

Cancer patients benefit from exercise during, after treatment

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(HealthDay)—Exercising during and after cancer treatment is safe and improves quality of life, fitness, and physical functioning, according to research presented at the American Institute for Cancer Research's Research Conference, held from Nov. 14 to 16 in Washington, D.C.

Brian Focht, Ph.D., of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center in Columbus, and colleagues evaluated the effects of [exercise](#) on both prostate cancer patients and [breast cancer patients](#). The prostate cancer study included 32 patients, average age 65. The men were all undergoing androgen-deprivation therapy for their cancer. The researchers randomly assigned half of the men to a plant-based diet and an exercise program, including strength training and [aerobic exercise](#). The other half of the group was assigned to standard care and did not get instruction in plant-based diets or exercise.

The researchers found that at the end of three months, the exercise and diet group was walking

three to four times more quickly in a timed walk test of about a quarter-mile than the usual care group. In addition, those in the [exercise group](#) lost an average of 4 pounds and 1 percent of their body fat, and said that their quality of life and ability to do everyday tasks had improved. Men who were in the usual care group gained about 1 percent body fat, although their weight was fairly stable.

In the second study, published recently in the *Journal of Community Support Oncology*, Focht's team evaluated 17 previously published randomized, controlled trials looking at [exercise programs](#) for women undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment after breast cancer. The studies varied in length from three to six months; some programs were based at home and others were supervised by researchers. On average, those who exercised had improvement in muscle strength, cardiovascular functioning, and quality of life, the investigators found.

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