



## **Coping with the Mental and Emotional Tolls of Cancer**

**By Katybeth Dee**

Dealing with a cancer diagnosis and any subsequent treatments and procedures can be overwhelming. Whether you're a cancer patient who was just diagnosed or you're a cancer survivor in remission, you must deal with mental and emotional toll of the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Fortunately, there are healthy and meaningful ways to cope.

### **Activities You Enjoy**

Spending some time [writing](#) about your cancer journey is another way to cope. You can write an entire memoir, write poetry, or take a few notes throughout the day. No matter how involved you are, just engaging in the

writing process will benefit you. If words aren't your cup of tea, you can paint, write music, or make any other artistic expression. An artistic outlet will allow you to better comprehend and accept your diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

Writing and artistic expressions shouldn't be seen as a distraction from cancer. Instead, they're a rewarding and meaningful way to analyze everything you are feeling and going through. Furthermore, it's inexpensive and doesn't require physical exertion, so you can use it as a tool even on one of your worst days.

### **Yoga and Meditation**

As the Yoga Journal [states](#), "While it's not a cure for cancer, yoga enhances physical and emotional wellness and brings a peace many patients had thought they'd lost forever." Yoga, meditation, and other relaxation techniques are ways to quiet your mind and body, which allow them to heal. Relaxation techniques reduce stress as well, which is important because studies have shown that stress can contribute to the development and progress of cancer.

[Yoga](#) can increase strength, reduce pain, and improve the overall quality of life. A yoga session may also include guided relaxation, meditation, and visualization – all things that further promote relaxation and healing. Furthermore, it's a great option for cancer patients and survivors because it's low impact and has a low risk of injury.

### **Exercise**

If you're feeling up to it, getting some low-impact [exercise](#) is good for you. Experts agree that exercise is beneficial for most cancer patients and survivors. In general, if care is taken and professional advice is followed closely, there's little risk. Exercising can boost your energy levels and improve your immune system, helping your body to better deal with cancer and cancer treatments.

Exercise can help improve many of the side effects of cancer and cancer treatments, including anemia, nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, anxiety,

depression, and body weight and composition changes. You should aim for about 20 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise four or five days a week. As previously mentioned, yoga is one option. You can also ride a bike, swim, or take your dog for a walk. Dogs also have the added [benefits](#) of improving your overall health, boosting your mood, reducing stress, and providing great company. If you want to take advantage of those great benefits but don't have a dog, consider finding ways to spend time with someone else's, either as a [dog sitter](#) or the neighborhood dog walker.

### **Speaking with a Professional**

Finding out you have cancer, going through treatment, and even living as a cancer survivor all produce levels of worry and anxiety. For many people, simply talking about their feelings helps to relieve worry and anxiety. Choosing the right person to talk with is important. It can be a good friend, a family member, or a religious person, such as a minister. Many people find speaking with a licensed mental health professional – such as a social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists – to be comforting and beneficial.

Not only are they expert listeners, they also can teach you valuable coping skills to use outside of your meetings. “Even one session with a licensed mental health professional can often help you and your family focus on what matters most,” [says](#) the American Cancer Society. If you need help locating a mental health professional, ask your cancer team, family doctor, or insurance company for recommendations.

A cancer diagnosis and the treatments that follow may be the most difficult things you ever do in your life. Continuing life in remission can be difficult as well. Finding healthy and meaningful ways to cope with the mental and physical challenges of cancer can help you live a better and longer life.

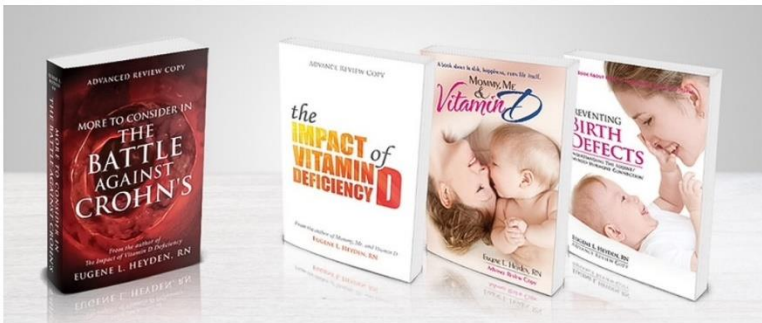
## About

Katybeth Dee created [SelfExam.org](http://SelfExam.org) after her sister received a cancer diagnosis at a young age. Her aim is to spread awareness about cancer prevention and she strives hard to offer support to those battling cancer.

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