



Living through cancer with exercise

May 2012

### Sunflower Wellness Welcomes Two Pioneers in Cancer and Exercise to its Medical Advisory Board

Sunflower Wellness is pleased to announce the addition to its Medical Advisory Board of two outstanding champions of exercise for people living with cancer. As pioneering innovators in our field, both Kathryn Schmitz from the University of Pennsylvania and Donna Wilson from Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York are passionately dedicated to the cause.



**Kathryn Schmitz, PhD, MPH, FACSM** is an associate professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine. Katie’s unique cross-disciplinary training in epidemiology and exercise physiology has resulted in a research career that spans from investigations of the physiologic effects of exercise at the molecular level to examining how best to actually help people get exercise in clinical and community settings.

Dr. Schmitz serves on the expert panel for the YMCA/Lance Armstrong Foundation Cancer Survivorship Collaborative, wrote the cancer survivorship section of the recently published U.S. DHHS report of the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee, served on the ad hoc committee that developed the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Cancer Exercise Trainer certification, and is the lead author of the ACSM Roundtable on Exercise for Cancer Survivors, which published guidance for exercise testing and prescription for cancer survivors in July 2010. In 2010, the National Lymphedema Network awarded Dr. Schmitz the Catalyst Award, for being a

Sunflower Wellness provides therapeutic movement and exercise for people living with cancer.

#### Board of Directors

<i>Bill Bain, President</i>	<i>Regan Fedric</i>
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researcher whose work has stimulated thought, discussion, and debate that leads to improvement in patient care for those with lymphedema. Dr. Schmitz’ long term professional goal is to see that all oncologists, fitness trainers, and cancer patients will eventually be as aware of the usefulness of exercise for cancer control as we already are for its role in controlling heart disease.

When she learned of the Sunflower Wellness Exercise Counseling program, Katie told us: “There is not another model out there doing what you do.” We are excited about working with Katie to expand our efforts.



**Donna Wilson** has worked as a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) and personal trainer with the Integrative Medicine Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering since September 2000. She studied at the

Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Institute of Health Professions, receiving an MSN in 1991. Additionally, Donna was certified as a Personal Trainer by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America in May 2000.

After working for 17 years at Massachusetts General Hospital, Donna joined the nursing staff at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in 1992 as a pulmonary/thoracic nurse. She has created [breathing lung exercise videos on YouTube](#) for lung cancer patients.

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- *Research news: Strong benefits of exercise recognized*
- *Exercise of the month: Three-position Toe-tap*

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### *Exercise Pioneers... (from page 2)*

Currently Donna designs exercise programs for all types of patients going through cancer treatments, including chair aerobics, strong bones, back-in-shape aerobics class, and personal training. Her goals are to rebuild strength, restore flexibility, achieve better balance, and decrease fatigue and breathlessness in all patients. Donna believes in collaboration with all services to give quality care to each patient.

In January 2009, Donna organized the first women's cancer survivor Dragon Boat Team. Sponsored by Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, the team has joined a worldwide network of 140 women's breast cancer teams to promote dragon boat racing as a part of a healthy lifestyle, as an innovative and unique activity for survivors and as a way to raise funds for cancer research and survivorship programs.

### *Sunflower Participants Talk Back*

In November-December 2011 Sunflower Wellness received a big boost from Zach Usi, an undergraduate student at San Francisco State University student majoring in Kinesiology. For a class research project, Zach developed a short online survey which was completed by many Sunflower Wellness participants. He then compiled the results. Bravo! Thank you, Zach!

We really appreciate all of Zach's hard work and are pleased to share several of the comments from our class participants.

- **"I love the program. Jane is a wonderful instructor and knows her stuff.** She is kind and caring and is always concerned about her students. I have improved my strength and especially my balance. I can walk more and I don't have such a fear of falling now. At the age of 73, this is a great benefit."
- **"This program helped me understand how much I could do at various points of my treatment.** Rather than just not doing anything, my trainer adjusted exercises to my level of ability and guided me on where/when to take it easy and when I was not doing enough. She has held me accountable to being active, helping me feel incredible not only physically but in rebuilding my emotional self-esteem."
- **"I love the exercise classes with other cancer patients and instructors who understand [the] limitations that I'd have to explain in a regular class.** With the Sunflower program I can get the understanding and encouragement I need to keep going at my own level.

