

Live your Life

Living with and beyond lymphoma

Module 3: Exercise and staying active





I have a dog called Floyd, and was glad that I had a reason to get out of the house each day. Some days I felt so fatigued and wiped out, that all I could do was find a seat and throw the ball to Floyd. But on other days when I could take a walk, I found that exercise – and just being out of the house – was really helpful.

Pam

Module 3: Exercise and staying active

Live your Life notes	58
Benefits of exercise	61
Exercise guidelines	62
Planning your exercise	64
Tips to help you stay motivated	69

Notes

You can use this space to make any notes from module 3 of the Live your Life workshop.



Action plan to help me stay active.

Action	How often
Find a local exercise or dance class to join	Go once a week



Things to check before exercising.

Question	Who and when to ask
What intensity of exercise is safe for me?	My clinical nurse specialist (CNS) at my next appointment
Are there certain types of exercise I should avoid after treatment? For how long?	My CNS or GP at my next appointment and if there are any changes to my health at other times

Benefits of exercise

There are lots of potential benefits of exercise on your overall physical and mental wellbeing. It can help to:

Improve mood and manage stress

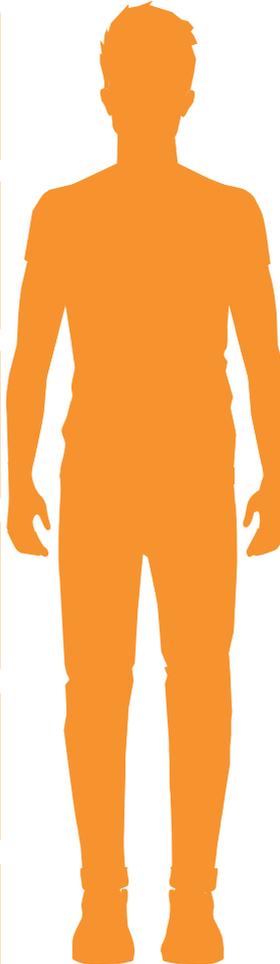
Lower fatigue

Build bone and muscle strength

Control weight, blood pressure and blood-sugar levels

Improve balance and flexibility

Increase confidence and self-esteem



Enable your medical team to offer optimum treatment

Prepare your body to cope with treatment (prehabilitation)

Reduce side effects of some treatments

Reduce risk of blood clots and infections while on treatment

Fun, social contact, and sense of achievement

Reduce risk of coronary heart disease and second cancers



- **We have more information on our website about exercise and physical activity.**
- **You can also search 'prehabilitation' to find out about benefits of getting ready for treatment, which includes physical activity.**
- **Macmillan Cancer Support has resources and information about exercise and physical activity for people affected by cancer on their website at macmillan.org.uk**

Exercise guidelines

In the UK, the recommendations for physical activity are the same for people with cancer, who are otherwise well, as they are for people who have not had a diagnosis of cancer.

For adults, the recommendation is to do 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate activity in chunks of 10 minutes or more each week. Examples include mowing the lawn, riding a bike and dancing. If you prefer, you could instead do 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) of brisk activity. Examples include swimming, running and riding a bike uphill. Aim to take 10,000 steps each day – but this doesn't have to be all at once.

One way to get the recommended amount of activity is to do 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 days of the week.

The recommendations are summarised below:



* Recommended for people over 65 years old.

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



- **Search ‘physical activity guidelines’ on the government’s website at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)**
- **You’ll find information about exercise on the NHS website at [nhs.uk/live-well](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well)**
- **Cancer Research UK has information about exercise for people who are living with cancer. Search ‘exercise guidelines’ at [cruk.org](https://www.cruk.org)**

Planning your exercise

It is beneficial to exercise during and after treatment for lymphoma. However, it’s important that it’s tailored to you. It should account for:

- your lymphoma
- any other conditions you might have
- any side effects of treatment you have
- your current general level of fitness – remember that you might need to build up gradually
- the types of exercise and activities you enjoy.

Ask for advice about the type and intensity of physical activity that is suitable for you, as well as any activities to avoid. Your clinical nurse specialist, GP, a physiotherapist or cancer exercise specialist can be good people to speak to.

Your medical team might also give you separate advice in relation to the following areas:

- **Intensity of exercise** – you might need to choose a lower-intensity type of exercise if you're anaemic or have had chemotherapy drugs that have had a lasting effect on your heart and lungs. This is because high-intensity exercise is likely to make you short of breath, tired and uncomfortable more easily than it otherwise would.
- **High-impact sports** – if you have a low platelet count (thrombocytopenia), you're more at risk of bruising and bleeding so you might need to avoid activities like rugby and hockey.
- **Activities that come with a high risk of falling or injury** – if you have damage to your nerves (peripheral neuropathy – see page 101) as a side effect of your lymphoma treatment it can affect your balance, coordination and your ability to feel injuries such as blisters. You might therefore need to choose activities with a low risk of falling or injury. This also applies if you're thrombocytopenic (due to increased risk of bruising and bleeding) or if lymphoma affects your bones and/or you have a higher risk of bone fracture.

If you have diarrhoea or vomiting, wait until you recover before you exercise. Diarrhoea and vomiting can change the levels of certain minerals (a type of nutrient) in your body, and exercise can further affect such levels and make you more unwell.



You can build activity into your everyday life, for example:

- take the stairs instead of a lift or escalator
- do some household chores, such as vacuuming
- do some gardening
- carry shopping bags or push a shopping trolley
- walk or cycle instead of driving or taking public transport.

Be sure that any activities you do are safe for you and remember that there might be some days when you need more rest. Find an amount and intensity of exercise that you can do without feeling exhausted. You can build up gradually over time. You could also use a fitness app to set goals and record your progress. Search online for one that suits you and works on your device. If you prefer, you could keep an exercise diary on paper, like the example opposite.

Build in regular breaks and give yourself enough time to rest and recover after exercise.



You can use the following table to help you plan your exercise.

Activity	How often	Considerations	Date	Intensity*	How I felt afterwards
Exercise or dance class	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose lower-intensity workout or dance options if I'm tired after treatment.• Look for 'pay-as-you-go' option in case I do not feel up to going sometimes.			

*For example, time spent, distance or number of repetitions.



Use this space to notes down:

- any precautions you should take
- signs you might need to slow down or take a break.



Tips to help you stay motivated

- Set realistic goals – having overly ambitious ones can be daunting and unmanageable.
- Break long-term goals into a series of manageable, shorter-term goals.
- Share your goals with people who will offer encouragement when your motivation dips.
- Exercise with friends or family or join an exercise class where you can have fun and support each other.
- Be flexible – if you're too busy or too tired to exercise, give yourself a break and return to your exercise schedule as soon as you feel able to.
- Track your progress – for example, with an exercise diary, wearable fitness tracker, app or online tool.
- Reward yourself and enjoy the positive feelings exercise gives you.



There are lots of resources available to help you achieve your exercise goals.

- Search 'exercise' on the NHS website for information about exercise and health, including a variety of exercise plans and home fitness routines.
- Find free tips, tools and support on getting healthier and more active at [nhs.uk/better-health](https://www.nhs.uk/better-health)
- Some hospitals, community centres, cancer centres and sports centres run exercise programmes specifically for people with cancer. You can also ask your nurse if they know of any local activities that might be of interest to you.
- Maggie's Centres offer a range of exercise options for people with cancer. Search for your nearest centre at [maggiescentres.org](https://www.maggiescentres.org)
- Search 'exercise' at [trekstock.com](https://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 across England. Find one near you at [walkingforhealth.org.uk](https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)
- Visit [beinspireduk.org/play](https://www.beinspireduk.org/play) for information and advice on how to get started in a wide variety of different sports and activities.

Notes

You can use this space to make any additional notes from this module.

Information and support

If you'd like to talk to someone about anything to do with lymphoma, get in touch.



Call our **Helpline** (freephone) Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm, on 0808 808 5555. You can also use Live Chat on our website



Join one of our peer support services such as **Support Group, online support meeting** or **closed Facebook support group**. Find one at lymphoma-action.org.uk



Use our **Buddy Service** to share experiences with someone in a similar situation to you. Call our Helpline for details



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



Check out our **YouTube channel** to watch personal stories and medical films

See our website for full details of our services. For our latest news and updates, follow us on social media:



@LymphomaAction



lymphoma_action



If you're interested in finding out more about any of the topics in this book, we have lots more information available on our website.

We also produce a number of books, which are available free of charge. In particular, you might find the following books helpful:

- *Introduction to lymphoma*
- *Living with and beyond lymphoma*
- *Active monitoring (watch and wait) for lymphoma*
- *Caring for someone who has lymphoma*

We also have some wellbeing videos available to watch. Search 'wellbeing videos' on our website.

Find our full range of books and information, including accessible information and Easy Reads, at lymphoma-action.org.uk/Books or call 0808 808 5555 for more information.

Useful organisations

We list some organisations below that you might find helpful. You can find more useful organisations on our website. If you don't find what you're looking for, please get in touch through our Helpline Services (see page 112).

Cancer Research UK has information about cancer, including about treatment and coping strategies.

www.cancerresearchuk.org

Citizens Advice provide free advice on matters such as housing, consumer, money and legal issues.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Every mind matters – NHS is a website from Public Health England with tips and advice for good mental health.

www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

GOV.UK is the UK government website. It outlines the financial benefits that people affected by cancer and their carers might be entitled to.

www.gov.uk

Look Good Feel Better helps people to manage the visible side effects of cancer treatment with free group and self-help skincare and make-up workshops

www.lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk

Macmillan Benefits Advice Service offers financial advice, including welfare benefits, housing, work and debt to people with cancer and their carers.

