



SERVICES OFFERED

GUIDE TO
COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CARE

PATIENT / FAMILY
RESOURCE CENTER

SELF CARE GUIDES

TESTS & PROCEDURES

COMPLEMENTARY /
ALTERNATIVE CARE

HOME

In the Know

Connecting Patient / Family Library Patrons To Information, Ideas and Resources

September 2003

from

The Duke Patient/Family Resource Center

The Duke Patient/Family Resource Center is:

- A lending library offering books, audio and video tapes, magazines and free brochures dealing with cancer and certain blood disorders and with issues of coping, survivorship, caregiving, and grieving
- Open 8:30 to 5:00 every day the Morris Clinics are open
- Located in the White Zone, first floor, of the Morris Cancer Clinic, Room 15123
- Our phone number is 919-684-6955. Our email address is FamilyLibrary@mc.duke.edu

Resource Center Coordinator: [Harriet Whitehead, PhD](#)

Cancer Patient Education Program Director: [Kerry Harwood, RN, MSN](#)

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Physical Exercise for Cancer Prevention and Recovery (discussion)

We all have learned that regular physical exercise is essential to regain or maintain cardiovascular health, but how many of us realize that there is also a strong positive relationship between regular physical exercise and improved chances against cancer? Studies have shown that

- there is a 37% reduction of breast cancer risk among women who exercise regularly, even when all other risk factors are taken into account; in fact, former college athletes under the age of 45 have only one-sixth the risk of developing breast cancer as their non-athletic counterparts.
- regular exercise protects against colon cancer under any circumstances and actually improves the protection that a cancer-healthy diet (i.e. a diet rich in fruit and vegetables) affords.
- cardiorespiratory fitness reduces cancer mortality in men, even in men who smoke.
- after high-dose chemotherapy (the most severe form of cancer treatment), aerobic exercise speeds recovery and enhances well-being.
- not just post-surgery, but pre-surgery exercise programs serve to speed surgical recovery.
- physical exercise has a positive effect on quality of life following cancer diagnosis, including physical and functional well-being and psychological and emotional well-being. This includes lessened pain and nausea, and for many cancer

patients, increased longevity.

Traditionally, people struggling with cancer fatigue, pain or treatment side effects have been told to take it easy. Even some of the books we've recommended in our "Cancer and Nutrition" newsletter (July 2003) take the approach that the best way to deal with fatigue is have somebody else do the cooking while you rest. But with evidence of the benefits of exercise mounting, we wouldn't be surprised if one day oncologists, like cardiologists, start putting their patients on an exercise regimen as a routine part of follow-up care.

At present, however, fitness concerns are left to the individual, and many individuals, especially those who are under treatment or in the early stages of recovery, find themselves unsure of how to proceed. How do you exercise when joints hurt, surgical wounds may be not completely healed, chemo has drained you, and a post-lumpectomy arm requires coddling?

The quick answer is: *Gently* and, if possible, under professional supervision. We're not trying to imitate Lance Armstrong here. No one is shouting at you to "drop and give me twenty!" You shouldn't be ashamed if all the force you can muster the first time out takes you only two laps around the couch on which you have been practicing potato-hood. The point is to start a routine, however modest, and stick with it.

Your first move should be to ask your doctor whether he/she will fix you up with a regimen, or prescribe physical therapy. (Prescribed physical therapy with realistic functional goals is usually covered by insurance.) A physical therapist can work out a plan for you that circumvents disabilities and strengthens specific weaknesses as well as keeping you well-exercised. As recovery proceeds, you may increase the repetitions of these exercises and take on new ones. If for some reason, you don't have access to a physical therapist, you might want to try out some of the "gentle fitness" videos that are available. Our library has the two reviewed below, and others are available at the public library or via the Internet. Also search out local programs of modified yoga or seated, gentle exercise that take place in nearby shopping malls or at the Y. Joining with others is a wonderful way to alleviate tedium.

