plan your exercise. Your options will depend on your physical condition, the stage and type of cancer you have, the treatment you are receiving, and any side effects you might be experiencing.

### Choose activities that:

- increase your endurance  
Walk, swim or cycle. Take the stairs. Walk to the shops instead of driving. Mow the lawn. Play with the kids. Join a walking or tramping group.
- improve your strength  
Lift weights. Go to an exercise class. Enjoy outdoor work—sweep the driveway, pull weeds, or push a wheelbarrow.
- extend your range of movement  
Take a stretch break at work. Find a yoga, Tai Chi or Pilates class in your area (stretching and breathing activities). Do housework—dust, vacuum, and reach to wash the windows.

### Here are a few more suggestions.

- Start slowly and build up time and intensity gradually.
- Ease back if you're feeling particularly tired.
- Take a break on days you don't feel up to it.
- Ask your family/whānau and friends to support your efforts.
- Set goals that are manageable.

Doing some exercise is better than none.

If any of the following problems occur during or soon after activity, see your doctor:

- breathlessness, chest discomfort, palpitations or an irregular heart beat
- blurred vision or fainting
- extreme fatigue (tiredness that doesn't go away after resting or sleep)
- bone or joint pain
- dizziness or nausea (feeling sick).

You may find it easier to do regular exercise for short periods of time.

## Be active, do what you can and what you enjoy.

*“When I was having chemo, the days I went for a walk, I felt better.”*

Elsie

*“During my treatment for breast cancer I practised yoga. I felt more relaxed and had more energy.”*

Nina

*“I was able to walk my dog all through treatment.”*

Mike

Small amounts of activity can give health benefits. At least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week is recommended.