

4 WAYS TO TAME TENSION—INSTANTLY page 86

THE POWER OF LIVING WELL

# health

**FAT-  
BURNING  
SECRETS**

**9** TIME-SAVING WAYS  
TO GET FIRM FASTER

SPECIAL REPORT

**Beating  
Breast Cancer**

The latest word on prevention,  
detection, and treatment

**The South Beach Diet**  
What WORKS, what DOESN'T

Renew your **SPIRIT!**  
**5** ways to find the beauty within you

**What are your  
"bad habits" telling you?**

THE OVERLOOKED DISEASE  
THAT COULD BE HOLDING YOU BACK



**NOW**

GULF REGENT

**ABREAST IN A BOAT**

**powering on**

More than 1 million American women are living with breast cancer. Could exercise be their new prescription for a better quality of life? *by Anne Kliegel*

**DIANE GOTTLING WAS HAVING A HARD TIME FOCUSING.** She stared at the pink hat on the woman in front of her. She stared at the Charles River. She focused on her feet, planted firmly in the boat. This race would take everything she had, and Gotting wanted to gather her strength. But a distant rumble had become hard to ignore: "One in nine, one in nine!" "All of a sudden, I realized what the other boats

A stroke and heart trouble caused weakness, leading Gotting to drop out of a rowing race in 1997. Photo: Brian Corbridge

PHOTO: BRYAN CORBRIDGE

NOVEMBER 2005

NOVEMBER 2005

were chanting," the 52-year-old benefits planner says. Cotting and her eight teammates, all breast-cancer survivors, were racing in Boston's Head of the Charles Regatta, in a boat dubbed *One in Nine*. "I had tears in my eyes," she says. "After all the exercise don'ts we'd heard since getting cancer, we were being cheered for doing this really physical sport we love."

**R**OWING IS A FAR CRY FROM the R&R typically prescribed for women during treatment and recovery, but old concerns—that exercise might exacerbate post-therapy fatigue, cause a debilitating and dangerous condition called lymphedema, or even increase the risk of the cancer coming back—are being swept away by a new view. "One in eight women will get breast cancer sometime in her life," says Carolyn Kaelin, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, Cotting's surgical oncologist at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and director of the Comprehensive Breast Health Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital. (Cotting's boat was named some years ago, when one in nine was the standard statistic.) "But five-year survival rates are up to 85 percent, and we know that most survivors will go on to live their full life expectancy. So research has expanded from early diagnosis and searching for a cure to include quality-of-life outcomes—and we're finding that physical activity often improves quality of life."

Exercise, including strenuous upper-body movement, appears to be not only safe for many breast-cancer survivors but also plainly beneficial. "In the medical community, we routinely perform surgery on a football player's knee and



**MAKING STRIDES:** Walking helped Carolyn Scott Korte get through chemo; now she jets other survivors and their families moving.

We rehab injured football players so they can get back in the game. It's about time we rehabbed breast-cancer survivors to go on and live their lives.

rehab him back into condition so he can face a 250-pound linebacker," says Michael K. Jones, Ph.D., P.T., president of the North American Academy of Health, Fitness & Rehabilitation Professionals. "It's about time that we rehab the breast-cancer survivor so she can go back and live. She has to be able to pick up her child or her briefcase, reach around and put on her bra, or get a book from a top shelf. She has to get back to a normal, active life."

In Cotting's case, she had to row. "I'm not your typical athlete. I'm just a short, middle-aged woman

who came to exercise late in life, and it's become very important to me," she says. "Rowing is a power in my life, off and on the water." So when she was told to take it easy following her three lumpectomies, mastectomy, reconstruction, and chemotherapy, she was devastated.

"It was 'Don't lift more than 5 pounds' and 'Don't do any repetitive exercise.' Well, that takes care of rowing, doesn't it?" she says.

Cotting's determination to row again led Kaelin to launch a study with Row As One, a Boston-based nonprofit that has made a mission

of getting girls and women into the sport. Kaelin thinks her research may dispel worries about exercise-induced lymphedema, a by-product of breast surgery. After lymph vessels or nodes in the armpit have been removed or damaged, fluid can build up, causing the arm on the affected side to swell.

"A breast-cancer survivor can get lymphedema at any time," Kaelin says. "But I'm not convinced that rowing or upper-body exercises lead to it; they might even help prevent it. If we can show that rigorous arm exercise such as rowing doesn't increase the rate of lymphedema, then we can remove some of these restrictions."

Don McKenzie, M.D., Ph.D., a sports medicine specialist at the University of British Columbia, has been studying women with breast cancer since 1996. "There's a lot of advice—don't knit, don't

scientific proof that exercise and lymphedema are linked," he says. McKenzie, an avid kayaker, decided that dragon boating, a kind of canoe racing popular in Vancouver since it was introduced by the Chinese at the 1986 World's Fair, would be a great way to study the condition. He launched a nonprofit organization called *Abreast In A Boat*, and his studies of survivors/paddlers in that program showed that upper-body exercise neither causes nor worsens lymphedema. In fact, his latest work, published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, shows a benefit. Compared with survivors who didn't exercise, women with lymphedema who participated in a progressive eight-week upper-body fitness program consisting of resistance training and aerobic activity experienced slight improvements in physical function-

**O**THER LONG-STANDING myths are also being put to rest. Chemotherapy and radiation can be so draining that doctors often advise against physical activity. Yet early results from a four-year study at the Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine at the Miriam Hospital and Brown Medical School in Providence, Rhode Island, show that exercise frequently increases energy in women treated for breast cancer. Meanwhile, a study at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in Baltimore found that radiation or chemo patients who walked at a moderate pace three times a week were less fatigued and anxious, felt stronger, and slept better than those who didn't.