If you're starting out relatively well and unimpaired, or if you have attained full recovery, you have the full range of options that most people pursue: sports, walking, swimming, jogging, taking classes in yoga, tai chi, chi gong, pilates etc., hitting the exercise machines in the gym or at home, or just upping one's level of housework and yardwork. Personal trainers are readily available these days, and several programs that we list below offer personal training. Research has not yet determined that any one type



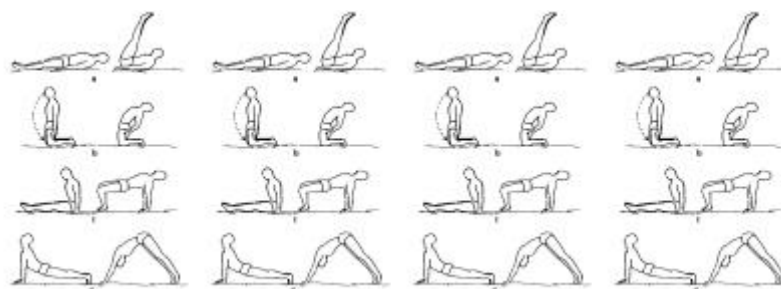
of exercise is more geared toward cancer fighting than any other, so simply a good balance between strength training, aerobics, flexibility enhancement, and stress reduction is probably the wisest goal. Once again, get something started - anything - then stick with it while gradually increasing the levels.

Exercise Videos in Our Collection

- *Catherine MacRae's Gentle Fitness*. A charming and evenly-paced instructor. You can do the majority of her exercises seated in a chair in your living room. Pick and choose which routines are best for you.
- *One Move at a Time: Exercises for Women Recovering from Breast Cancer Surgery*. There are seven basic flexibility and strength motions illustrated, very slowly and precisely on this video. All the featured demonstrators are breast cancer survivors.

Reviews of Books in Our Collection

The Force Program: The Proven Way to Fight Cancer Through Physical Activity and Exercise by Jeff Berman, Fran Fleegler, MD, and John Hanc



This is one of the finest getting-started manuals you can lay hands on if you are trying to work greater fitness into your recovery or prevention plan. Its main author, Jeff Berman, a marathon runner in his spare time, got a diagnosis of chronic lymphocytic leukemia while he was preparing for a triathlon. He kept running. Three years later, he got sicker and finally required treatment; still he kept training and running. During chemo, he never lost his hair, never got nauseated, and didn't feel appreciably weaker. And he got better again. It's now 8 years later and he is still running marathons and maintaining good health. During the interval, realizing the value of his strength and fitness in his cancer battle, Jeff teamed with others to create The Force Program, a cancer survivor's complete fitness plan. The book features this program and is co-authored with an oncologist and a sports writer. The exercises themselves (illustrated in the book) were designed by exercise physiologist John Buzzerio.

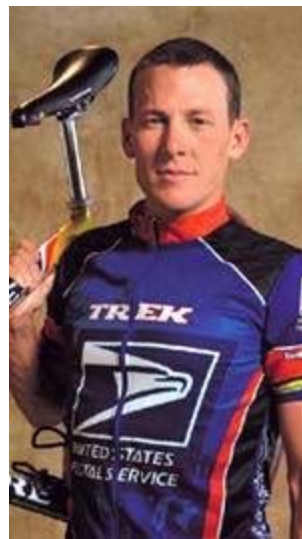
Larded throughout the book are loads of encouragement:

Your best bet? Start gradually. Make consistency your goal. As we'll discuss in our chapter on exercise, you can begin to feel the benefits of exercise with a relatively small amount of work. In fact, we've had FORCE patients who've started walking for as little as five minutes. That's all you need to get going.

