
Weight Training After Surgery Improves Quality of Life In Breast Cancer Survivors

Researchers believe that weight training significantly improves the quality of life in women recently treated for breast cancer. Minnesota doctors found that six months of twice weekly exercise that improved strength and body composition was enough to result in improvements in the overall physical and emotional condition of the patients.

It is not unusual for newly diagnosed and treated breast cancer patients to suffer from multitude quality of life limiting complaints, including insomnia, weight gain, chronic fatigue, depression, and anxiety. Although treatments for breast cancer have progressed rapidly, treatment for these secondary complaints has only recently been compared.

There are several physical options available for the management of these secondary issues involving breast cancer survivors. The researchers compared aerobic and weight training and found weight training produced better results.

Tetsuya Ohira, M.D. of the Division of Epidemiology and Community Health at the University of Minnesota and colleagues found that weight training improved the women's overall physical and psychosocial quality of life score and global psychological scores compared with controls. They found significant improvements in body mass and upper body strength. Evidently this had the greatest impact on symptoms.

A recent study of the effect of aerobic exercise on quality of life among recently treated breast cancer survivors showed to positively affect only half the number of survivors as the six months of strength training. The strength / weight training study involved eighty-six women within 36 months of treatment, who were assigned either a weight training exercise program or no treatment.

This was the first study to evaluate weight training and its effect on quality of life among breast cancer survivors. "Changes in body composition and strength," conclude the authors, may empower these women with "a sense of return to feeling in control of their bodies that may translate into feeling greater efficacy in other areas of life."

The study is published in the May 1, 2006 issue of *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.



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