

Physical activity guides: Different activities to help you to be active living with and beyond cancer

This leaflet provides helpful tips to support you to be physically active and includes some exercise ideas you can try.

Some of these activities might not be suitable for everyone, depending upon your health condition and treatment. If you are unsure, please ask your team for advice. Your safety and wellbeing are our priority.

The South East London Cancer Alliance (SELCA) have developed a physical activity guide and online module to help you understand what activities are safe and appropriate for you. This might be a helpful starting point for you.
<https://info.guyscanceracademy.co.uk/being-active-when-youre-living-with-cancer/#/lessons/MFL33DIHMteVA6lcNsk7JQswZJ69a-yA>



Why do we recommend physical activity?

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that adults aim to do some form of physical activity every day, gradually working towards being able to do 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week.

Being active can help both your physical and mental wellbeing.

Whatever your starting point, we encourage you to begin at a level that feels comfortable to you.

Getting started

- **Start slowly** and **progress gradually**, this will help to reduce your risk of having an injury.
- Keep hydrated while you active
- Wear supportive, comfortable shoes, or trainers.

If you would prefer to be active with other people or have one-to-one guidance, the **Cancer Care Map** is an online resource that can help you to find cancer support service in your local area. You can use this to find local and online physical activity services.



www.cancercaremap.org

How to use these guides

These guides have 3 different levels of difficulty. Level one is the beginner's level and Level three is the advanced level. Please start at level 1 and progress when you feel ready to move to the next level.

There are three different types of activity included in these guides, Pilates, yoga and general fitness.

Scan this QR code to access the videos for each of the exercises



Muscle Strengthening
8-12 repetitions
2-3 times/ week
5-7/10 Intensity

AND



Moderate Intensity Exercise
30 minutes
3-5 times/week
3/10 intensity
Aim: 150 minutes weekly

OR



Vigorous Exercise
20 minutes
2-3 times/week
7/10 Intensity
Aim: 75 minutes weekly



How hard should I work?

Moderate intensity activity is 3/10 on the image below. You will feel warmer, and your breathing will become harder and faster, but you are about to speak in broken sentences.

Stop if you develop pain, feel unwell, or feel extremely short of breath.



Borg G. (1998) Borg's Perceived Exertion and Pain Scales.

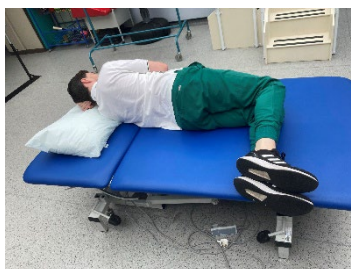
Pilates – Level 1 Glute Bridge

- Bend your knees and place your feet on the bed.
- Squeeze your buttocks and lift your lower body.
- Slowly lower your back down.
- To make the exercise harder, hold for a few seconds at the top.



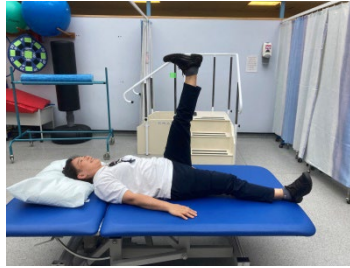
Clam

- Lie on your side with your knees bent.
- Keep your feet together and lift the knee on top.
- Lower your knee back to the initial position.
- To make the exercise harder, hold for a few seconds at the top.
- Repeat on the other side.



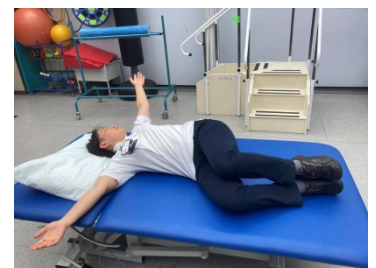
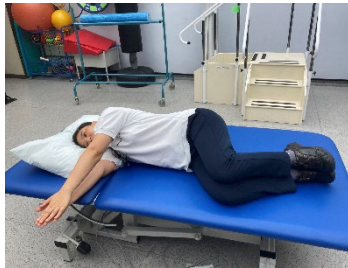
Developpe

- Lie on your back with legs straight.
- Lift one leg keeping it straight.
- Pull your toes towards you and point your toes towards the ceiling.
- Repeat on the other side.



