

Cancer experiences led to workout book

By **LORI PRICE**
Staff Writer

Like millions of other people, Andrea Leonard is no stranger to breast cancer.

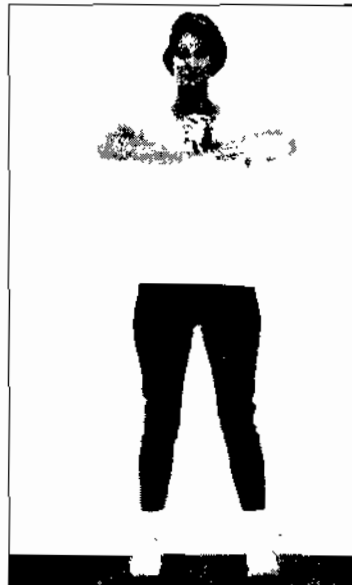
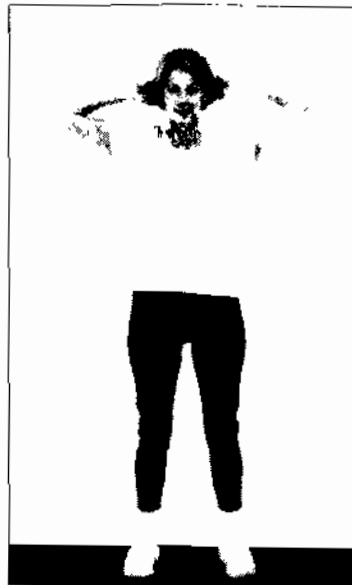
The personal trainer's mother was diagnosed twice with the disease that afflicts 184,000 people each year.

"I was 15 the first time and 30 the second time she was diagnosed," says Ms. Leonard, whose own diagnosis with thyroid cancer at 18 led to her career in the fitness field. "She had a frozen shoulder because no one told her to strengthen the area. She also had the beginnings of osteoporosis because she wasn't doing any strength training."

Her mother's post-diagnosis problems served as a guide for *Essential Exercises for Breast Cancer Survivors: How to Live Stronger and Feel Better*, a book Ms. Leonard co-authored with Amy Halverstadt, who is also a personal trainer.

"She was quite disabled from it and I tried to put together a program for her to use in recovery, but I couldn't find much information out there," says Ms. Leonard, 35. "Amy was working with me at the time, and we decided to pull together on the effort about four years ago."

Essential Exercises, which includes a foreword by Olympic figure-skating gold medalist and breast cancer survivor Peggy Fleming, hit bookstore shelves in



Courtesy photos from *Essential Exercises for Breast Cancer Survivors*

Andrea Leonard's new book demonstrates exercises for breast cancer survivors. She says exercising leads to reassurance.

time for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October.

"For me, as a young girl, exercise strengthened not only my body, it also strengthened my soul," Ms. Fleming writes. "In 1998, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I once again turned to that early tool of measuring myself through exercise."

Ms. Leonard and Ms. Halverstadt consulted with physicians from hospitals across the country to write the book, which focuses on the role of exercise in breast cancer recovery.

The book is a step-by-step

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manual that targets strength building and stretching exercises in areas of the body typically affected by treatment of the disease, such as the shoulders, arms,

abdomen and back. It also addresses aerobic exercise, nutrition and side effects associated with the disease.

Included in the book are more than 80 exercises, with photos and guidelines, to monitor progress from level one (stretching for flexibility and range of motion) to higher levels that are more intense and more specific to the needs of breast cancer survivors.

"In writing the book, we realized that there are a lot of implications from surgery that are not dealt with," Ms. Leonard says. "The idea is that if we can correct these issues through proper stretching and strengthening, then

we can help these women return to a normal and healthy way of life."

The role of exercise in breast cancer isn't addressed much, Ms. Leonard says, because the focus up until now always has been on saving lives. Restoring quality to the lives of those who have survived the disease is often overlooked, she adds.

Last April, Ms. Leonard formed the Breast Cancer Survivors Foundation, an organization that will concentrate on methods to improve the lives of the 1.6 million breast cancer survivors in the nation.

She and Ms. Halverstadt aren't knocking other more established groups that primarily raise money to search for a cure to the illness. The idea is to help those who have fought the illness already, she says.

"We're not trying to find a cure," Ms. Leonard says. "We just want to help them enhance the existing lives of survivors."

