



YOUR FITNESS & BEING ACTIVE WITH NETS



Who am I?

Jo Green

PLANETS Cancer Charity Director of Operations and Marketing

- **NET Patient - diagnosed in 2011, aged 34**
- **Surgery in 2011/2017/2018**
- **Worked in Fitness Industry for 28 years**
- **BSc Hons Exercise & Health Science**
- **Level 3 GP Referral / Level 4 Cancer Rehab**
- **Fitness class instructor**
- **CrossFit Athlete**



benefits of physical activity

Improved Energy Levels

Reduced anxiety and improved mood

Contributing to own well being

Increased confidence

Positive aspect to your day

Overall improvement in quality of life

Social interaction

Improved general fitness and other health conditions

Fewer complications, shorter stay in hospital post surgery

Better tolerance to treatment

Lower chance of recurrence shown in some studies

Improved Energy

Increasing cardiovascular fitness and strength in turn increases your energy levels. Many patients will suffer from fatigue but it is important for us to understand that moving will help this!

Reduced Anxiety & Improved Mood

Most of us will experience low mood and anxiety at times and exercise is proven to alleviate these feelings.

Contributing to own well-being

It is more positive for us to focus on what you can do to help yourself rather than what is happening to you and the things that you can't change. This can help you to feel more in control of your situation.

Exercise should be seen as part of your treatment, we should, where possible, aim to approach surgery with the best possible level of fitness & maintain a healthy weight avoiding any further, unrelated, health issues that could potentially compromise further treatment.

Increased Confidence

There may be some physical changes that can effect your body confidence and self esteem. Exercise can improve your confidence generally but also your body confidence and help you to trust your body again.

Positive aspect to your day

As patients we deal with a lot of things in our day that could be considered negative, it is unlikely that you will regret or feel worse for doing some exercise!

Improved QOL

Aside from the mental benefits, improving your fitness can help you to stay mobile and independent and continue to enjoy your hobbies and time with family and friends.

Social Interaction

Exercise can be social, particularly in a group setting, Keeping active will also help you get back to their social life with confidence and reduce the burden on carers helping to maintain healthy relationships.

Improved fitness and other health conditions

Reduce the risk of developing co-existing conditions, like heart disease and diabetes and stave off frailty and disability.

Help manage co-existing conditions you may already have.

Fewer complications

Patients with a better level of fitness are less likely to have complications after surgery and time in hospital is reduced.

Better tolerance to treatment

Being active has been shown to improve how treatment works and reduce treatment side effects. In general, exercise can improve the body's response to treatment.

Lower chance of recurrence

There are studies that show the chance of recurrence is lower in some cancers for patients that exercise. Whilst I am not aware of any studies for NET cancer survival rates, even the management of a patients comorbidities should help increase long term survival.

Results from the CHALLENGE trial

What was the CHALLENGE Trial?

- Looked at people with colorectal cancer (stage II high risk or stage III) who had finished surgery and chemotherapy.
- Purpose: to test if a structured exercise programme after cancer treatment could reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, or improve survival.
- Compared two groups for 3 years:
- One group got regular supervised exercise + coaching + support.
- The other got health education materials only.

Key Results — Disease Recurrence & Survival

- After 8 years people in the exercise group were 28% less likely to have the cancer come back (or develop a new cancer, or die) than the education only group.
- The 5 year “disease free survival” was 80.3% in exercise group vs 73.9% in control group.
- In the exercise group, there was a 37% lower risk of death compared to the control group.
- At 8 years, 90.3% of exercise group were still alive vs 83.2% in the education group.

Results from the CHALLENGE trial

Benefits Beyond Survival

- Physical fitness improved: better walking distances, strength, endurance.
- Patients generally had better quality of life: reduced fatigue, better mood etc. (Though survival was the main outcome, these were real and meaningful side benefits.)
- Most people were able to stick with the programme reasonably well, especially once routines were established.

What This Means for Patients

- Exercise isn't just "nice to do" — this study shows it can help prevent cancer coming back and improve chances of long term survival in colorectal cancer survivors.
- If possible, aim for a structured and supervised programme, with support, rather than just trying to exercise on your own without guidance.
- Even modest increases in activity (e.g. brisk walking, swimming, cycling) most days of the week can make a difference if maintained over time.
- Exercise still needs to be adapted to individual health, fitness, and any other medical issues. Not everyone may be able to do every type of exercise

Exercise Prescription

- **Every person will have different needs**

It is difficult to write exercise guidelines to cover everyone. Everyone is different in terms of how much exercise they can do, what treatment they have been through, other health issues that need to be considered and where they started from but there is generally something that you can do that will be helpful and give you the benefits that I have mentioned.

- **The place of resistance training**

Strength training helps maintain/increase muscle mass and can help to counteract treatment related muscle atrophy and sarcopenia. Increasing muscle mass can help improve your balance (reducing risk of falls), reduce fatigue, and make it easier to do daily activities and the things you enjoy!

- **Exercise doesn't have to mean gym!**

There are many ways to be active and it is important for you to enjoy what they are doing.



Why Resistance Training Matters — Especially As We Age or Face Cancer

What is Resistance Training?

Any exercise that uses your muscles against resistance — like lifting weights, using resistance bands, or bodyweight exercises (e.g. squats, wall push-ups).

Can be done at home, in a gym, or with a physiotherapist — doesn't have to mean heavy lifting!

As We Age, We Naturally Lose Muscle

Starting around age 30–40, we gradually lose muscle and strength — a process called sarcopenia.

This makes everyday tasks harder (like standing up, climbing stairs, or carrying groceries).

Resistance training helps slow down or reverse this process — keeping you independent, mobile, and confident.

Why It's Extra Important for Cancer Patients

Cancer and its treatments (like chemo, steroids, or long hospital stays) can speed up muscle loss.

You may feel more tired, weaker, or unsteady — which can affect recovery and quality of life.

Strength training helps to:

Maintain or rebuild muscle | Reduce cancer-related fatigue | Improve mood, sleep, and confidence | Support immune function and recovery | It protects your strength, independence, and recovery — especially when facing illness or surgery.

Preparing for Surgery?

Resistance Training Can Help - Building muscle and strength before surgery (sometimes called "prehab") can:

- Speed up recovery
- Reduce complications
- Help you get back to normal activities faster
- Even a few weeks of simple strength training before surgery can make a real difference.

Good News: It's Never Too Late to Start!

- Studies show people in their 70s, 80s, and even 90s can improve strength with resistance training.
- You don't need fancy equipment — even exercises with your own bodyweight can work.
- Safe, guided training can be done even during or after cancer treatment, with support from your clinical team.

Final Takeaway

Resistance training = your body's armour

MOVING THROUGH CANCER...

When I exercise, I do not feel like a cancer patient, there is a temporary reprieve and no matter how my day starts, it is always better once I have exercised!

I've had to re-frame my goals. What am I trying to achieve? Does it matter if I progress?

Exercising gives me confidence in my body and what it is capable of rather than worrying about all the things that are going wrong.

Small changes can make a big difference!

'Medical treatment saves lives, exercise (or cancer rehab) can help give you your life back'.

Thank you for listening.....

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