

Recovery PHYSICAL THERAPEUTIC CENTER

Rehabilitation and Wellness Enhancement

www.recovery-ptc.com

Recovery is Abreast:

Fall 2009

The Role of Physical Therapy in Breast Cancer

A diagnosis of breast cancer is a life altering event. The goal in the treatment of breast cancer is understood; the eradication of the cancer. No matter what the stage or type of breast cancer, some surgery is usually involved. For many women radiation, chemotherapy or both is also a part of treatment. Unfortunately, women are often stunned by the associated loss of strength and function of the involved limb and the decrease in their overall energy & fitness level that usually accompanies breast cancer treatment.

Several of the post-surgical problems are interrelated. The surgery itself and scarring from it tightens the skin on the chest wall. This is the body's way of healing. But if fibrous adhesions form, shoulder joint dysfunction including frozen shoulder may result in immobility and loss of range of motion. A chronic condition, known as post-mastectomy pain syndrome, caused by scar tissue impinging on nerves can create numbness and pain. The shoulder blade is also susceptible to problems after surgery. Trauma to the long thoracic nerve during surgery can cause temporary or permanent paralysis of the muscle that helps stabilize the scapula. This may be first noticed upon attempting to reach for something, or when headaches, low-back pain or interscapular pain occur.

Balance and symmetry of the body can be significantly altered after a mastectomy contributing to postural strain. Weeks of daily radiation may further exacerbate posture and range of motion problems by causing fibrosis and skin tightness of the axilla or armpit. Chemotherapy can intensify the effects of

immobility, when treatment causes fatigue and corresponding inactivity. Removal of lymph nodes, especially if lymph node surgery is followed by radiation, increases the risk of lymphedema, or swelling of the arm. In addition to causing discomfort, such swelling can produce other complications, including infection as well as changes in skin, posture and musculoskeletal problems related to the increased girth of the arm.



Recovery from breast surgery is linked to the timing, intensity and quality of a rehabilitative program. Because prevention is key to recovery, beginning physical therapy as soon as possible is encouraged. Rehabilitation can begin even before surgery with a baseline evaluation & education session, followed by appropriate exercise starting shortly after surgery and progressing through stages of healing with individualized treatment and structured fitness program takes the patient through complete recovery.

Why begin physical therapy so soon? Because the most common physical problems

resulting from lumpectomy or mastectomy are in a large part preventable. The degree of difficulty patients encounter with any of these complications varies with the extent of the disease and the procedure, as well as prior health problems and age. When approached with a positive and determined attitude, physical therapy can not only improve range of motion, strength and function of the impacted body parts, but can also help alleviate stress, restore self-confidence and enhance quality of life.

Did You Know

- ◆ A woman's chance of getting breast cancer is 1 in 8 over her lifetime
- ◆ The majority of women who develop breast cancer have no known risk factors except being a woman and getting older
- ◆ Most women who get breast cancer have no family history
- ◆ The incidence of breast cancer is second only to skin cancer in women in the US
- ◆ Men can develop breast cancer too! Incidence in men is 1/100th that of women.
- ◆ Early Detection : Regular screening is the best way to lower risk of dying from breast cancer



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Now is the best time.....

Believe it or not, the best time to check for breast cancer is when your breasts feel fine. If you find cancer early, there are more treatment options and a much better chance for survival. Mammography is the best screening method used today to find breast cancer early. However, it is not perfect. When mammography is combined with clinical breast exam your chances for finding cancer are even greater. Remember, even if you feel healthy now, just being a woman and getting older puts you at risk for breast cancer. Getting checked regularly can put your mind at ease. Finding cancer early may save your life!

For more information about breast cancer detection & treatment and how you can help find a cure go to:

Susan G. Koman for the Cure : ww5.koman.org

American Cancer Society : www.cancer.org

FREE CONSULTATION

Have you wondered if you or a friend or family member have a problem that might benefit from physical therapy-either an injury or condition that interferes with function or quality of life? Or perhaps you are interested in knowing if a "Performance Enhancement Program" might improve your game or help your child get a scholarship.

Well, stop wondering and find out! We offer a no-charge consultation with a trained therapist who will spend a few minutes with you to understand your situation and your goals. We will tell you honestly if we think we can help and, if so, what your program might involve. If you need a physician referral, we can help you get to your own doctor or we can recommend one if you are between doctors.

Simply fill out the form below for yourself or your friend and bring this to our front desk. Or you can call the information into our office @ 466-8711.

REQUEST FOR A FREE CONSULTATION

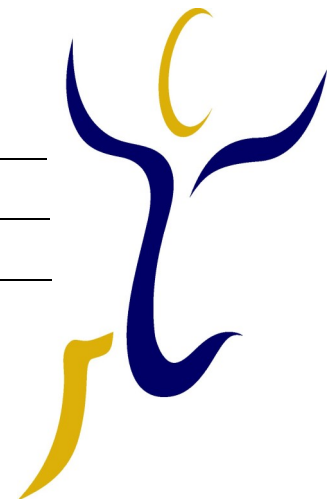
Your Name: _____

Friend/Family Name: _____

Phone Number : _____ Date: _____

What is the problem or interest that you or your friend have?

What would be a good time for us to contact you or your friend?



Empowering You to Better Health