Macmillan Cancer Support provides support for people affected by cancer from diagnosis through treatment and beyond.

www.macmillan.org.uk

Maggie's gives practical, emotional, financial and social support to people with cancer, their family and friends.

www.maggies.org

Mental Health Foundation has information about mental health, including resources designed to introduce techniques to support mental wellbeing.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind offers support and advice in relation to mental health.

You can email their infoline at info@mind.org.uk or call on 0300 123 3393.

www.mind.org.uk

NHS website has health information.

www.nhs.uk

NHS inform is a health information service from NHS Scotland covering health and welfare, and including self-help resources that are free to access.

www.nhsinform.scot

Relate is the UK's largest provider of relationship support. Their services include information, workshops and counselling.
www.relate.org.uk

Samaritans offer emotional support to anyone who is struggling with difficult feelings. Their service runs 24 hours a day, all year round. Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

Shine Cancer Support offers support for people in their 20s to 40s who have been diagnosed with cancer.
www.shinecancersupport.org

Shout offers support to anyone struggling to cope. They have a free and confidential text service available 24/7. Text 85258
www.giveusashout.org

Teenage Cancer Trust offers information and support for young people living with cancer and for their families.
www.teenagecancertrust.org

Working with Cancer helps employees, employers, the self-employed, job seekers, people who are self-employed, and carers to manage cancer and work.
www.workingwithcancer.co.uk

Young Lives vs Cancer offers clinical, emotional and practical support to children and young people with cancer, and to their families.
www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk

About our information

Our information is evidence-based, approved by experts and reviewed by users. By keeping up-to-date with latest developments, we ensure that our information stays relevant and reflects current practice. Learn more at lymphoma-action.org.uk/HealthInfo

How you can help us

Volunteering is at the heart of what we do. If you'd like to volunteer with us, visit lymphoma-action.org.uk/Volunteering

We continually strive to improve our resources and are interested in any feedback you might have. Please visit our website at lymphoma-action.org.uk/BookFeedback 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.

References

The full list of references is available on request. Please email publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk or call 01296 619400 if you would like a copy.

Disclaimer

Although we make reasonable efforts to ensure the content of our publications is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press, we make no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that the content is accurate, complete or up-to-date, particularly in relation to medical research which is constantly changing.

The content of this publication has been developed for people living in the UK and is provided for general information only and primarily for personal and educational use. It is not intended to amount to advice on which you should rely. You must obtain professional, medical or specialist advice before taking, or refraining from, any action on the basis of the content of this publication. Lymphoma Action cannot accept liability for any loss or damage resulting from any inaccuracy in this information or third party information referenced in it.

©Lymphoma Action 2021. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted without permission. Go to lymphoma-action.org.uk/Legal for permitted use and reproduction of this booklet.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the continued support of our Medical Advisory Panel and other expert advisers as well as our Reader Panel. In particular we would like to thank the following people for their assistance with this book:

- Charlotte Bloodworth, Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Haematology, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.
- Martha Wilson, Clinical Liaison Nurse Specialist for teenagers and young adults, The Christie Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

With thanks to the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Foundation (www.ERKFoundation.org), Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Family Limited Partnership®, for permission to reproduce the change curve that appears on page 35 of this book.

Special thanks to Callum, Jeff, Kat, Louise, Nuala, Pam and Penny for sharing their experiences. Quotations from their stories are featured throughout the book. We would also like to thank health professional Martha Wilson for sharing her thoughts.

With thanks to AbbVie, Bristol Myers Squibb, Incyte, Janssen, Kyowa Kirin, St. James's Place Charitable Foundation and Takeda UK Ltd for part-funding this book. As per our policy, they have no influence over our content.

This book is part of Lymphoma Action's Live your Life peer-led, self-management workshops, but can also be used on its own. It is designed to support you to live well with and beyond your lymphoma, and includes lots of information, suggestions and places for you to write your own notes.

Lymphoma Action is the UK's only charity dedicated to lymphoma, the fifth most common cancer. Our mission is to make sure no one faces lymphoma alone.



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



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



Visit **www.lymphoma-action.org.uk**



Live Chat via our website (Mon to Fri, 10am to 3pm)

Lymphoma Action
PO Box 386
Aylesbury
Bucks HP20 2GA
General enquiries 01296 619400

© Lymphoma Action 2021
2nd edition produced December 2021
Next revision due December 2024
ISBN 978-1-914948-02-2

Registered company in England and Wales
(03518755). Registered charity in England and
Wales (1068395) and Scotland (SCO45850).
LYM0248LiveYourLife2021ed2

✓	Evidence-based
✓	Approved by experts
✓	Reviewed by users