- **"My doctor was amazed at how strong I was after months of chemotherapy.** While I was going through it, I kept hearing from friends, 'You don't look like you're going through chemotherapy. You look healthy.' Exercise has given me back my body, given me a sense of ease in movement that I had lost."
- **"The program has helped get my strength and confidence back and is helping me get in better shape.** I look forward to going to class even when I don't feel well since I know I will feel much better after class. The classes have been a very important part of moving forward with my life after cancer."
- **"It is the best program which I have ever experienced.** This is one of the most innovative programs for cancer patients. Of course, the doctors get most credit, however, this program brings us to a much more positive environment and improves our mental health."
- **"With classes every day, Sunflower is providing remarkable opportunities to the cancer community with trained and capable instructors specific to our needs.** I am back in my physical body again. Strong, flexible and with balance as a result of the dedication of the various instructors that recognize and teach what we cancer survivors need to get back on our feet and stay in motion."

### *By the numbers*

Our innovative UCSF Exercise Counseling program reached its second anniversary in April. The patients we consult with continue to benefit from their Exercise Counseling sessions with 78% reporting that they exercise regularly after their session! And those who exercise report that their overall levels of stress and fatigue go down as a result of exercising.

#### *UCSF Exercise Consultation stats*

- Program start: April 15, 2010 (Two years ago!)
- Over 650 patient phone inquiries logged
- Over 430 patient consultation sessions held to date
- Patients who report they now exercise: 78%
- Average STRESS reduction: 23.4%
- Average FATIGUE reduction: 24.4%

#### *Sunflower Exercise program stats*

- Weekly exercise classes offered (currently): 11
- Total clients served: 251
- Class sessions logged: 1,175
- Personal training sessions: 365
- Total client- hours of exercise: Over 5,700

## ***Nutrition: The Straight Skinny on Diet and Cancer***

*Sunflower Wellness continues its series on Nutrition and Cancer, graciously authored by Cecelia Ottenweller, a survivor living in Houston. The full installment of Cecelia's interview with Bay Area cancer nutritionist Natalie Ledesma can be found on our website at <http://www.sunflowerwellness.org/Nutrition>.*

### ***Supplements***

**How important is it to take nutritional supplements to stave off a recurrence of cancer?**

Natalie: We don't have evidence to suggest that supplements are going to reduce your risk of a recurrence per se. However, I do recommend supplements for certain clinical conditions (such as diarrhea, constipation) and/or to enhance immune function, decrease inflammation, improve glycemic control, all of which help control the areas where cancer grows. Which supplements are best really vary by individual. [NOTE: Natalie advocates talking to a professional to determine what supplements a person should take.]

### ***Cleansing***

**A number of my friends are "cleansing" their systems, like with the lemon/cayenne/maple syrup cleanse. Is this a good idea? Do I have toxins locked in my many-feet of intestines that will someday cause a recurrence or another cancer? Can you shed some (sane!) light on this subject?**

Natalie: Hard science behind cleansing? I don't think so. Can it be beneficial? Possibly. There are various types of cleanses out there, some of which are reasonable and many that are not. Eating a healthy vegan diet is essentially a cleansing diet. I generally do not advocate radical cleanses for cancer patients and even with a conservative cleanse would suggest that patients be at least 6-8 weeks out of treatment (if not longer) before embarking on a cleanse. I do find that, for some patients, adhering to a healthy well-balanced cleanse for 3-4 weeks can be very helpful (reset the system after treatment if you will), but this is not a low calorie diet necessarily. Cleanses/fasting can involve consuming freshly-juiced organic vegetables and fruit, juices diluted with water, raw or steamed organic fruit and vegetables, cooked whole grains (such as mung beans and rice, often used by yogis), legumes, nuts and seeds, micro-algae combined with vegetable or

fruit juice or herb tea. It can also be an absolute fast, which is not recommended. Regardless of which type of fast is practiced, it is very important to have plenty of water, liquid and rest, and to work with a professional so that you're being closely monitored.

### ***Research News:***

***Exercise-related improvement in the physical function of cancer survivors may have longer-term effects***

By Trisha Hue, PhD, MPH  
*Sunflower Wellness Board Secretary*

A recent meta-analysis, published in the British Medical Journal, assessed the effects of physical activity in cancer survivors.<sup>1</sup> The authors systematically evaluated data from 34 randomized controlled trials of exercise interventions in patients, after completion of their main cancer treatment.

