For Lung Cancer Patients, Presurgery Exercise Cuts Complications in Half

Study findings also showed a reduction in the length of hospital stays.

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Cancer patients who undergo surgery are often concerned about postoperative complications. But according to new study findings published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, exercising regularly before lung cancer surgery reduces the risk of complications by nearly half, according to a press release from BMJ.

The study sought to determine the effects of preoperative exercise on postoperative complications, length of hospital stay and quality of life in patients undergoing oncological surgery.

Investigators analyzed 13 different trials involving a total of 806 individual participants and included six types of cancer (colon, liver, esophageal, lung, mouth and prostate cancer).

The duration of preoperative exercise ranged from one to four weeks; most participants joined a two-week program. Patients worked out between three times a day to three times a week and completed workouts that included aerobic exercise, breathing and weight training.

According to study authors, regular exercise prior to surgery was most effective on individuals with lung cancer versus those with other types of cancer. Complication rates post-surgery for patients with lung cancer were reduced by 48 percent and hospital stays were reduced by nearly three days.

Although the impact of exercise on other types of cancer was much less clear, researchers determined that it might have improved the quality of life after surgery for patients with mouth and prostate cancers.

"These findings may also impact on health care costs and patients' quality of life and consequently have important implications for patients, health care professionals and policy makers," wrote study authors.

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