

BREAST CANCER

Yoga and breast cancer



FILE PHOTO

By **BONNIE YONKER**
SPECIAL TO FEELING FIT

The American Cancer Society estimates that the United States is home to approximately 2.5 million breast cancer survivors. Whether the goal is to recover wellness, achieve peace of mind, or stay physically fit, yoga is an increasingly popular option for survivors and women who are currently battling the disease.

The grueling ordeal of breast cancer treatment often leaves patients with a range of debilitating side effects, like decreased mobility, a loss of balance, and numbness in the arms, shoulders and chest.

In the wake of the procedure, many women also suffer from destructive mental side effects, like magnified

feelings of self-consciousness, a belief that they are now "disfigured" or no longer "whole," and limiting ideas about their physical and mental capabilities.

With an energizing and healing yoga practice, however, these side effects — physical, psychological, and emotional — can be decreased and even reversed.

A recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois and Indiana University found that yoga can be an effective tool for managing pain and fatigue, regaining physical fitness and recovering psychologically from the trauma of breast cancer surgery.

Participants in the study reported substantial physical benefits, including reduced pain, improved sense of

balance, greater strength and flexibility, better muscle tone and weight loss.

The researchers also found significant psychological benefits in women who maintained a regular practice in group yoga sessions. These women reported feeling that their body image had improved drastically, that they felt freed from the self-imposed psychological barriers they had constructed, and that they had learned to take time for themselves and seek out the invaluable support offered by a community of women in similar situations.

"Yoga is healing on many levels," says Bobby Clennell, author of A Woman's Yoga Book and a guest instructor at The Yoga Sanctuary, "from the physical to the mental, the psychological and the spiritual."

For women battling breast cancer, yoga provides both physical and mental relief by calming anxiety, relieving fatigue, supporting healing, boosting overall health and encouraging a state of ease in the body and mind. At a time when women may feel disconnected from their breasts and their womanhood, yoga stimulates a powerful connection with all parts of the body and "gives these women a reference point from which to view the body/mind/spirit as a whole," says Clennell.

"I began my yoga journey 2 years ago, and I attend 4-6 classes a week," says student Carolyn Hamilton. "As a

10-year breast cancer survivor, I immediately noticed a sense of serenity and positive feeling from my yoga experience. I was diagnosed with a different form of breast cancer last summer and underwent another operation. My recovery has been full, and my general feeling of serenity continues."

Bonnie Yonker is the owner of The Yoga Sanctuary in downtown Punta Gorda. For more information, visit www.TheYogaSanctuary.biz or call 941-505-YOGA (9642).

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MYTH: Laser will not clean down to the bone; only flap surgery can access the bone
FACT: That is not true according to the available science. LANAP accesses the bone without making a large incision in the gums, or needing sutures.

MYTH: Laser is only a quick fix with no permanent results
FACT: That is not accurate. Studies show that LANAP has 6 year track record of no re-treatment of over 84%. Science has shown that LANAP re-grows new collagen attachment to the tooth and bone—a more stable tissue than what conventional gum therapies and surgeries can accomplish.

MYTH: Periodontists don't use the laser, they are strictly gum therapy doctors because it doesn't work.
FACT: 25% of LANAP providers are periodontists, 45% in 2008 alone, and a number are very well-known. So periodontists are involved with LANAP at over 4 times the rate they are represented in the profession.

MYTH: Only periodontists understand perio disease not regular dentists.
FACT: That's not accurate, ethical, or a professional representation to make. All Dentists are trained in Periodontics and are legally authorized to practice periodontal treatments as it is within the scope of practice of their State Dental License.

MYTH: Traditional Gum Surgery is better and there is only discomfort for 1 week.
FACT: That is not supported by science. There is scientific evidence that LANAP may be superior to conventional gum treatments. See IJPRD and Yukna. Intense discomfort after conventional scalpel surgery is well documented in the scientific literature.

Dr. Farag is a certified LANAP provider as well as a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Laser Dentistry.

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