

Figure 4



## Reference sources

- **Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group**  
[www.cclg.org.uk](http://www.cclg.org.uk)
- **Information on Childhood Cancers**  
The Royal Marsden Hospital  
[www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk](http://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk)

## Contact details

We hope this information has been helpful to you. If you require further information, please call:

**Physiotherapy Department:** 01483 464153

**Hascombe Ward:** 01483 464071

## PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm  
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Helen Troughton  
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# Physiotherapy for teenagers with cancer

## Physiotherapy Department



## Patient information leaflet

**This leaflet contains physiotherapy advice for teenagers diagnosed with a cancer, including leukaemia.**

### Why might I need physiotherapy?

Being treated for cancer can be a long process. Some people become less mobile than they used to be and are unable to take part in their usual activities. Some of the chemotherapy drugs can cause aches and pains in the legs, and weaken the muscles in hands and feet. Many young adults are still growing, and the combination of this with reduced activity and muscle strength can cause muscle tightness, cramps, tip toe walking or a flat footed walking pattern.

Some teenagers struggle to clear secretions from their chest if they become unwell. Respiratory physiotherapy can help whilst in hospital, and this may be something that you can carry on at home.

### What will physiotherapy entail?

The physiotherapist will assess your current mobility levels. They can help you get back on your feet if you've been unwell and provide walking aids if needed. They will assess any weakness or tightness in the leg muscles and advise on suitable activities and footwear. They may teach you stretches and strengthening exercises which should be carried out regularly. Should temporary use of a wheelchair be required, a referral to wheelchair services can be made.

### Who can refer me to physiotherapy?

Any of the doctors or nurses on Hascombe ward or from your specialist cancer centre can refer you to physiotherapy. If you have any concerns please discuss it with them. Once a physiotherapy assessment has been performed, any follow up can often happen if and when you are on Hascombe ward. Some people benefit from outpatient follow up in the physiotherapy department or in our gym.

### What can I do to help myself?

Try to keep as active as possible, with some walking every day if you're feeling well. This keeps muscles strong and loose, and builds reserves for if you are not so well at any point. Even if you are in hospital, try to walk to the toilet and sit out of bed if possible. If cramps are a problem a gentle walk, heat pack or massage can be helpful. Good supportive shoes or over ankle boots can give extra support and discourage tip toe walking.

Heel walking with toes off the floor and a straight back is a useful strengthening exercise (figure 1). Stretching the calf by allowing heels to drop off the bottom step whilst holding the banister is simple yet effective (figure 2). Good sitting posture will help minimise back and hip pain (figure 3). Hamstrings can also be stretched on a step (figure 4 – overleaf).

Figure 1

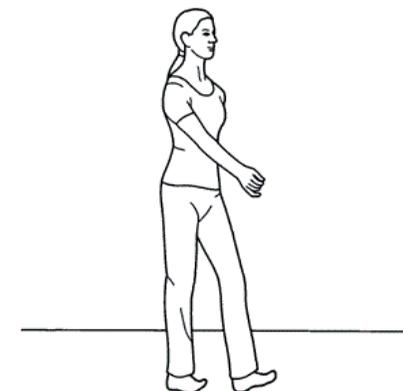


Figure 2

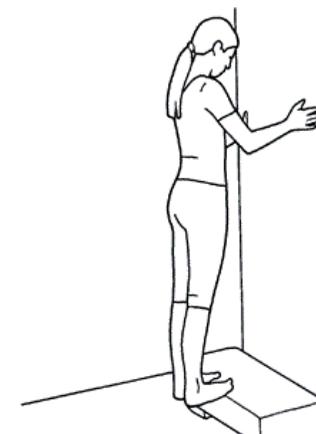


Figure 3

