

More Evidence Links Physical Activity With Improved Cancer Survival, New ACS Study Finds

American Cancer Society researchers stress the need for survivors to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine

ATLANTA, May 21, 2025 —A new large analysis led by [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) researchers shows engaging in leisure-time moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) after a cancer diagnosis improves survival for people with several cancer types, including bladder, breast, colon, endometrial, kidney, lung, oral, prostate, rectal, and respiratory cancer. This is the first longitudinal study of the relationships between postdiagnosis physical activity and overall mortality in bladder and oral cavity cancer survivors and is the largest study to quantify associations within survivors of endometrial, kidney, and lung cancer. The findings are published today in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* (JNCI).

“For decades, it’s been known that consistent exercise can help people live healthier lives,” said [Dr. Erika Rees-Punia, senior principal scientist, population science research](#) at the American Cancer Society and lead author of the study. “Our findings bring more critical evidence that being physically active after a cancer diagnosis can bring a meaningful impact on your likelihood of survival.”

Researchers pooled data from six U.S.-based studies, including 90,844 cancer survivors, an average of 67 years of age at diagnosis, among whom 45,477 died during an average of 10.9 years of follow-up. Models were adjusted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, smoking status, alcohol use, cancer treatment, and stage.

Study results showed that compared to no MVPA, engaging in recommended amounts of MVPA after a cancer diagnosis was related to better overall survival in participants with a history of one of ten cancer types: oral, endometrial, lung, rectal, respiratory, bladder, kidney, prostate, colon, and breast. The recommended amount of MVPA is 7.5 to under 15 Metabolic Equivalent of Task or MET hours per week, equivalent to 2.5 – 5 hours of brisk walking per week.

“The effects of cancer treatment can wear you down physically and mentally,” Rees-Punia added. “This can make exercise feel like a daunting task, but doing some exercise is better than doing none. Finding an exercise that you enjoy or exercising with a friend can make it more approachable.”

Other ACS researchers contributing to the study include [Dr. Lauren Teras](#), [Christina Newton](#), [Dr. Lauren Bates-Fraser](#), [Den E Bloodworth](#), and senior author [Dr. Alpa Patel](#).

Additional ACS Resources:

- [Diet, Physical Activity, and Healthy Living and Cancer](#)
- [Healthy Nutrition and Physical Lifestyle Choices Lower Cancer Mortality Risk for Survivors](#)
- [Nutrition for People with Cancer](#)
- [ACS Physical Activity and Nutrition Guideline](#)
- [Chemotherapy and Endocrine Therapy Have Different Long-term Effects on Physical Health Decline for Breast Cancer Survivors](#)

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 110 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit [cancer.org](#) or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

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