

- Break Room
- Columnists
- D.C./Politics
- Education
- Entertainment
- Health/Science
- House/Garden
- Lottery | Pets
- Nation | World
- Opinion | Blog
- Photography
- Punchbutton
- Religion | Obits
- Special Reports
- Texas/Southwest
- Texas Living
- Travel | Food
- Weather | Traffic
- Corrections

- AIDiaTX.com
- Community
- GuideLive
- Texas Almanac

- CowboysPlus.com
- com Store

ClassifiedCenter

Local ads from the paper and more!

- ▶ HomeCenter
- ▶ Cars.com
- ▶ JobCenter
- ▶ DatingCenter
- ▶ TicketCenter
- ▶ Other categories

Marketplace

- ▶ Newspaper ads
- ▶ Photo Store
- ▶ Front Page Store
- ▶ News Archive
- ▶ Services for newspaper subscribers

My DallasNews.com

- ▶ Register
- ▶ Account information
- ▶ My-Cast Weather
- ▶ My-NetLink ISP
- ▶ My Specials Direct
- ▶ Make this my home page
- ▶ My newsletters

Texas Living

Texas Living | Columnists | Fashion | Food | High Profile | House/Garden

A cancer survivor's road back to fitness

06:24 PM CST on Thursday, October 30, 2003

By **ALINE McKENZIE** / The Dallas Morning News

Annie Toglia, a personal trainer from New York, has been through the gamut with breast cancer.

In 1996, she was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer, which had killed two aunts and a grandmother. She has had 16 operations, including two mastectomies. She went through a lawsuit because of an early misdiagnosis.

What she didn't get was a full program that would help her regain her mobility and fitness.

"Nothing on paper, nothing in a book, nothing that I thought was suitable enough for me," she says.

So she became certified as a medical exercise specialist and developed her own regimen.

Working with doctors, trainers and other health workers, she has developed a program called "Staying Abreast: Rehabilitation Exercises for Breast Cancer Surgery," and has self-published a book by that title (\$65).

"I had probably 10 different personal trainers who had different ideas, and I had different ideas, and we all kind of bounced off each other," she says.

Her exercises follow a scheme called "periodization," in which exercises are presented in stages: one set to be done just after surgery, another for six weeks later, and so on.

During her own treatments, she would exercise on her own while she was in the hospital; for instance, walking down the hall, pushing her IV pole, "performing what appeared to be gymnastics in hospital garb," an oncology nurse practitioner writes in the book's foreword.

She developed her regimen in conjunction with her breast doctor and plastic surgeon, but she was already becoming well-known among health professionals.

"Before I was even writing the book, they were already sending their patients to me," she says.

Some exercises are as easy as a shoulder shrug, while more advanced exercises involve movement using a bar or a large ball. Early exercises are geared toward preventing swelling and scarring, and later ones help build aerobic capacity, strength and flexibility.

"I want people to feel more a part of the fitness world and less of a cancer patient," she says.

Suzanne Fox Trotter, a physical therapist in Austin who uses the book, says it's a good resource for therapists, who tend to draw from a variety of techniques.

She says the book is worthwhile because patients can say, "Hey, this is what I should be doing," and, she says, "They can maintain the benefits they got in therapy."

Producing the book was a team effort. Many friends and colleagues helped with money or services. The cover, for instance, features a photograph of supermodel Kate Moss – both she and the photographer donated the image.

Friends advanced money to cover the printing costs, while the artist was willing to delay being paid, and charged so little that it was "nearly a donation," Ms. Toglia says.

The first version of her Web site (www.stayingabreast.com) was designed for free and went up in November 2000.

And she seems to have touched a nerve.

"I have a tremendous amount of e-mail from the Web site," she says.

One woman was in such constant pain that she was suicidal, and wanted to visit Ms. Toglia for treatment. Instead, she told the woman to get treatment

Search **Go**
DallasNews.com
The Archives

REFINANCING YOUR CAR 
How to save money with a lower rate. **GO**

BRING A FRIEND SALE!
SAVE HUNDREDS ON A SECOND TICKET!



Funjet Vacations
Vacation Getaways

with medication. Later, the woman told her that she had saved her life, she says.

Meanwhile, she kept working on the book. It was originally supposed to be about 50 pages but grew to 111.

And there was the lawsuit. "That was truly worse than the treatments themselves," she says. "It kept me from being able to promote my book."

Now that the suit is settled, she has been able to focus on getting the word out. A lot of it is by word of mouth, which has led to copies of the book being distributed to clinics as far away as Portugal, Australia and Singapore.

"It's sort of become this amazing thing of book donations going on all over the country," she says.

She had 1,000 copies printed and estimates that about 800 are floating around the medical world. At least 30 clinics are using the program.

"I don't care about making a million dollars," she says. "I care about getting people well."

E-mail amckenzie@dallasnews.com

Archives: More information on this or other topics from *The Dallas Morning News*.
Subscribe to *The Dallas Morning News*.



[Printer Version](#)



[Email to a Friend](#)



[Discuss in Forums](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Terms](#)

[Privacy updated](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Site Map](#)

[About Us](#)

©2003 Belo Interactive

Dallas Web Sites: WFAA.com | TXCN.com | GuideLive.com | Community | CowboysPlus.com | AIDiaTX.com
This site is best viewed with Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher.