

Live your Life

Living with and beyond lymphoma
Workbook to accompany workshops

Module 3: Exercise and
staying active





I was really weak and exhausted after I finished chemotherapy so I started going for a short walk every day to give my days some structure and get me out of the house! I found getting and staying active really helped rebuild my health and fitness, make new friends, and manage some of the emotional fallout from diagnosis, treatment, and side effects. Sometimes it's difficult to know how to start being active but the Live your Life events have some great information and advice about exercise – and it's all based on the experiences of people who've been affected by lymphoma so I know I can trust it!

Freya, diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma





It was so helpful focusing on setting and implementing personal goals to help maintain a healthy life, living with lymphoma. It was also an opportunity to consider and reflect on how lucky we are to be able to live a full life with this malignancy, something I never thought would be the case in the very early days of diagnosis.

Jayne, diagnosed with stage 4 follicular lymphoma

Module 3: Exercise and staying active

This module is one of a series taken from our workbook 'Live your Life - living with and beyond lymphoma'.

There are five modules in total:

- Know your lymphoma
- Coping with the emotional aspects of lymphoma
- Exercise and staying active
- Diet and nutrition
- Practical aspects of living with lymphoma

You can download all of the modules, or the complete workbook, at www.lymphoma-action.org.uk/lylworkbook



**Use this space to transfer your notes from Module 3
of your Live your Life workshop**



Action plan

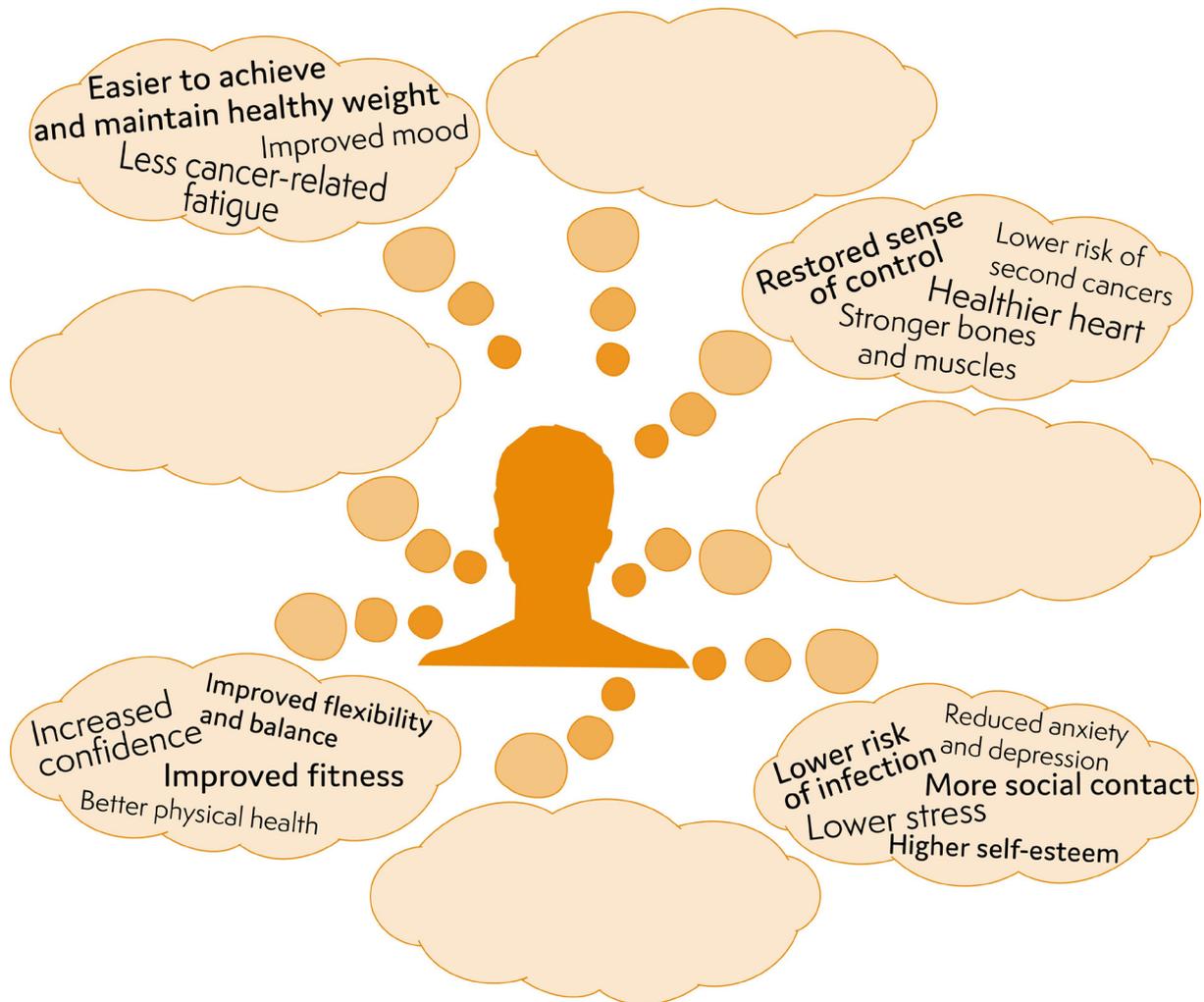
Action	How often
<i>Example: Research and join a local dance class</i>	<i>Once a week</i>

Things I'm going to check with my medical team before exercising:

What I'm going to check	Who I'll check with	When I'll check

The benefits of exercise

Exercise has the same benefits for people with lymphoma as it does for anyone – plus some additional benefits related to the effects of cancer and its treatment.



Use the figure above to write down any other benefits of exercise or activity you can think of.



Macmillan Cancer Support has more information on the benefits of being active before, during and after treatment for cancer at www.macmillan.org.uk

Exercise guidelines

In general, people who have lymphoma should aim to take the same amount of exercise as people who are well. For adults, the current recommendation is:



* Recommended for people over 65 years old.

If you prefer, you can swap 30 minutes of moderate exercise for 15 minutes of vigorous exercise – or do a mix of both. Your exercise schedule should take into account your overall fitness, treatment, and other factors that could affect your safety.

Speak to your medical team about the type and intensity of exercise that is safe for you.

Moderate exercise	Vigorous exercise	Strength exercises	Coordination and balance exercises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mowing the lawn • Vacuuming • Brisk walking • Gentle cycling • Dancing • Aqua aerobics • Hiking • Golf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing stairs • Jogging or running • Aerobics • Fast swimming • Hard cycling • Football • Tennis • Rugby • Hockey • Martial arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digging the garden • Carrying shopping • Yoga • Chair aerobics • Push-ups • Sit-ups • Resistance band training • Weight training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tai chi • Yoga • Pilates



- Search 'physical activity guidelines' at www.gov.uk for the Government's recommendations on exercise for different age groups.
- Search 'exercise guidelines' at www.cancerresearchuk.org to find out more about exercise after a diagnosis of cancer.

Planning your exercise

It is beneficial to exercise during and after treatment for lymphoma, but remember that you might be able to do less than you did before. Build in regular breaks and give yourself enough time to recuperate after exercise.

Exercise needs to be tailored to you, not just with regards to your lymphoma, but to any other conditions you might have as well. For example, if you have a heart condition, you should avoid over-vigorous exercise; if you have osteoporosis, you need to avoid high impact exercise and contact sports. Some of the side effects of lymphoma and its treatment might also affect the type of exercise you can do.

You might want to talk to your GP for advice before starting a new exercise programme.



Precautions

- If you're anaemic, you'll get tired and short of breath more easily than usual. Take this into account when you plan your exercise schedule.
- Peripheral neuropathy can affect your balance, coordination and your ability to feel injuries such as blisters. Choose activities with a low risk of falls or injury.
- Avoid high-impact sports if you have a low platelet count (thrombocytopenia) to lower your risk of bruising and bleeding.
- Avoid public swimming pools and gyms if you have low immunity (for example, if you have a low neutrophil count or you've had a stem cell transplant).



Use the table below to make a note of things to consider when planning your exercise programme.

Activities that are suitable for me	Precautions I need to take	Signs I should slow down or stop

Getting started

It can be daunting to think about exercise when you're recovering from a lymphoma diagnosis or treatment. It's important to remember that every little helps. You could start by making small changes to your lifestyle to help you be more active.



Tips on being more active

- Cut down the time you spend sitting down.
- Break up sedentary time with regular walk breaks.
- Take the stairs instead of a lift or escalator.
- If you can, cycle or walk instead of driving or getting the bus.
- If you're going further afield, get off the bus a stop early or park a bit further away than usual and walk the rest of the way.

The key thing is to 'find your level': the amount of exercise you can do without feeling exhausted. You can build up from this over time.



Tips on exercising

- Try to do some physical activity every day.
- Choose activities that you enjoy.
- Make it convenient – slot exercise into your daily routine.
- Start at a level that's appropriate for you.
- Increase your activity level gradually.
- Alternate activity and rest to allow your body to recuperate.



Use the table below to write down activities that you already do, however small, and think about how you can build upon them.

Activity	How I can build upon it
<i>Example: Mow the lawn once a week</i>	<i>Rake up the cuttings afterwards</i>

Staying motivated

It's easy to start out with good intentions but it can be difficult to keep the momentum going. It's important to make a positive commitment to staying active, either by putting it in writing or by telling people what you're going to do.



Tips on staying motivated

- Set realistic goals that aren't too daunting. Break long-term goals into a series of manageable, shorter-term goals.
- Share your goals with people who will encourage you to achieve them.
- Track your progress – for example, with a wearable fitness tracker, an app, an online tool or an exercise diary.
- Exercise with friends or family or join an exercise class where you can support each other – and where you'll be missed if you don't attend.
- Be flexible: if you're too busy or too tired to exercise, give yourself a break and get back on track as soon as you can.
- Reward yourself and enjoy the positive feelings exercise gives you.



- **Some hospitals, community centres, cancer centres and sports centres run exercise programmes specifically for people with cancer. Your CNS may be able to give you information on groups near you.**
- **Maggie's Centres offer a range of exercise options for people with cancer. Search for your nearest centre at www.maggiescentres.org**
- **Search 'exercise' at www.trekstock.com for information about how to continue to be active after you've been diagnosed with cancer.**
- **Walking for Health is a network of health walks with over 375 schemes across England. Find one near you at www.walkingforhealth.org.uk**
- **Visit www.beinspireduk.org/play for information and advice on how to get started in a wide variety of different sports and activities.**
- **Search 'exercise' at www.nhs.uk for information about exercise and health, including a variety of exercise plans and home fitness routines.**
- **Visit the NHS One You website for free tips, tools and support on getting healthier and more active: www.nhs.uk/oneyou**
- **There are many fitness apps tailored to different sports and devices. Search on your mobile for one that suits you.**

Useful organisations

Cancer Research UK provides comprehensive information on all types of cancer. Call **0808 800 4040** or visit **www.cancerresearchuk.org**

Citizens Advice provides free, independent and confidential advice on benefits, housing, consumer and other problems. Call **03444 111 444** (England), **03444 77 20 20** (Wales) or visit **www.citizensadvice.org.uk**

CLIC Sargent provides specialist support for children and young people with cancer and their families. Call **0300 330 0803** or visit **www.clicsargent.org.uk**

Depression UK is a self-help organisation for people with depression. Visit **www.depressionuk.org**

Drinkaware is an independent charity that helps people make better choices about drinking. Call **0300 123 1110** or visit **www.drinkaware.co.uk**

Macmillan Cancer Support provides support and information for people with all types of cancer. Call **0808 808 00 00** or visit **www.macmillan.org.uk**

Maggie's Centres provide free support for people with cancer and their family and friends. Call **0300 123 1801** or visit **www.maggiescentres.org**

Mind provides advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Call **0300 123 3393** or visit **www.mind.org.uk**

