

# Cancer Fatigue: Balancing Rest and Exercise

Although they may seem to be opposite kinds of advice, the recommendations to get rest AND exercise are not in conflict, but really two sides of the same beneficial coin. Conserving energy, delegating tasks, accepting help, and planning activities are all good management of fatigue. Yet, research shows that exercise can actually lessen your fatigue, increase your energy, improve your appetite, improve your ability to function, and generally improve your quality of life. It is a great goal to incorporate exercise in your daily routine, even on the not-so-good days.

✿ **Delegate activities that someone can do for you.** But, try to continue to do some activities yourself, however small. Not using your muscles will make you even more tired.

✿ **Sit if you need to when doing household tasks.** But, stretch and exercise while sitting. Try walking instead of using a wheeled cart when on a short shopping trip. Walk whenever you can. Move whenever you can. The more you move, the less the fatigue, even in advanced cancer.

✿ **Rest in bed on a very bad day.** But, lift your legs, circle your ankles, and stretch your arms and legs every 2 hours. Moving will prevent blood clots and sluggish circulation. Exercise on a not-so-good day may be only walking to another room and back twice a day...or once.

✿ **Use assistive devices to help you reach.** But stretch and reach unassisted whenever you can.

✿ **Sleep when you are tired.** But don't stay in bed all day. Try to get up and walk a few steps...or more. Exercise for several short periods a day.

✿ **Fatigue comes in waves.** As you become more familiar with your best times of day, save important tasks for those times.

✿ **Remember that exercise and moving are ways to lessen fatigue.** The more you move the better you will feel overall.