

Breast cancer survivors can find comfort in teams with athletic goals

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Breast cancer survivors may find participation on a team that incorporates physical fitness, such as boating, walking or running, can help improve their quality of life, says a Purdue University sport and exercise psychologist.

"Many of these survivors' emotional, informational and social needs are met through traditional support groups or online groups," says Meghan McDonough, an assistant professor of health and kinesiology who studies the role relationships play in [physical activity](#). "In addition, there are certainly some positive social and quality of life benefits associated with breast cancer survivors being active together and even competing in community events."

Women who have had breast cancer are not always looking for, or expecting benefits from, the social aspects of competing, but such camaraderie seems to improve their confidence and self-esteem about being a cancer survivor, says McDonough, who has studied breast [cancer survivors](#) in Canada and the United States who compete in canoe racing.

"Plus, realizing the ability to train, compete and reach a goal is considered very empowering for women who have experienced such a difficult time in their lives," she says. "Not only do they consider themselves survivors, but they also start to think of themselves as athletes and teammates."

McDonough recommends patients speak with their physicians about

appropriate physical activity during and after treatment.

It is estimated that more than 190,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States this year, McDonough said. October is [breast cancer](#) awareness month.

Provided by Purdue University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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