You're not trying to 'cure' yourself with exercise or transform yourself into a hard-boiled aerobics instructor. Your goal is to get yourself back to working a full day, to have energy to play with your kids, to be able to go for a walk with your spouse and not be fatigued for the rest of the day. Even so, many FORCE patients have been surprised that after fourteen weeks they were in better physical shape than *before* they were diagnosed!

The book spells it all out for you: Exercise regimens, stress-reduction techniques, special plans for the different common cancers, and a plan for children with cancer; plus diet advice and recipes. Highly recommended.

It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life by Lance Armstrong, with Sally Jenkins.



Athletic fitness may reduce one's cancer odds, but sometimes athletes do get cancer, and especially when they are prominent sports figures, their personal cancer journeys often attract media attention and wide public interest. When they lose their battle, afflicted athletes become romantic tragic figures, like Chicago Bear's Brian Piccolo immortalized in "Brian's Song." When they win their battle, they easily morph into the action heroes of cancer survivorship. Cyclist Lance Armstrong explains it: "One of the redeeming things about being an athlete - one of the real services we can perform - is to redefine what's humanly possible."

Armstrong has done his share of redefining - on the bike and in the treatment room. He has now won the Tour de France, cycling's most grueling stage race, 5 times - all after beating a stage IV testicular cancer that put his chances of survival at around 3%. "It's Not about the Bike," he assures us in his title, alluding to the life-transforming experience that cancer became for him. "It's All About the Cancer," Bernadine Healy replies in a counter-title to her

essay that followed the incredible media whirlwind over his latest win.

Well, obviously it's about both.

Lance and his co-writer, Sally Jenkins (an accomplished sports writer) give us a fast-paced, fascinating and remarkably moving story. Here is Lance's account of returning from the clinic after receiving the shattering news:

I drifted through the streets in first gear, without even the energy to press the gas pedal. As I pattered along, I questioned everything: my world, my profession, myself. I had left the house an indestructible 25-year old, bulletproof. Cancer would change everything for me, I realized: it wouldn't just derail my career, it would deprive me of my entire definition of who I was. I had started with nothing. My mother was a secretary in Plano, Texas, but on my bike, I had become something. When other kids were swimming at the country club, I was biking for miles after school, because it was my chance. There were gallons of sweat all over every trophy and dollar I had ever earned, and now what would I be? Who would I be if I wasn't Lance Armstrong, world-class cyclist?

A sick person.

I pulled into the driveway of my house. Inside, the phone was ringing. I walked through the door and tossed my keys on the counter. The phone kept ringing. I picked it up. It was my friend Scott MacEachern, a representative from Nike assigned to work for me.

"Hey, Lance, what's going on?"

"Well, a lot," I said angrily. "A lot is going on."

"What do you mean?"

"I, uh..."

I hadn't said it aloud yet.

"What?" Scott said.

I opened my mouth, and closed it, and opened it again.

"I have cancer," I said.

I started to cry.

And then, in that moment, it occurred to me: I might lose my life. Not just my sport.

I could lose my life.

Sometime later in the saga, we find him alone with his chemo nurse, barely able to talk anymore as the next-to-last round of cancer-fighting toxins drips into his veins.

"What do you think, LaTrice?" I asked, whispering.

"Am I going to pull through this?"

"Yeah," she said. "Yeah, you are."

"I hope you're right," I said, and closed my eyes again.

LaTrice leaned over me.

"Lance," she said, softly. "I hope someday to be just a figment of your imagination. I'm not here to be in your life for the rest of your life. After you leave here, I hope I never see you ever again. When you're cured, hey, let me see you in the papers, on TV, but not back here. I hope to help you at the time you need me, and then I hope I'll be gone. You'll say, 'Who was that nurse back in Indiana? Did I dream her?'"

It is one of the single loveliest things anyone ever said to me. And I will always remember every blessed word.

