



# Living with lung cancer?

Get back to doing what you love

#WithYourPhysio

## What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is a tumour that grows in one or both lungs. Primary lung cancer begins by growing in the lungs and can sometimes spread to other parts of the body. Secondary lung cancer, or metastatic lung cancer, starts growing in another part of the body and then spreads (metastasises) to the lungs.

## Symptoms and causes

The main symptoms of lung cancer are:

- a persistent new cough (lasting more than three weeks) or a change in a cough you've had for a long time
- breathlessness
- pain in the chest or shoulder
- chest infection that lasts more than three weeks, or that keeps coming back
- coughing or spitting up blood.

Having any one of these symptoms does not necessarily mean that you have lung cancer. Some of these symptoms may be caused by other conditions, or from the side effects of smoking. However, if you have symptoms, see a doctor without delay. Sometimes, there are no symptoms and the cancer is found during routine tests (for example: x-ray, CT scan) for other conditions.

The most common cause of lung cancer is tobacco smoking, however, there is a small group of people with lung cancer who have never smoked. Lung cancer is usually seen in people over the age of 60.

Lung cancer is usually caused by a combination of risk factors, including:

- exposure to second-hand smoke
- exposure to asbestos
- exposure to other environmental or occupational dusts and chemicals
- being of an older age
- having other lung diseases or
- a genetic predisposition.



In Australia, about 90% of lung cancer cases in men and 65% in women, are estimated to be a result of smoking tobacco.



Lung cancer is our biggest cancer killer – more than breast, prostate and ovarian cancer combined.



Physiotherapy is safe through all stages of cancer and effective in improving fatigue, breathlessness and mood.



AUSTRALIAN  
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## How can physio help?

Physiotherapy can help you to keep fit, reduce symptoms and maximise quality of life. A thorough physiotherapy assessment aims to identify any problems you may have and treat them accordingly. The main treatment a physiotherapist will provide is exercise prescription, which is a program of exercises and physical activities individually tailored to you. Exercise aims to help keep you physically active and strong and counteracts the side-effects of cancer and the treatments.

## Treatment

Treatment for lung cancer usually involves:

- targeted therapies
- immunotherapy
- radiotherapy
- chemotherapy
- surgery.



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## What next?

### GO TO

[choose.physio/find-a-physio](https://www.choose.physio/find-a-physio)

To find your nearest Cancer, Palliative Care and Lymphoedema physiotherapist.

### CHOOSE

'Cancer, Palliative Care and Lymphoedema' option under special interest area in the 'refine your search' drop-down box.

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## Do you live with a chronic health condition?

Physiotherapists help you recover from injury, reduce pain and stiffness, increase mobility and prevent further injury. They listen to your needs to tailor a treatment specific to your condition.

You don't need a doctor's referral to see a physiotherapist, but in many cases physiotherapists, doctors and other health professionals will work together to plan and manage treatment for your specific condition.

Some of the many techniques physiotherapists use to treat and help you overcome your condition include exercise programs to improve mobility and strengthen muscles, joint and/or soft tissue manipulation and mobilisation to reduce pain and stiffness and muscle re-education to improve control.

[www.choose.physio/lung-cancer](https://www.choose.physio/lung-cancer)