



Breast Cancer Dragon Boat

In 1996, Dr. Don McKenzie, a professor in the Department of Sports Medicine and an exercise physiologist, challenged the prevailing medical thinking that women treated for breast cancer should avoid rigorous upper body exercise for fear of developing lymphedema, a debilitating and chronic side effect of treatment.

He developed a program to determine the impact of exercise on breast cancer survivors, choosing dragon boat paddling as the epitome of strenuous, repetitive upper body exercise. He trained twenty-four breast cancer volunteers in the gym for three months, introduced them to dragon boats and taught them paddling techniques. At the end of the three-month season on the water, none of the volunteers had lymphedema.

The women volunteers loved the camaraderie and support of their fellow paddlers and had regained control of their lives. They realized dragon boat paddling could become a means to raise awareness for breast cancer and invited other to share in their experience.

Over the years, the movement progressed to other areas: Canada, Australia Italy, Penany, New Zealand Singapore, Poland and the United States.

To learn more visit: www.IBCPC.com – International Breast Cancer Paddler’s Commission