There are some ironies in the story. Armstrong's years of hyper-training on the bike had taught him to - as he puts it - "suck up pain." He even rather enjoyed pain's cleansing psychological effect. Weeks of daily 8 hour rides, in all sorts of weather, in the face of minor injuries, with mishaps along the way (he reports being driven into the ditch by traffic more times than he can remember) were a routine part of the cyclist's experience. As a result, when even rather severe medical symptoms appeared, like coughing up blood or having headaches that dropped him to his knees, Armstrong managed to ignore them! The result was a cancer detected so late that even the doctors' usual optimism over the treatability of testicular cancer was dimmed. He had to submit to the most severe levels of chemotherapy and undergo brain surgery to remove the brain metastases.

Yet those years of hyper-training may well account for his amazingly speedy recovery, even for his survival. It is hard to know. Whatever the effect, it was not quite two years after his last chemo treatment, that Lance Armstrong became the long-shot winner of the Tour de France. He had also become a new husband, having finally fallen in love and married, and a new father, thanks to a trip to the sperm bank before he began treatment. I leave the details of his romance, his budding family life, and his exciting bike races to the reader to discover.

All in all, a thrilling book.

Websites Review

Georgia State University Exercise and Physical Fitness Page

<http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwfit/>

Sometimes in order to get started, it helps to have some notion of what the basic exercises look like. Surprisingly, it's very hard to find good illustrations on the Web. But one decent source is the GSU page above. Right on the home page, you'll see a list of buttons that includes "aerobic exercise," "strength training," and "flexibility."

Under strength training and flexibility, you will find illustrated exercises with written instructions for each. Under aerobic exercise, there is a list of types and clicking on the type will bring up a page of explanations and elaborations with one or two photographs. (Not every page loads).

AICR Newsletter Article on Exercise

<http://www.aicr.org/cpublications.html>

Go to this URL, the publications of the American Institute for Cancer Research, to read a recent article summarizing some of the findings on exercise and cancer recovery. Look to the left and click on AICR Newsletter, then scan down the list of articles to find, "Exercise Helps Survivors Fight Side Effects."

Local Classes in Motion and Fitness



- *Cornucopia House Cancer Support Center*
Overlook Building, Suite 220
111 Cloister Court
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
phone (919) 401-9333
email chsupport@mindspring.com

Cornucopia House is an independent cancer support facility offering support groups and counseling and different types of restorative exercise. It is the only place listed here that does not charge for services. Classes include Chi Gung, Restorative Yoga, Compassionate Touch Massage, and soon to come Neuromuscular Integrative Action.

- *Duke Health and Fitness Center at the Center for Living*

Located on Erwin Rd just off Cameron Blvd, the Center for Living houses a number of wellness and fitness programs. One of their personal trainers, Stacy Smith, director of the C.A.R.E. program is herself a breast cancer survivor. She will work with cancer patients to put together a program of exercises tailored to their individual needs. Contact her at (919) 660-6810, or smith252@mc.duke.edu

- *Rex Wellness Centers*

Rex Healthcare has a Wellness Center in Raleigh, in Cary, and soon to come in Garner. At any of these there will be health promotion classes in yoga and other forms of restorative training. One program meriting special attention is the Raleigh Center's *Fighting It Together*, a comprehensive rehab program for people recovering from cancer. Contact Laura Coppedge at (919) 784-1380.

For locations and contact numbers for any of the Rex Wellness centers, go to

http://www.rexhealth.com/centers/wellness/index_wellness.htm.

While the Wellness Centers charge for their services, some scholarships are available and they will go through social services for other options.

■ *Body Renewal, Inc. of Apex*

8517 Burnside Drive
Apex, NC 27539
(919)454-8895

The two specialists here, Jennifer Eatmon and Gail Weiner have both been touched by cancer; Jennifer is a survivor of breast cancer, while Gail has had cancer in her family. They work with cancer patients and survivors to provide exercise programs that will promote recovery, fight lymphedema, and bring people back to their former activity level. Both one-on-one training and group sessions are available, and guided at-home programs can be arranged.

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