

Free membership · Prostate cancer initiative

Get moving, at your pace.

Three exercise programmes built with
The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust
and The Institute of Cancer Research,
designed to help you exercise safely
and confidently following a prostate
cancer diagnosis.

A pocket guide for members
In partnership with

A few words before we begin.

This booklet has been put together for members joining us through our prostate cancer initiative. The aim is simple: to help you build a routine of regular movement that fits your life, your energy levels, and your stage of treatment.

Being active can **reduce fatigue, support muscle and bone strength, lift your mood**, and help you keep doing the things you usually do. Even small amounts of movement make a difference. You don't need to do everything at once. Start where it feels comfortable and build up gradually.

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Before you **start**.

Exercise is safe and beneficial for most people living with prostate cancer, but everyone's situation is different. A short conversation with your healthcare team before you begin is always worth having.



Speak to your GP or healthcare team first

Particularly if any of these apply to you: your cancer is in your bones, you have ongoing or unexplained pain, you regularly feel dizzy or unwell, or you've recently had surgery.

If something doesn't feel right when you exercise, please stop and ask for advice.

A quick checklist before your first session

- ☐ I've spoken to my GP or healthcare team about starting exercise.
.....
- ☐ I've thought about which of the three programmes suits me.
.....
- ☐ I have suitable footwear and comfortable clothing ready.
.....
- ☐ I have water with me, and I'll stay hydrated throughout.
.....
- ☐ I know who to contact if I feel unwell during exercise.

How to use this booklet.

A balanced exercise routine includes three types of activity. Each programme in this booklet weaves them together into a single session.

01 Strength & balance

Working your muscles against a resistance to build strength, support bone health, and help with everyday movements like sitting, standing and climbing stairs.

02 Cardiovascular

Activity that gets your heart and lungs working — walking, cycling, swimming, the cross trainer. Reduces fatigue and supports overall heart health.

03 Mobility & stretching

Gentle movements that prepare the body, increase blood flow, and help you check for any stiffness or pain before you start working harder.

Knowing how hard to work

The 0–10 effort scale



Resting

Working

Maximum

3 – 5

Easy. You can talk and sing easily. Use for warm-ups and cool-downs.

6 – 7

Moderate. You can talk but not sing. Most cardio sessions sit here.

8 – 9

Vigorous. You're slightly out of breath. Use for short intervals only.

Programme 01

Getting started at the gym.

For you if you're new to the gym, you feel unsure about using equipment, or you want some simple guidance to build confidence and routine.

SESSION LENGTH
~ 60 minutes

FREQUENCY
2–3 × per week

EQUIPMENT
Gym machines

EFFORT TARGET
5–7 / 10

Your session structure

Five stages,
~ 60 min total

- 1 Warm-up**
Treadmill walk, bike or cross-trainer. Start easy and build to 6–7/10. 10 min
- 2 Mobility & stretching**
Head turns, shoulder circles, arm and leg swings. Add pelvic floor work. 5–10 min
- 3 Strength & balance circuit**
5–6 exercises focusing on legs, back, chest, arms and core. Start with 1 set. 15–20 min
- 4 Cardiovascular**
Steady walking, cycling or swimming at moderate intensity. Working but able to talk. 15–20 min
- 5 Cool-down**
Same equipment as your warm-up. Gradually reduce intensity over the 10 minutes. 10 min

Your strength circuit.

The 6 exercises

1 SET · 12 REPS

1 Squat *

2 Seated Low Row *

3 Leg Press

4 Chest Press

5 Single-Leg Stand

6 Elevated Plank

Pace yourself · 2:1:2 timing. Move for 2 seconds, pause briefly when your muscles are under tension, then move for 2 seconds back to the start. Aim for 60 seconds time-under-tension on each exercise. You should feel like you could do a few more reps at the end of each set.

*May not be suitable if you have bone metastases, including in the spine or pelvis. Speak to your healthcare team for advice that's personal to you.

