

The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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The Impact of Exercise on Cancer

Presented by:

Your chiropractor will confirm the important link between exercise and many serious diseases. In the last few years, scientists have conducted numerous studies on exercise's positive impact on life-threatening diseases like cancer. The research has proven to be both encouraging and, in some cases, quite surprising!

In 2009 the journal *Cancer* revealed that many older cancer survivors actually practice poor health habits, despite the fact the survivors said they were interested in diet and exercise. They only did about 10 minutes of vigorous exercise a week – far below the recommended levels (Ask your chiropractor how much weekly exercise you should get). And only 7% of the participants followed a healthy eating plan recommended by government health agencies.¹

A 2008 study also revealed some startling facts. Only 22% of cancer survivors engaged in regular physical activities. In fact, 34% of cancer survivors were classified as overweight. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, 25% of cancer cases are directly related to lack of exercise and being overweight. These factors are associated with an increased risk for cancer reoccurrence.

If you – or a loved one – are affected by cancer, new research shows how beneficial exercise can be for dealing with the disease. Of course, you should always get the okay from your health practitioner before starting any type of exercise program.

Exercise and Cancer Prevention

How does exercise reduce the risk of developing cancer? Experts believe several factors are responsible. Exercise boosts the immune system, reduces inflammation (a risk factor for cancer), controls body fat and positively alters hormones that play a role in cancer development.

The US Department of Health and Human Services cited a number of studies showing exercise may slash cancer risk anywhere from 20% to 70%.²



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Exercise of the Week

Calf Stretch, Variation 2

Difficulty: Easy

(Consult your chiropractor before doing this or any other exercise.)

Start: Standing behind a chair, or in front of a wall. Place hands on backrest or wall for balance.

Exercise: Bring one foot behind other. Keeping heel on floor, bend knee and lean hips forward. You should feel tension behind lower leg, close to ankle. Hold for 30-60 seconds, relaxing muscles of lower leg. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



When it comes to specific types of cancer and exercise, there has been a lot of research on breast cancer. Several studies show that premenopausal women can cut their risk of this cancer by up to 20% with regular physical activity. The news is even better for postmenopausal women. In a review of 29 research studies, scientists concluded “evidence was strong that physical activity reduced risk of postmenopausal breast cancer by 20% to 80% and that each additional hour of physical activity per week reduced risk for breast cancer by 6%.”²

Ovarian cancer is particularly dangerous as it usually doesn’t show symptoms until it has spread to other parts of the body. But research from a Canadian study indicates women who participate in frequent moderate exercise or have a job that requires moderate to intense physical activity are less likely to develop this often deadly form of cancer.³

Exercise Delivers Better Health to Cancer Patients

Not only does it help prevent many types of cancer, but exercise can dramatically improve the quality of life for people with cancer.

One study followed the progress of prostate and breast cancer patients for a year during and after treatment. The researchers noted “Recent studies have shown that cancer patients experience between 11%-50% decline in physical activity depending on the intensity of (cancer) treatment.”⁴ But cancer patients participating in the study reported an improved quality of life and less fatigue with regular exercise.

Another study investigated the effects of strength training on breast cancer survivors. Participants attended a strength-training program twice weekly over a six-month period. As expected, the participants saw improved strength in their bodies and a reduction in body fat. But the psychological benefits for the cancer survivors were also powerful. As well as a lessening of depression and anxiety, participants reported increased confidence and felt a better sense of control over their bodies.⁵

A study published last year also supports similar findings. The research, appearing in the medical journal *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*, showed breast cancer survivors who participated in strength training sessions twice weekly saw a positive impact on “self-perceptions of appearance, health, physical strength, sexuality, relationships, and social functioning” compared to the control group.⁶

And the Archives of Internal Medicine reported that men with colorectal cancer (nonmetastatic) that engaged in regular exercise cut their risk of dying by half.⁷

So you can see the amazing benefits exercise can bring to both cancer prevention and recovery. Talk to your chiropractor about setting up an exercise program that’s right for you.



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Quote of the Week

“If your dog is fat, you’re not getting enough exercise.”

- Anonymous

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