Encouraging in a different way are results from Kerry S. Courneya, Ph.D., at the University of Alberta. His studies have found that, in addition to improving aerobic

## fitness finds for survivors As exercise for women with breast cancer

*gets the nod from researchers, more resources are becoming available. Here are several worth investigating.*

### • A BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR'S GUIDE TO FITNESS.

Surgical oncologist Carolyn Kaelin, M.D., created this DVD with Reebok, Row As One, and Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital. On the disc, available this month, survivors and master trainers Josie Gardiner and Joy Prouty demonstrate exercises tailored to address the repercussions of treatment. Details: [www.rowasone.org](http://www.rowasone.org), [www.reebok.com](http://www.reebok.com), or [www.danafarber.org](http://www.danafarber.org).

• **ABREAST IN A BOAT** is a Vancouver, British Columbia-based dragon-boat racing group for women fighting breast cancer. Details: [www.abreastinaboat.com](http://www.abreastinaboat.com).

• **CANCERFIT** provides tailored fitness programs and retreats. Details: [www.cancerfit.com](http://www.cancerfit.com).

• **COTTING COMPANIES** offers exercise classes for survivors, seminars for fitness trainers, and inspirational materials, including a documentary about the first

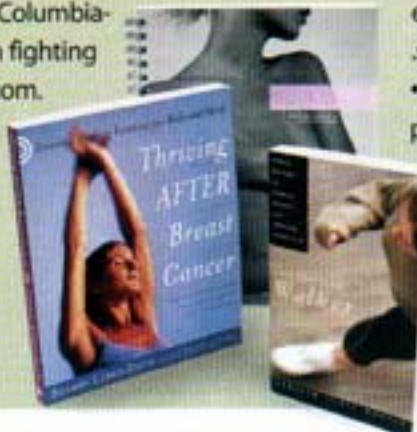
*One in Nine* boat to row in the Head of the Charles Regatta, on the Charles River in Boston. Details: [www.cottingco.com](http://www.cottingco.com).

• **FOCUS ON HEALING: THE LEBED METHOD** is a dance- and movement-therapy regimen available at hospitals and health clubs across the country, and in video and book form. Details: [www.focusonhealing.net](http://www.focusonhealing.net).

• **STAYING ABREAST: REHABILITATION EXERCISES FOR BREAST CANCER SURGERY** is a therapy program and book by medical-exercise specialist Annie Togli. Details: [www.stayingabreast.com](http://www.stayingabreast.com).

• **TEAM SURVIVOR** is a Danskin-sponsored nonprofit organization that provides free health education and activity programs. Details: [www.teamsurvivor.org](http://www.teamsurvivor.org).

• **THE SPIRITED WALKER**, a book by survivor Carolyn Scott Kortge, explores the physical and emotional power of walking. Details: [www.spiritedwalker.com](http://www.spiritedwalker.com).



## powering on

continued from page 149

energy levels, exercise raised survivors' self-esteem and improved their moods. "We knew that exercise increases fitness, but now we also have the happiness factor," Courneya says. "Exercisers had 19 additional hours of happiness per week compared to those not exercising."

The importance of a salve to the spirit is clear to breast-cancer survivor Carolyn Scott Kortge, who found out she had the disease at age 57 and underwent a lumpectomy, radiation, and chemotherapy. "For many years, walking had been a way to quiet my mind," says Kortge, author of *The Spirit Walker*. "But when I was diagnosed it became a lifeline to patterns of normalcy in a time when nothing felt normal. We can feel so betrayed by our bodies when we get cancer, but with every step I'm taking, I'm working with my body to show my intention to survive." Kortge, who lives in Eugene, Oregon, now conducts walking seminars for other survivors and their families.

Women whose cancer has spread are feeling the effects of walking and other activities in studies at the University of Wisconsin's HealthEmotions Research Institute. "So far, we know that women with metastatic breast cancer seem to be improving on fitness and quality-of-life measures," says research scientist Gregory C. Kolden, PhD. "You can imagine how a patient feels when she could barely walk around the track and within a few weeks she's doing it 10 to 12 times. She feels like she's actually living her life."

Karen Hornbostel, a Colorado exercise physiologist, knows the rewards. Her cancer has recurred or spread several times over the past 10 years. Each time, she has fought back with exercise.

"Because I'd been a competitive cyclist and was fit, I've been able to better tolerate the treatments," says the 50-year-old, who's participated in several triathlons with a group of cancer survivors. "So exercise as a way to cope with the fatigue, depression, and physical debilitation isn't new to me. What is new is that the medical community and others are starting to see the benefits, too." Inspired, Hornbostel launched Summit Cancer Solutions Inc., a Denver organization that promotes exercise for cancer patients.

Ames, says Diane Cotting. Her nonprofit group, Cotting Companies, is sponsoring a series of conferences to "train the trainers," she says. "It should be standard that exercise specialists at health clubs, or yoga teachers, know what it means when a woman walks in and says 'I have breast cancer.' This is a person with special needs."

One of the trainers doing the training is New Yorker Annie Toglia, a medical-exercise specialist and survivor who, with her surgeon, created *Staying Abreast: Rehabilitation Exercises for Breast*

One of the trainers doing the training is New Yorker Annie Toglia, a medical-exercise specialist and survivor who, with her surgeon, created *Staying Abreast: Rehabilitation Exercises for Breast Cancer Surgery*, a landmark program scientifically designed to aid recovery from surgery and treatment. "With Toglia's book and the current research," says physical therapist Jones, "we're starting to see the kind of rehabilitation guidelines and evidence that will reassure the medical community and insurance companies about the validity of exercise as a part of therapy for survivors."

exercise physiologist, he says.

Knoxville, Tennessee.