

# Evidence from the **CHALLENGE** trial explained

## Exercise in Cancer Care

This guide explains how exercise can help people living with and beyond cancer, based on the results of the CHALLENGE research study.



## Why Exercise Matters in Cancer Care

Exercise is not just about keeping fit – it can be a powerful tool to improve your health before, during and after cancer treatment. The CHALLENGE study, a large international research trial, has shown that regular physical activity can help people live longer, reduce the risk of cancer returning, and improve quality of life.



## What is the CHALLENGE study?

The CHALLENGE study (Colon Health and Life-Long Exercise Change) followed almost 900 people who had been treated for stage III or high-risk stage II colon cancer. Participants were randomly placed into two groups: one received a structured, supervised exercise program for three years, and the other received general health advice. Researchers then tracked their health over several years.

## Key Findings

- People who exercised regularly had a 28% lower chance of cancer coming back or a new cancer developing.
- They also had a 37% lower risk of dying during the study period.



## Key Findings

- Exercise improved energy levels, reduced fatigue, and boosted mood.
- The benefits were similar to, or better than, some cancer medicines – without the side effects.





# Evidence from the **CHALLENGE** trial continued

## How Does Exercise Help?

- Strengthens your immune system.
- Reduces inflammation in the body.
- Improves circulation and helps your body process treatment better.
- Boosts mental well-being and reduces anxiety and depression.



## Tips for Getting Started

- Include strength exercises twice a week to help keep your muscles and bones strong.
- Listen to your body and adapt your activity to how you feel.
- Speak to your medical team before starting any new exercise plan.

- Start slowly with activities you enjoy, like walking, dancing, or cycling.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, broken into manageable sessions.



## The Takeaway

The CHALLENGE study has shown that exercise is more than a lifestyle choice – it's a part of cancer care that can help you live longer, feel better, and stay healthier. It's never too late to start moving in a way that works for you.

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