Cardio guidance

Build up to 30–40 minutes of steady state activity at moderate intensity. Once you're comfortable, add 3–5 short higher-intensity intervals (30–60 sec on, 60–120 sec recovery).

Tired today?

Do your warm-up and 2–3 of your usual exercises at a reduced weight. Add some easy walking or cycling. Something light still counts as a successful session.

Programme 02

Exercising at home.

For you if you prefer to exercise at home, or find it difficult to access a gym. Uses minimal equipment — your body weight, a chair, a step.

SESSION LENGTH

Flexible

FREQUENCY

2–3 × per week

EQUIPMENT

Body weight + chair

EFFORT TARGET

5–7 / 10

Your session structure

Same five stages — adapted for home

- | | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Warm-up
Step-ups, side-steps with arm movements, marching, light punches. | 10 min |
| 2 | Mobility & stretching
Same exercises as Programme 01.
Add pelvic floor work or glute bridges. | 5–10 min |
| 3 | Strength & balance circuit
5–6 body-weight exercises. Start with 1 set, focus on slow controlled movement. | 15–20 min |
| 4 | Walk outside
Build to 30–40 minutes at moderate intensity.
Plan a route. Tell someone. | 30–40 min |
| 5 | Cool-down
Gentle marching or slow walking, gradually reducing the pace. | 5–10 min |

You can also break a session into shorter “exercise snacks” through the day — they still build cardiovascular capacity and strength.

Your home strength circuit.

The 6 exercises

1 SET · 10 REPS

1 Sit-to-Stand or Squat *

2 Single Arm Bent Over Row *

3 Hinge or Heel Raise *

4 Wall Press or Elevated Press-Up

5 Single-Leg Stand or Heel-Toe Walk

6 Elevated Plank

Pace yourself · 4:1:4 timing. Move slowly for 4 seconds, pause briefly under tension, return for 4 seconds. Aim for 90 seconds time-under-tension and 10 reps. As you get more comfortable, you can move faster (2:1:2) and reduce the time-under-tension to 60 seconds.

*May not be suitable if you have bone metastases, including in the spine or pelvis. Speak to your healthcare team for advice that's personal to you.

Adding intensity

Plan your walking route to include a hill, or add short higher-intensity bursts to your usual moderate-paced walk. 5k Your Way groups are a great way to do this with others.

Progressing safely

If exercises start to feel easy, slow them down further before adding load. Better technique always beats heavier weight, especially with body-weight movements.

Programme 03

For experienced gym users.

For you if you already go to the gym regularly and are comfortable with exercise. You want to keep training safely during or after treatment.

SESSION LENGTH

Your usual

FREQUENCY

2–3 × per week

EQUIPMENT

Full gym

FOCUS

Maintain & build

Your session structure

Same five stages – built into your training

- 1 Warm-up**
Whole-body, low-impact. Build gradually to working intensity over the full 10 minutes. 10 min
- 2 Mobility & stretching**
Your usual routine. Use it to check for any new stiffness or pain before loading. 5–10 min
- 3 Strength & balance**
Keep training the major muscle groups. Consistency and good technique over heavy load. 15–20 min
- 4 Cardiovascular**
Light to moderate intensity, low-impact. Intervals are fine once a steady base is in place. 15–40 min
- 5 Cool-down**
Gradual, 10 minutes. Don't skip it – it matters more during treatment, not less. 10 min

Do the strength component, the cardio component, or both per session – whatever fits your split.

Adapting your training.

Keep going, adjust where needed

You don't need to start from scratch — the aim is to maintain and build the strength and fitness you already have. The focus is on adapting or adjusting your training where needed and progressing safely.

Consistency, good technique and time for recovery are key.

Progress in small steps. When you're comfortably completing your reps on an exercise, increase the resistance by no more than 5–10% at a time. On harder weeks, holding steady — or stepping back — is a smart training decision, not a setback.

Keep what's working

Low-impact cardio (bike, cross-trainer, swimming, incline walking), machine and cable work, and your usual mobility routine. Interval training is fine once you have a steady base — build duration and number of intervals gradually.

