

# Staff guide: Physical Activity

## Hormone Therapy



Improves  
cancer-related  
fatigue



Helps  
depression



Helps  
anxiety



Improves sleep  
quality



Improves  
quality of life



Improves  
cardiorespiratory  
fitness



Improves  
cognitive  
function



Improves  
muscle strength



Reduces  
hormone/metabolic  
dysfunction



Helps joint  
pain



Helps body  
composition



Reduces post  
treatment  
complications



Helps  
lymphoedema



Helps  
sexual function

## Minimum Guidelines For Adults



**5 days a week for 30 minutes which increases heart rate and breathing so you can talk but not sing**



**Strength activities 2-3 x a week for large muscle groups at a level where you need a short rest before repeating the activity**



**If over 65 years old, do activities that challenge balance 2 x a week**

- 1. Choose an activity and do it several times a week**
- 2. Increase the amount of time per session**
- 3. Make it more challenging i.e. adding speed, walking up hills, adding a weight**

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## **Evidence for benefits during hormone therapy**

Physical activity throughout hormone therapy can reduce side effects including weight gain, bone density loss and improves strength, anxiety & fatigue.

## **Side Effects of Hormone Therapy**

### **Low mood?**

- Physical activity helps improve mood.

### **Joint & muscle pain?**

- Physical activity can help. Warm up & cool down helps the body prepare & recover from activity.
- Swimming or cycling may be more comfortable forms of exercise.

### **Bone loss?**

- Weight-bearing and impact exercises (stairs, walking, jumping) are important for bone health as hormone therapy can cause bone loss.

### **Muscle loss?**

- Strength exercises twice a week are important as hormone therapy can cause muscle loss.

### **Weight gain?**

- High-intensity exercise with referral to a dietitian & cancer physiotherapist for weight management may help.
- While on hormone therapy it may be unrealistic to achieve weight loss, however, through regular exercise it will reduce the weight gain. After the hormone treatment has finished, weight loss is more likely.
- Water based activity can be a comfortable way to increase activity as it is kinder on the joints.

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## Side Effects of Hormone Therapy

### Fatigue?

- Physical activity is the best treatment for fatigue and improving energy levels.
- Avoid 'boom & bust': on good days do 80% of the physical activity and on 'not so good' days drop to 40%.
- Avoid total sedentary rest.
- Keep a diary on how the fatigue responds to different activities.

### Hot flushes?

- Exercise in a cool room: open windows, use a fan or go outside.
- Wear layers of light clothing so it is easy to take clothes off if overheating.
- Wear natural fibres such as silk or cotton instead of synthetic (artificial) fabrics.
- Spray your face with a cool water atomiser.
- Take a towel with or have one nearby

### People who are already active

Encourage people who have been recently regularly physically active to continue with their physical activity. They may need to adapt to do a little less during 'not so good' phases of treatment.

Refer to physiotherapist for more advice.