# New research advocates exercise as a key strategy in prostate cancer management



A growing body of research is challenging long-held assumptions about managing advanced prostate cancer, especially the advice often given to patients to take it easy and avoid strenuous activity. Professor Nick James, a leading prostate cancer expert at The Institute of Cancer Research in London and consultant clinical oncologist at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, emphasises that such well-meaning counsel is frequently misplaced. According to him, “the opposite is true” for most patients, with exercise playing a crucial role in improving outcomes and quality of life.

The benefits of physical activity for prostate cancer patients are widely supported by clinical research and expert organisations. Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center highlights that exercise, incorporating both resistance training and aerobic workouts, effectively counters the common side effects of prostate cancer treatments—particularly fatigue and muscle loss. Their findings stress that remaining sedentary often poses more risks than engaging in appropriately tailored physical activity, with resistance training notably helpful in maintaining muscle mass and strength.

Further research from Northumbria University reinforces this perspective. Their study found that a structured, three-month programme combining aerobic and resistance training prevented common declines in cardiopulmonary fitness and reduced fatigue among prostate cancer patients undergoing hormone therapy. Published in the British Journal of Urology International, these findings suggest that regular exercise could significantly enhance the wellbeing and long-term health of cancer survivors by mitigating treatment-related side effects.

Meta-analyses and systematic reviews strengthen the case for exercise’s positive impact on prostate cancer management. One review published on PubMed observed a small but meaningful improvement in cancer-specific quality of life and noted a moderate to large enhancement in cardiovascular fitness, particularly through aerobic exercises. It concluded that exercise is effective in improving metabolic health in men with prostate cancer, helping to counteract the negative effects of both the disease and its treatments.

Longer-term research indicates that physical activity may even influence cancer progression and survival. Another review of cancer patients, including those with prostate cancer, points to exercise's role in reducing general cancer-related symptoms, improving cardiovascular risk factors, and potentially extending cancer-free and overall survival rates. These findings are encouraging further investigation into the role of regular exercise as part of comprehensive cancer care.

More direct evidence of exercise influencing prostate cancer biology comes from a pioneering clinical trial at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. The trial demonstrated that engaging in 225 minutes per week of moderate endurance exercise before surgery improved key biomarkers associated with better prognosis in men with early-stage prostate cancer. This study marks an important step forward in understanding how physical activity may help control cancer progression at a molecular level.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation provides a biological explanation for these beneficial effects, noting that exercise might not act directly on the cancer cells themselves but changes the body's internal environment. Physical activity reduces insulin and insulin-like growth factor levels, which are involved in cellular growth and division. Lowering these factors can create conditions less favourable for cancer progression, potentially slowing the disease's development.

Together, this collective evidence strongly supports integrating exercise into prostate cancer management protocols. Contrary to outdated advice advocating rest, clinicians are increasingly recognising that appropriately prescribed physical activity is a powerful tool to improve patients’ physical health, alleviate treatment side effects, and possibly influence the disease trajectory itself. This paradigm shift could have profound implications for how prostate cancer survivors approach their recovery and ongoing care.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/puregym-exercise-olympians-glasgow-prostate-cancer-b1246329.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.mskcc.org/news/how-can-exercise-help-people-prostate)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/news/exercise-and-prostate-cancer/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35055794/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27389872/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.mskcc.org/news/can-exercise-impact-prostate-cancer-first-of-its-kind-clinical-trial)
* Paragraph 7 – [[7]](https://www.pcf.org/patient-support/patient-resources/how-exercise-sabotages-prostate-cancer/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/puregym-exercise-olympians-glasgow-prostate-cancer-b1246329.html), [[2]](https://www.mskcc.org/news/how-can-exercise-help-people-prostate), [[3]](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/news/exercise-and-prostate-cancer/), [[5]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27389872/), [[6]](https://www.mskcc.org/news/can-exercise-impact-prostate-cancer-first-of-its-kind-clinical-trial), [[7]](https://www.pcf.org/patient-support/patient-resources/how-exercise-sabotages-prostate-cancer/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/puregym-exercise-olympians-glasgow-prostate-cancer-b1246329.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.mskcc.org/news/how-can-exercise-help-people-prostate> - Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center discusses how exercise can alleviate side effects of prostate cancer treatments, including fatigue and muscle loss. They highlight that both resistance training and aerobic exercises are beneficial, with resistance training being particularly effective in combating muscle mass loss. The article emphasizes that exercise can improve strength, reduce fatigue, and enhance quality of life for prostate cancer patients. It also addresses concerns about over-exertion, noting that being sedentary can be more detrimental than engaging in appropriate physical activity.
3. <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/news/exercise-and-prostate-cancer/> - Northumbria University reports on a study showing that a three-month programme of aerobic and resistance training prevented adverse changes in cardiopulmonary fitness and fatigue levels in prostate cancer patients undergoing hormone therapy. The research suggests that structured exercise can mitigate side effects of hormone treatment, potentially improving the quality of life for prostate cancer survivors. The findings were published in the British Journal of Urology International, highlighting the importance of exercise in managing prostate cancer treatment side effects.
4. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35055794/> - A systematic review and meta-analysis published in PubMed examines the effects of exercise on quality of life and metabolic health in men diagnosed with prostate cancer. The study found that exercise had a small positive effect on cancer-specific quality of life and a moderate to large effect on cardiovascular fitness, with aerobic exercise being particularly effective. The review concludes that exercise is effective in improving metabolic health in men with prostate cancer, with aerobic exercise as the superior modality.
5. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27389872/> - This review published in PubMed explores the benefits of exercise in cancer patients, focusing on prostate cancer. It discusses how exercise can improve nonspecific cancer-related symptoms, ameliorate symptoms and cardiovascular risk factors related to cancer treatment, and enhance various quality-of-life factors. The review also points toward improved cancer-free and overall survival in cancer patients who undertake regular exercise, encouraging further research in this area.
6. <https://www.mskcc.org/news/can-exercise-impact-prostate-cancer-first-of-its-kind-clinical-trial> - Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center reports on a clinical trial suggesting that specific amounts of endurance exercise before surgery among men with early-stage prostate cancer can meaningfully improve two key biomarkers associated with better outcomes. The study found that 225 minutes per week of moderate exercise was the appropriate dose to improve prostate cancer biomarkers. The findings represent an important step forward in investigating how exercise impacts the progression and spread of cancer.
7. <https://www.pcf.org/patient-support/patient-resources/how-exercise-sabotages-prostate-cancer/> - The Prostate Cancer Foundation discusses how exercise can impact prostate cancer, particularly in men already living with cancer that has escaped the prostate. The article highlights that exercise may not act directly on prostate cancer but can disrupt the environment, making the body less hospitable to cancer. It explains that exercise lowers insulin and insulin-like growth factor levels, which can affect cell growth and division, potentially reducing the risk of cancer progression.