

# Exercise improves quality of life during breast cancer treatment

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Women undergoing treatment for breast cancer might fight off distressing side effects and improve psychological well-being by staying off the couch. According to the University of Miami (UM) study, women who are physically active during treatment have less depression and an enhanced quality of life and report less debilitating fatigue.

"Women who are physically active may also have more confidence in their own ability to continue with family-related, household, work-related, or social activities, which bring meaning and satisfaction to their lives," says Jamie M. Stagl, M.S., doctoral student in Clinical Health Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences at UM and lead author of the study. "This may lead to appraisals of lower fatigue, heightened quality of life, and less depression."

UM researchers studied the reported physical activity of 240 women recently diagnosed with non-metastatic [breast cancer](#) and recruited from four to 10 weeks post-surgery. Participants attended a 10-week, group-based Cognitive Behavioral [Stress Management](#) (CBSM) intervention, or a one-day psychoeducation "self-help" comparison group. In addition, researchers monitored the women's reported [physical activity levels](#).

While these researchers have previously shown that stress management improves [breast cancer treatment](#), the current study reveals that there are additional benefits for women who are also physically active through treatment.

"Women who increased the amount of time they spent being physically active between the weeks after surgery and their adjuvant therapy had less 'fatigue disruption' --- their fatigue did not disrupt their ability to perform everyday activities," Stagl says. "They also showed a decrease in depressed mood and an increase in quality of life."

**More information:** The study, titled "Physical Activity Adds to the Effects of Stress Management Intervention on Fatigue Interference, Depression, and Functional Quality of Life During Treatment for Breast Cancer," was funded by the National Cancer Institute.

Provided by University of Miami

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