Moodjuice offers information, advice and self-help resources to people experiencing troublesome thoughts, feelings and actions. Visit **www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk**

NHS Choices provides comprehensive health information to help you make the best choices about your health and lifestyle. Call **111** or visit **www.nhs.uk**

NHS Smokefree provides motivation, information and support for smokers who want to quit. Call **0300 123 1044** or visit **www.nhs.uk/smokefree**

Shine Cancer Support offers support for adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s who have a cancer diagnosis. Visit **www.shinecancersupport.org**

The Mental Health Foundation is a UK charity that helps people understand, protect and sustain their mental health. Visit **www.mentalhealth.org.uk**

The UK Government information service outlines what benefits you might be entitled to and how to claim them. The enquiry line is no longer available. Visit **www.gov.uk**

Working with Cancer is an organisation that helps people with cancer get back in to work or to find work. Visit **www.workingwithcancer.co.uk**

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References

These are some of the sources we used to prepare this information. The full list of sources is available on request. Please contact us by email at publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk or phone on 01296 619409 if you would like a copy.

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About our information

Lymphoma is a complex type of cancer. Our award-winning information and publications can help you better understand your diagnosis, treatment and life beyond lymphoma.

Lymphoma Action's booklets give information on broad topic areas (for example they might cover all low-grade non-Hodgkin lymphomas and the types of treatment often given). They are professionally printed and bound and most are A5 size.

We offer our lymphoma information to you free of charge (UK only). If you live outside the UK, we recommend that you contact the lymphoma patient and carer organisation in your country as treatments and healthcare systems vary overseas. You can find a list of which organisations might be of help in your country on the Lymphoma Coalition website www.lymphomacoalition.org.

Lymphoma Action is committed to the provision of high quality information for people with lymphoma, their families and friends. We produce our information using nationally recognised guidelines, including the DISCERN tool for information about treatments, the NHS Toolkit for producing patient information and the Campaign for Plain English guidelines. Lymphoma Action is a certified member of The Information Standard independent quality assurance scheme, which is supported by the Department of Health.

Our publications are written by experienced medical writers, in close collaboration with medical advisers with expertise in the appropriate field. The most relevant references are listed in the publication. A full list of sources is available on request.



Information and support

If you'd like to talk to someone about anything to do with lymphoma (including how you feel), get in touch.



Call our Information and Support team Monday to Friday on 0808 808 5555. You can also use Live Chat on our website



Come to one of our support groups. Find one near you at www.lymphoma-action.org.uk/support-groups



Join our online forum to chat with others who are affected by lymphoma



Get in touch with a buddy, someone affected by lymphoma



Visit www.lymphoma-action.org.uk/TrialsLink to find clinical trials that might be suitable for you



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How you can help us

We continually strive to improve our resources for people affected by lymphoma and are interested in any feedback you might have about this booklet. Please visit our website at www.lymphoma-action.org.uk/Book-Feedback or email us at publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk with any comments. You can also call our Information and Support team on 0808 808 5555.



We produce other publications that give information about lymphoma and what to expect from treatment. Visit our website at www.lymphoma-action.org.uk or call 0808 808 5555 for more information.

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This booklet has been researched and written by Lymphoma Action, the only UK charity dedicated to those affected by lymphoma.

We would like to thank our incredible supporters whose generous donations enable us to offer all our essential support services free of charge. As an organisation we do not receive any government or NHS funding and so every penny received is truly valued. From everyone at Lymphoma Action and on behalf of those affected by lymphoma, thank you.

To get involved in fundraising for us or to make a donation towards our work please visit www.lymphoma-action.org.uk/Donate

This workbook complements the Live your Life workshop. It provides practical advice and information about living with and beyond lymphoma and has space for you to record information about your own lymphoma experience.

Lymphoma Action is a charity that has been providing information and support to people affected by lymphoma for over 30 years. We're here for you.



Helpline freephone **0808 808 5555** (Mon to Fri, 10am to 3pm)



Email **information@lymphoma-action.org.uk**



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