

BREAST CANCER WORKOUTS

Aug 11, 2011 | By Alicia Miller

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Exercise is recommended by the American Cancer Society for women who've been diagnosed with breast cancer and have had breast surgery. Weekly exercise can also improve your chances of survival if you have breast cancer, according to a 2005 study by Harvard University published in the "Journal of the American Medical Association." Consult your doctor before beginning an exercise routine.

Yoga

Yoga is a beneficial form of exercise that has proven benefits for women diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, according to a 2007 Duke University study published in the "Journal of Pain and Symptom Management." The study showed that a regular yoga routine may help women with breast cancer by reducing pain and fatigue, improving the ability to relax and promoting feelings of acceptance and invigoration. Additionally, certain yoga poses, such as the Eagle pose or the Upward Salute, may be beneficial for breast cancer survivors, according to "Yoga Journal." If you've recently had a lumpectomy, start your yoga program slowly, as you may experience a limited range of motion in your chest and shoulder area. Consult a qualified yoga teacher to discuss poses that are appropriate for your condition.

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Range of Motion and Strengthening Exercises

Range of motion and strengthening exercises can help to build strength and flexibility in your upper body. According to exercise experts Amy Halverstadt and Andrea Leonard in their book, "Essential Exercises for Breast Cancer Survivors," these exercises should be performed, with your doctor's permission, every day for the first year, starting six weeks after surgery. These exercises include plies, wall pushups, hamstring curls, bicep curls and abdominal exercises. Consult a physical therapist to discuss appropriate exercises for your condition.

Walking

According to the study by Harvard University researchers, women who exercised by walking at a moderate pace for 3 to 5 hours a week appeared to have a reduced risk of death from breast cancer. Group walking for breast cancer survivors, offered by many hospitals and charitable organizations, not only provides the benefits of aerobic exercise, but it can also be an avenue for support and encouragement from others in a similar situation.

Tai Chi

Tai chi is a gentle Chinese martial art that focuses on flowing movements coordinated with your breath. These movements are combined into an almost dance-like series known as a form, which connects your body with your mind through specific meditative techniques and breath work. According to BreastCancer.org, tai chi is a beneficial form of exercise that may help to increase strength, flexibility, balance, heart and lung function and feelings of well-being in breast cancer patients. Once you learn the movements from a qualified teacher, you'll be able to develop your own tai chi practice at home.

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References

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- ["Journal of Pain and Symptom Management"; Yoga for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer: Results of a Pilot Study; James W. Carson, Ph.D et al; March 2007](#)
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- [BreastCancer.org: Tai Chi](#)

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