Arm openings

- Lie on your side with your knees bent and your arms extended out in front of you.
- Lift your top arm up and over your body towards the floor behind you.
- Let your trunk roll with the movement
- Repeat on the other side.



Pilates – Level 2

Spine stretch

- Sit in the chair and place your hands on your knees.
- Sit tall and open up your shoulders.
- Breathe in and lean forward with a flat spine, keeping your chest forward.
- Look down and sit back up rounding your back while breathing out.



Single leg bridge

- Bend your knees and place your feet on the bed hip-distance apart.
- Squeeze your buttocks, and using one leg lift your lower body.
- Slowly lower your back down into resting position.
- Repeat on the other side.



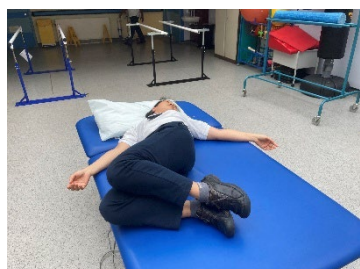
Supported squats

- Breathe in and hold onto the side of the bed for support.
- Push the bottom back and bend the knees, hips not lower than knee level.
- Push back up into standing.



Knee rocks

- Lie on your back with knees bent and arms out to the sides.
- Roll both knees to the right.
- Roll your head and neck towards your opposite shoulder.
- Roll your knees and head back to the midline.



Pilates – Level 3

Toe taps

- Lie on your back with your hips close to the edge of the bed.
- Breathe in and bring your legs into tabletop position.
- Breathe out, lower one foot down toward the floor.
- Repeat on the other side.



Heel press squat

- Stand facing away from the wall. Bend one knee to bring the foot against the wall.
- Bend your front knee and push your hips towards the wall.
- Press off the foot that's on the wall to come back up to standing.
- Repeat on the other side.



Oblique wood chop

- Stand tall and step your left leg back.
- Lift your arms overhead to the left.
- Lower into a lunge, bringing your hands down to your right side as you do.
- Press back up and repeat on the other side.



Superman

- Start in all fours position on your hands and knees. Breathe in.
- Breathe out and lift one arm and opposite leg and hold.
- Return to the starting position slowly. Repeat with the other side.



Yoga – Level 1

Shavasana Pose

- Lying on your back, let the arms and legs drop open. Make sure you are warm and comfortable.
- Close your eyes and take slow deep breaths through your nose. Allow your whole body to become soft and heavy, letting it relax into the bed.
- As the body relaxes, feel the whole body rising and falling with each breath.



Ocean breath

- Sit comfortably in a relaxed position.
- Breathe in through your nose, then open your mouth and breathe out slowly, making a “haaa” sound.
- Close your mouth, breathe in, and breathe out through your nose.



Knees to chest

- Lie down on your back and pull one knee up to your chest.
- Slowly pull the other towards your chest until you feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold for a few seconds.
- Lower the other leg slowly and repeat on the other side.



Bound angle pose

- Lie on your back, bend your knees and bring your feet together.
- Let your knees open wide apart keeping the feet together.
- Bring your arms over your head.
- Breathe in and out gently and hold for a few seconds.



Yoga – Level 2

Head to knee pose

- Sit upright with your legs straight.
- Bend the right knee, pressing the heel into the inner left thigh.
- Keep the left leg straight. Breathe in and bring the arms up.
- Breathe out and reach forward as far as you can comfortably.
- Return to starting position and repeat on the other side.



Superman pose

- Start on your stomach with your arms above your head.
- Breathe in.
- Breathe out and lift one arm and opposite leg and hold.
- Return to the starting position slowly. Repeat on the other side.



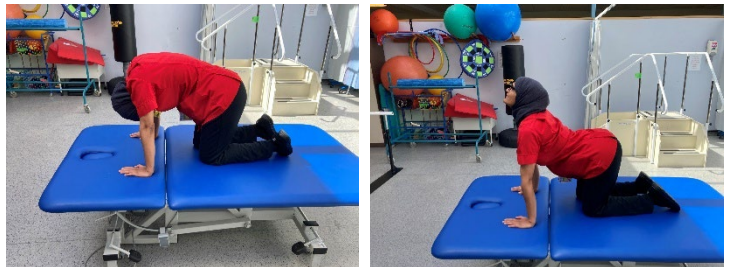
Powerful pose

- Stand tall with your arms by your side.
- Breathe in and raise your arms above your head.
- Push your hips back and bend your knees keeping your chest forward.
- Breathe out and return to the starting position.