Train around treatment

Energy levels will vary through treatment cycles. On low days, reduce the load and spend more time on easy cardio — a lighter session still counts. Build recovery days in deliberately rather than training through fatigue.

Watch your spine & impact

Keep your back neutral — avoid loaded spinal flexion, extension, side-bending or twisting. Swap running and jumping for low-impact options. Avoid breath holding on heavy lifts and isometric holds.

If you have bone metastases

Some exercises — particularly loaded movements through the spine, pelvis or affected areas — may not be suitable. Ask your healthcare team to review your programme before continuing heavy training.

Six things worth knowing.

Small details that make sessions safer, more effective, and easier to stick with over time.

01

Schedule it in

Add a recurring entry to your diary. People who plan their sessions are far more likely to stick with them.

02

Keep your back neutral

Avoid extreme bending forwards, leaning back, side bends or twisting. A straight, neutral spine keeps you safer on every exercise.

03

Breathe through it

Maintain regular breathing on every movement. Don't hold your breath — especially during a plank or as you push on a chest press.

04

Build slowly

When you can comfortably complete your reps, increase the resistance by no more than 5–10% at a time.

05

Skip high-impact

Avoid running and jumping. Stick to walking, cycling, swimming or the cross-trainer to keep stress on bones manageable.

06

Listen to your body

Good days and harder days are normal. On tired days, do something light — that's always better than nothing.

When to stop.

Pause and contact your healthcare team

If you experience any of the following 12 hours before, during, or 24 hours after a session, please stop your routine and let your healthcare team know.

Chest, arm or jaw pain

Stop straight away. Contact your healthcare team or emergency services.

Fever or infection

Rest until you're fully well again.

Irregular heartbeat

Avoid exercise. Contact your healthcare team.

Nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea

Avoid exercise until symptoms have passed.

Dizziness or fainting

Stop. If recent or recurring, get checked.

Sudden muscular weakness

Don't exercise. Speak to your team.

Bleeding

Avoid moderate-to-high intensity exercise.

Persistent headaches

Avoid exercise until they've cleared.

New bone, back or neck pain

Keep your spine stable. Avoid impact, deep stretching and twisting until reviewed.

Joint pain & swelling

If you suspect lymphoedema swelling, focus on rhythmic leg movements and gentle stretching while lying down. Avoid isometric holds.

Your goals.

A goal doesn't have to be a number. "Walk to the shops without stopping", "feel less tired by Friday", "keep my gym habit through treatment" — all count. Write down up to three, and revisit them monthly.

Over the next three months, I'd like to...

1

2

3

What might get in the way — and my plan for it



Start smaller than you think

The best goal is one you'll still be doing in three months. If in doubt, halve it — you can always build up once the habit is in place.

Your weekly tracker.

People who plan and track their training are more likely to meet their goals. Use this page to log what you did each day — or photocopy it and use one for every week.

Day	What I did	How long	Effort 0–10
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

A few prompts for the end of the week

How did the week feel overall?

Energy, sleep, mood, anything that stood out.

What got in the way?

Tiredness, time, weather. How could you adapt?

What worked well?

A time of day, a session type, a route — keep doing it.

One small thing for next week.

A small, specific intention. Not a resolution.

Notes & questions for my healthcare team.

Use this page to note anything you want to raise — a symptom during exercise, a question about an exercise to avoid, or a change you've noticed. Take this booklet with you to appointments.

Useful things to mention

Anything new

Pain, swelling, dizziness or unusual tiredness during or after sessions.

What's going well

Progress matters to your team too — it helps them advise you.

Your medication

Any changes — some treatments affect how exercise feels.

This booklet

Ask whether any exercises need adapting for your situation.



Thank you

You're not doing this alone.

This booklet is a starting point. The teams at your local PureGym, your healthcare team, and the organisations below are all here to help you keep moving on the days that feel easier – and the ones that don't.

Made in partnership with

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

The Institute of Cancer Research

The Exercise Clinic

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business@icr.ac.uk