

Oncologist-approved cancer information from the American Society of Clinical Oncology

Home > Publications and Resources > Cancer Advances > News for Patients from the Journal of Clinical Oncology

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Cancer Advances: Study Finds Benefits of Exercise Program for Prostate Cancer

From the May 1, 2003 issue of the Journal of Clincial Oncology Read the Study [1] For many years, researchers have known that healthy older men who follow a resistance exercise program experience elevated mood and increased strength. Until now, little was known about the effect of resistance exercise on men being treated for prostate cancer. To answer this guestion, researchers, led by Dr. Roanne Segal of the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre, examined a group of 155 prostate cancer patients who were receiving androgen deprivation therapy - a standard form of hormonal therapy for advanced prostate cancer and in some men prior to radiation therapy. They divided the patients into two groups. The 82 participants enrolled in the intervention group were put on a moderate resistance exercise program for 12 weeks. The remaining patients were assigned to a second group that did not perform the training until the end of the study. The training itself consisted of a personalized resistance exercise program, which a certified fitness consultant introduced to each participant. Under supervision, each patient performed the resistance exercise program, which was defined by nine strength-training exercises three times per week. The researchers used various methods to measure strength, body composition, fatigue, and quality of life of all of the participants prior to the study. They performed the same tests at the end of the 12-week trial. Researchers found that men who performed resistance exercise gained strength, experienced lower levels of fatigue, and reported better quality of life than those who did not exercise. The benefits held true for patients regardless of whether they received the treatment with the intent of curing or controlling the disease. Nor did it depend on how long they had been receiving treatment. What Does This Mean For Patients? This study shows that prostate cancer patients can improve quality of life and decrease levels of fatigue by enrolling in a moderate resistance exercise program, and that it is never too late for prostate cancer patients to realize the benefits of resistance exercise. Patients should discuss the benefits of enrolling in an exercise program with their physician prior to commencing any program.

Links:

[1] http://www.jco.org/cgi/content/abstract/21/9/1653