Cat camel pose

- Start in all fours position on your hands and knees. Breathe in.
- Camel Phase: Breathe out, round your back up toward the ceiling until you feel a nice stretch in your upper, middle, and lower back.
- Cat Phase: Breathe in, relax and let your back arch. Bring the tailbone towards the ceiling while lifting your head to look up.



Yoga – Level 3

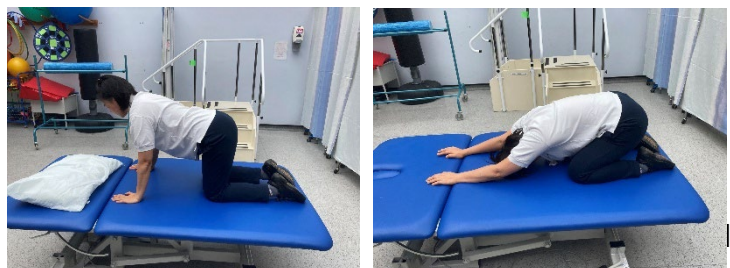
Up dog – down dog

- Start in a plank position.
- Down dog phase: breathe in, tuck the toes under, press into the hands and begin to lift the hips up towards the ceiling. Breathe out.
- Return to the starting position.
- Up dog phase: lower yourself to the ground. Straighten your arms to lift your chest off the floor.
- Look up towards the ceiling, breathe out.



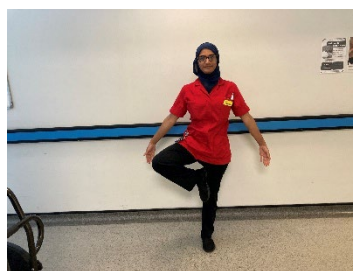
Child's pose

- Start on your hands and knees
- Sit on your heels, walk your feet forward, feel a stretch
- Relax the shoulders, jaw, and neck
- Stay as long as it is comfortable, breathe out



Tree pose

- Stand tall with your weight evenly distributed.
- Bend your right knee and bring the bottom of your right foot high onto your inner left thigh.
- Press your foot into your thigh.
- Breathe gently, hold for a few seconds and repeat on the other side.



More advanced: Lift your arms up toward the ceiling making a "V" shape.

Spinal twists

- Start lying comfortably on your back.
- Bend your right leg and with your left hand guide your right knee over the left side towards the bed.
- Hold for a few seconds and take slow, deep breaths. Repeat on the other side.



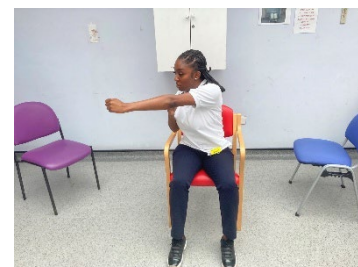
Fitness – Level 1

Marching on the spot

- Stand upright with your feet hip width apart. Keep your shoulders relaxed and arms by your side.
- Lift one knee up towards the ceiling, stopping at a comfortable height, hip height if possible.
- Lower that leg then lift the other up, continuing in a marching rhythm.
- Swing your arms as you march – or hold onto something sturdy if you need the support.

Seated boxing

- Sit comfortably with your back in a neutral position.
- Start with your hands by your face with your elbows tucked into your body.
- Allow your body to rotate as you reach forward.
- Fully extend the arm with the weight of the shoulder behind the punch.
- Repeat continuously alternating sides.



Fitness – Level 2

Standing boxing

- Stand comfortably with one foot in front of the other for stability.
- Start with your hands by your face with your elbows tucked into your body.
- Allow your body to rotate as you reach forward.
- Fully extend the arm with the weight of the shoulder behind the punch.
- Repeat continuously alternating sides.



Skipping

- Stand tall and imagine holding a skipping rope handle in each hand.
- Jump and land on your feet alternately.
- Rotate your wrists at the same time as if you were spinning a rope.
- Skip continuously for a few minutes and take rests as needed, increasing the time gradually.



For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

NHS UK provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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