

# Exercise may improve quality of life during and after cancer

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Exercise may improve quality of life for people with cancer, according to Cochrane researchers. In two separate Cochrane systematic reviews, the authors gathered together evidence showing that activities such as walking and cycling can benefit those who are undergoing or have completed treatment for cancer.

People with cancer suffer from many different physical, psychological and social effects related to cancer, as well as treatment-related symptoms. There has been much interest in the effects of exercise on physical and psychological well-being in people with cancer. However, no previous systematic reviews have comprehensively examined the potential benefits of exercise on health-related quality of life, or on treatment-related symptoms. Cancer treatments and [survival rates](#) continue to improve, but quality of life remains a priority for people with cancer who are undergoing or have completed treatment.

The first review focused on 56 trials involving a total of 4,826 people undergoing treatment for different [types of cancer](#), including breast and [prostate cancer](#). The second focused on 40 trials involving a total of 3,694 people who had completed treatment for cancer. Exercise programmes in both reviews included walking, cycling, yoga, Qigong, [resistance training](#) and [strength training](#). The results show that exercise can improve health-related quality of life for people with cancer. Further, results from both reviews show that exercise improved social functioning and tiredness. Benefits were also seen in the physical well-being of participants undergoing treatment and in self-esteem, emotional

well-being, sexuality, sleep, anxiety and pain in people who had completed treatment.

"Together, these reviews suggest that exercise may provide quality of life benefits for people who are undergoing or have undergone treatment for cancer," said lead author Shiraz I. Mishra of the Prevention Research Center at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, US.

"However, we need to treat these findings with caution because the trials we included looked at many different kinds of exercise programmes, which varied by type of exercise, length of the programme and how hard the participants had to exercise. We need to understand from future trials how to maintain the positive impacts of exercise in the longer term and whether there are particular types of exercise that are suited to particular types of cancer."

**More information:** Mishra SI, Scherer RW, Geigle PM, Berlanstein DR, Topaloglu O, Gotay CC, Snyder C. Exercise interventions on health-related quality of life for cancer survivors. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2012, Issue 8. Art. No.: CD007566. [DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007566.pub2](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD007566.pub2)

Mishra SI, Scherer RW, Snyder C, Geigle PM, Berlanstein DR, Topaloglu O. Exercise interventions on health-related quality of life for people with cancer during active treatment. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2012, Issue 8. Art. No.: CD008465. [DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008465.pub2](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD008465.pub2)

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