Based on data from clinical trials of breast, prostate, gynecologic, colorectal, gastric, and lung cancer survivors, the researchers confirmed that exercise had positive effects on quality of life, as seen in many other studies. Additionally, the meta-analysis demonstrated that physical activity significantly increased peak oxygen consumption and peak power output, reflecting better physical fitness status in the "exercising cancer survivors". Peak oxygen consumption has been shown to be a strong predictor of mortality in both non-cancer and cancer patients.<sup>2-3</sup> In men and women with non-small cell lung cancer, achieving higher peak oxygen consumption resulted in a 21-61% reduction in the risk of death.<sup>4</sup>

#### *References:*

<sup>1</sup>Fong DY, Ho JW, Hui BP, et al. Physical activity for cancer survivors: meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *BMJ*. 2012 Jan;344:e70.

<sup>2</sup>Kavanagh T, Mertens DJ, Hamm LF, et al. Prediction of long-term prognosis in 12 169 men referred for cardiac rehabilitation. *Circulation*. 2002; 106: 666-671.

<sup>3</sup>Myers J, Prakash M, Froelicher V, Do D, Partington S, Atwood JE. Exercise capacity and mortality among men referred for exercise testing. *N Engl J Med*. 2002; 346: 793-801.

<sup>4</sup>Jones LW, Watson D, Herndon JE 2nd, et al. Peak oxygen consumption and long-term all-cause mortality in non-small cell lung cancer. *Cancer*. 2010 Oct;116(20):4825-32.

**COPYMAT**

Sunflower Wellness gratefully thanks Copymat (455 Market Street, Suite 180, San Francisco) for their generous printing support for this newsletter mailing.

## *Exercise of the month: Jane Clark demonstrates a Three-Position Toe-Tap*

You can do this exercise just about anywhere.



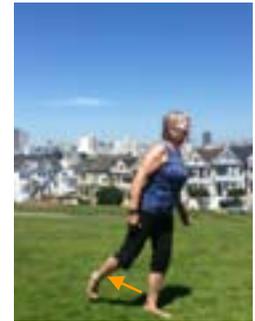
1) Stand tall, putting your weight on your left leg.\*



2) Tap your right toe in the front. Just tap! – while bending your left knee slightly. Then return your right foot to the start.



3) Do the same toe-tap movement to the side – out, tap, return.



4) ... and finally to the back. Remember: just tap!

- 5) Try to straighten your left leg each time you bring your right foot back (after moves 2, 3 and 4 above).
- 6) Repeat the whole sequence with the other leg – putting all your weight on your right leg, tapping with your left.
- 7) Repeat this sequence three times with each leg.
- 8) As you progress, try not to tap your toe on the floor, but simply move your toe in the indicated direction.
- 9) You can also gradually increase the number of repetitions to five on each leg.
- 10) A final progression is to move your arms in the opposite direction of your foot.

\* If you need help balancing, you can hold onto a cane, a golf club or an upright foam roller with your left hand.

### *Sunflower Wellness Welcomes*

Sunflower Wellness is extremely pleased to announce another outstanding new Director on our Board:



#### **Chris Dunn, Director**

Chris brings over 20 years experience in direct, digital and database marketing in the healthcare, financial services, and high-tech industries to Sunflower Wellness. Chris has spent the last six years as

VP of Strategy for several Omnicom advertising agencies driving strategic initiatives for such leading brands as Blue Shield of California, Sony PlayStation, Union Bank, E\*Trade, and Waterford. Before moving to the advertising world, Chris was principal and founding partner of thinkSmart, LLC, a San Francisco based marketing consulting firm. Chris also brings extensive client side experience from such industry leaders as Wells Fargo, Intuit, and Marsh.

*Sunflower Wellness kindly requests your support. Please visit our website to donate.*

### *In Brief*

- It's still under wraps, but we are excited about the ongoing redesign of our website, which we hope to debut this summer. You'll want to check out our specialized exercise videos, research library, testimonials blog, and ongoing news, exercise tips and encouragement from the Sunflower Wellness team. Many thanks to Kris, Carrie, Chris, Cecelia, Jason and Kimberly for countless hours of help.
- Available now: you can follow us on Facebook. Just look for Sunflower Wellness. We welcome your feedback!
- Coming soon: we'll be tweeting on Twitter. You can find us there at [@sunflowerwell](https://twitter.com/sunflowerwell).
- Sunflower Wellness is pleased to acknowledge the law firm of Perkins Coie, which has taken us on as a pro bono client. We give special thanks to Kirupa Pushparaj (now at Amazon), Brian Coleman, and the rest of the team for their unflinching efforts to turn us into a real company.
- Finally, we are especially grateful to Bob Farr for his unwavering support of our organization. Mr. Bob: you are an amazing gentleman. Thank you!