Physiotherapy department
Inpatients
Patient Information
Exercising during cancer

Document history
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Contact number 01223 216940
Publish/Review date July 2017/ July 2020
File name PIN2411_Exercising_during_cancer_V5.doc
Version number/Ref V5/PIN2411 / Document ID 11965

Other formats:
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We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.
Exercise during cancer

With the treatment you are receiving you may experience some better days than others. This leaflet is designed to advise you on exercises and activities that you can do even when you are not feeling your best. For further information about your treatment and care please ask the staff on your ward.

Before treatment:

It is important that you continue with some form of exercise and activity while you are in hospital to maintain your level of fitness so that you will be able to cope better when you are at home.

During treatment:

Research has shown numerous benefits of exercising for cancer patients and that low intensity exercise is safe during treatment. Low intensity exercise undertaken for 30 minutes a day whilst undergoing treatment has been shown to minimise cancer related fatigue. Examples of low intensity activity could be walking, gardening, walking up and down the stairs, cleaning or tai-chi.

After treatment:

The lower the fatigue you experience the better your overall function and mood will be and hence, the higher the chances of a good recovery and early discharge from hospital. After treatment you can slowly start to return to normal activities and increase your activity levels. Remaining physically active can enhance your recovery, help you maintain a healthy weight and reduce the risk of certain cancers reoccurring.
What can you expect from physiotherapy?

Members of the physiotherapy team include qualified physiotherapists and physiotherapy assistants. You will be assessed and reviewed by a physiotherapist depending on your level of function. You are likely to be treated by both during your inpatient stay.

At your initial assessment, the physiotherapist will ask questions about your current level of activity. From the information gathered you will be advised on exercises and activity appropriate for you. Your programme may include exercises from this leaflet and other individualised exercises depending on your needs.

The exercise programme will be designed for you to carry out independently but if you have any questions the nurses on your ward can contact a member of the physiotherapy team.

Some of the exercises in the programme are designed so that they can be carried out even if you are not feeling very well, for example; breathing exercises and bed exercises. Your friends and relatives can be a great source of support and encouragement. Involve them in your exercise programme by getting them to read this information leaflet, and encourage them to prompt or remind you to exercise a bit every day.

Your physiotherapist can also advise and signpost you to activity groups and programmes in your local area or follow up clinics.

There is a lot more information available at www.Macmillan.org.uk. For further reading please see ‘Physical Activity And Cancer, A practical guide to living with and after cancer’, a publication by Macmillan.
Exercises

1. Breathing exercises

Find a comfortable position in either a lying or sitting position. This technique aims to fill the bottom of your lungs with air, by focusing on the outward movement of your ribs.

- Place your hands just below your ribs with your fingers loosely linked. Hold them there lightly in this position.
- As you breathe in, your fingers should slide apart; as you breathe out they should return together.
- Continue in this manner, taking slow, consistent breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Ensure your shoulders and neck are relaxed. Try to repeat this for ten good breaths every waking hour to carry over the benefit.

- The third picture above shows a position that you could adopt if you began to feel short of breath while you are standing or walking around.

2. Bed exercises

1. Straighten and bend your legs one at a time.
   Repeat _____ times

2. With your knees together slowly roll them from side to side keeping your upper trunk still.
   Repeat _____ times

3. Squeeze your buttocks together and lift your bottom off the bed. Hold for ____ seconds and then return to the starting position.
   Repeat _____ times.

1. Rotate your ankle in a full circle in both directions and then repeat with the other foot.
   Repeat _____ times

2. Tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Lift your leg ____ cm off the bed. Hold for ____ secs.
   Repeat ____ times.
3. Chair exercises

1. In sitting, tap your toes and then your heels, on the floor alternately. Repeat ______ times.
2. In sitting, pull your toes up, tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Hold for _____ seconds. Repeat ______ times on each leg.
3. In sitting, march your legs up and down lifting your knees towards the ceiling. Repeat _____ times.
4. In sitting, stand up and then sit down slowly on a chair. If you need to you can use your arms to help you stand. Repeat ___ times.

Other exercises

1. Standing in front of a step, step up ___ times with one leg leading and then repeat with the other leg leading.
2. Static bikes are available on the ward. Your physiotherapist will advise you if these are an appropriate addition to your programme.
3. Walk up and down the ward/ around your room ____ times a day with or without assistance.
**Exercise diary**

Use of an exercise diary has been shown to be helpful in keeping a record of activities each day. It can also help increase your motivation to continue with your programme. Opposite is an example of an exercise diary with some examples filled in, try continuing this and completing it with your own physical activity. Useful information to include is what exercises/activity you have undertaken, how you felt that day, and any other information that you feel is relevant to your exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What exercise/activity?</th>
<th>How did you feel?</th>
<th>Any other comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/05/2017</td>
<td>Exercises 1-5</td>
<td>Quite hard work but managed. Only two reps of each</td>
<td>Nil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walked two times up/down the ward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/05/2017</td>
<td>Exercises 1-5</td>
<td>Easier today One more rep on each exercise</td>
<td>Felt good about everything today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walked down to Concourse with family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>