



NUTRITION



EXERCISE



EDUCATION



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



TOOLS TO HELP YOU SURVIVE



# Thriving after cancer

When breast cancer survivor Melinda Tomsic completed Thrive, Mercy's cancer fitness & wellness program, she was eight pounds lighter and three inches smaller around the waist.

There literally was a measurable difference in the rate of her recovery.

Thrive is designed to empower cancer patients with tools to conquer the physical and emotional effects of cancer. The eight-week exercise, nutrition and personal training program focuses on the individual needs of each patient to improve quality of life.

"I had gained weight during chemo and was inactive," she explains. "I wanted to get back in shape a little bit and feel better."

Melinda had a mastectomy in December 2008, followed by seven months of chemotherapy. Dacey Waldron, Health and Fitness Coordinator at Mercy Fitness Center, was Melinda's personal

trainer. Also helpful were two consultations with a Mercy nutritionist, who provided healthy diet information.

"I hate to exercise but Dacey motivated me to do it," says Melinda. "She was wonderful and encouraged me all the way. When I was done, I was happy and proud of myself."

Melinda feels so much better she is choosing to continue exercising and joined Mercy Fitness Center. "There has been a huge difference in my energy level—and my confidence, because having cancer shakes you in a lot of different ways."

Donald Bolton can empathize with Melinda's story as he well knows just how difficult it can be to deal with the effects of having cancer. Don had



prostate cancer diagnosed in 1990 that later spread to his jawbone in 2008, as well as a sarcoma in his thigh in 2006. The final bout of treatments left him with low energy and fatigue.

"I was getting less and less active. If I kept going in this direction I knew I would become very sedentary," Don says, crediting Thrive for expediting his recovery.

"While I was at Mercy, they indicated there was a specific program (Thrive) for cancer patients," says Don. "They said I had to have permission from my doctor, so I went back to doctor to ask. He said 'if you think you can do it – do it!'"

Don, who completed the program in October 2009, received nutrition counseling and then had a fitness assessment before beginning an exercise

program. "The thing I noticed was the more I exercised, usually three times a week, the less I felt the side effects from the chemo. I brought that up

to the doctor," he says, adding, "Each time I saw him he'd ask if I had pain from the bone cancer. Each time my answer was no. And, each time my blood work was improving."

In fact, Don's PSA score went from 25 (under 4 is optimal) to 2. Don knew he was onto a good thing and he has continued exercising long after completing Thrive.

Dr. Janet Merfeld, Radiation Oncologist and Medical Director of Mercy's Hall Radiation Center, notes, "We've seen

remarkable results in our patients. They feel a sense of empowerment and see significant improvement in their quality of life."

**"...having cancer shakes you in a lot of different ways."**

*Melinda Tomsic  
Cancer survivor  
and Thrive participant*