

Prostate cancer survivors can improve their sex life at the gym

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Prue Cormie with patient. Credit: Cohesion Magazine ECU

Perth researchers have shown that twice-weekly exercise can improve sexual function in prostate cancer patients by 50 per cent.

Now, they're calling on Perth [men](#) to participate in a new study to find out why [exercise](#) works, and how effective it can be on a broader range of patients.

One in six Australian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, and 90 per cent of them will report some form of sexual dysfunction during or after their treatment.

"Men think about sex a lot – on average, every 45 minutes which is more often than they think about food or sleep," says Dr Prue Cormie, a senior research fellow at Edith Cowan University. "So it's not surprising that sexual dysfunction is the most frequently identified issue of importance among prostate cancer survivors."

Last year, Prue and her colleagues at the Edith Cowan University Health and Wellness Institute put a group of men with prostate cancer through a supervised exercise program involving twice-weekly group-based sessions of resistance exercise such as weight lifting, and aerobic exercises including walking and cycling.

"After three months, the men involved in the exercise program had a 50 per cent greater level of sexual activity, which was largely driven by an increase in sexual desire," says Prue. "We observed significant improvements such as gains in muscle mass, as well as improvements in fatigue, depression, anxiety, strength, fitness and quality of life that we believe contributed to enhancing men's libido."

Not only is exercise effective, but it also offers a more patient-friendly and cost-effective treatment compared with traditional [sexual dysfunction](#) management options such as Viagra, penile implant surgery, or the injection of drugs directly into the penis.

"We've shown that exercise is having a positive effect, so now our next step is to look at a broader range of patients undergoing different prostate cancer treatments to help us explain why," says ECU Health and Wellness Institute co-director, Professor Daniel Galvão.

The team at Edith Cowan University would like to hear from men who are concerned about their sexual wellbeing, who are receiving treatment and/or are within six months since having surgery, finishing radiation therapy or completing hormone therapy for [prostate cancer](#).

"The exercise routine is fairly straightforward," says Mr Lee Giampietro, who participated in the initial study and has chosen to continue exercise treatment. "I'd certainly encourage other men out there to get involved in the next phase of the study to help improve treatment options, and reduce of the big stresses that come with this kind of cancer."

More information: For more information on the study, see: [www.ecuhealthwellnessinstitute ... ychosexual-therapies](http://www.ecuhealthwellnessinstitute...ychosexual-therapies)

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