



The AMBER Report

ISSUE 2

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **First 500 participants**
- **Take 10 with Jenna**
- **The REACH Centre**

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Message from the Principal Investigators

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your ongoing dedication to the AMBER Study. Without you this important research would not be possible.

In this edition of the newsletter we would like to give you a few updates about the study, tell you about the new testing centre in Calgary and introduce you to two fellow participants, one from Calgary and one from Edmonton. We will also introduce you to the newest exercise tester in Calgary, Jenna Leib, and she



Dr. Christine Friedenreich with Calgary participant, Louise Jefferies

In the fall of 2015 we prepared a manuscript describing the baseline characteristics of the first 500 participants en-

rolled in the AMBER study. The paper concluded that 85% of participants were able to complete the baseline health related fitness assessments (upper body strength measurements were lower). Activity monitoring data, from the accelerometers were collected on 90% of participants. Blood samples were provided by 99% of

will share with you some tips and techniques on how to use a ball for myofascial release. It has been almost four years since the first participant was enrolled in the AMBER Study. Recruitment has been going very well in both Calgary and Edmonton. We are now more than half way towards reaching our goal of 1500 participants. Currently we have 790 participants enrolled in the study, 421 in Calgary and 369 in Edmonton. Thus far, 480 participants have completed their year one



Dr. Kerry Courneya and Dr. Christine Friedenreich

assessments and 53 have completed their year three assessments.

As always, we thank you for your continued interest and commitment to the AMBER study.

First 500 Participants

participants, 98% provided a lymphedema measurement and 95% of participants completed the questionnaires. The paper has been submitted for publication. Once published, it will be made available for you to view on our website, under the heading About the study :

www.amberstudy.com/publications.html



Mary Beth, on the cover of LEAP magazine

"I trust that my participation in this important research project will further improve breast cancer recovery and survival"
Beatrice Paulisch

Q & A with Mary Beth Eckersley

Mary Beth is a Calgary participant who just completed her year three assessments.

What motivates you to be physically active ?

For me being active was a positive way to deal with all the stress and pain. I found being less active made it worse. Even when I was so tired and sore, if I was a little active it helped with everything, mostly about how I saw myself dealing with the cancer. I also had an amazing support team which included my chiropractor who works out of a

training facility. Everyone there was amazing and helped me think I was super active even when I couldn't do much. There were a couple of occasions when Mike my doctor just stood beside me so I could ride a spin bike for a bit.

What was your favorite part of the testing experience ?

I liked all the fit testing and seeing I could affect my outcome and my health and skills.

Would you join a study

like this again in the future? Absolutely.

What advice would you give to ladies newly diagnosed with breast cancer?

I truly believe a positive attitude makes a huge difference, and if you are a part of something that helps you keep that thinking, you are ahead of it and all the stress that comes with cancer.

Q & A with Beatrice Paulisch

Beatrice is an Edmonton participant who has completed her year three testing.

What motivates you to be physically active ?

Coming from such a large family of 12 children and other relatives galore, I couldn't help but be active! From girlhood I have been regularly involved in all school sport activities – continuing with baseball, bowling and curling throughout my adulthood.

I truly believe my yard has motivated me to remain physically active throughout my years. I get all the exercise required to keep fit by tending to all the spruce trees, assortment of ever-

greens, shrubs, cotoneaster hedges, etc.- especially with the trimming and pruning in the spring and fall.

What was your favorite part of the testing experience ?

The caring staff and fulfillment of my dream, made my experience with the AMBER study nothing but pleasant!

The fitness tests were actually fun, especially with the continued encouragement and information provided by the AMBER Study staff. They provided me with all the information relevant to the risks, benefits and alternatives of the lifestyle factors looked at in this project as well as keeping me informed of any new developments.

After understanding the purpose of the AMBER Study, what was involved and the staff being forever pleasant, I didn't find any part of the testing unfavorable, how could anyone?



Beatrice, age 83

Meet Jenna Leib



Jenna, in the new REACH testing centre in Calgary

Jenna is the newest member of the Calgary testing team. She came to us from Saskatchewan with a wide range of qualifications and experience. After completing her bachelor's degree in Kinesiology from the University of Regina she continued her education and became a certified yoga instructor as well as a certified exercise physiologist. With a personal interest in breast cancer, Jenna received additional training at the Rocky Mountain Cancer Institution in Colorado

to become a Cancer and Exercise Specialist.

Before coming to Calgary Jenna was working primarily with breast cancer patients experiencing lymphedema. She developed individualized exercise programs specifically tailored to the needs of the patients. Her programs included yoga, strength training, ball rolling and urban poling. She is currently obtaining an additional certification in yoga therapy. We are very fortunate

to have Jenna as part of the AMBER team.

In subsequent newsletters Jenna will provide a new stretch or exercise that she has used when working with breast cancer survivors in the past (see page 4). If you have any questions about the exercises, please contact Jenna and she will happily assist you:

Jenna.Leib@ahs.ca

Take 10 with Jenna: Ball Rolling for Myofascial Release

What exactly is myofascial release?

Fascia is the thin sheath of fibrous tissue that covers our muscles. The space between the fascia and the muscles can become painful and inflamed as a result of injury, surgery or even every day wear and tear.

Myofascial release is a technique that involves applying gentle sustained pressure into the fascia that surround our muscles to eliminate pain and restore motion.

How often can you roll?

I roll a little every day! A little goes along way. You will feel change in as little as two minutes. If you can, try to

make it a daily habit of 10 to 30 minutes.

Where can I buy a ball(s)?

You can purchase the balls online at www.yogatuneup.com.

Some people also use lacrosse balls, found at most sport stores.

How much pressure should you apply?

The sensation level should always lessen as you start to roll. The sensation may start at 8-7 (on a scale of 1-10) but then should decrease to a 3-2 level as you continue to apply pressure. If this isn't happening, adjust the pressure, use a wall

instead of lying on the floor, back off the pressure, use a larger or softer ball, or back away from the area. Rolling should be slightly uncomfortable like a massage. You can roll over scar tissue once the scar is healed with a soft ball. This is great way to release the tissue and get lymph fluid moving.



Upper Trapezius Release

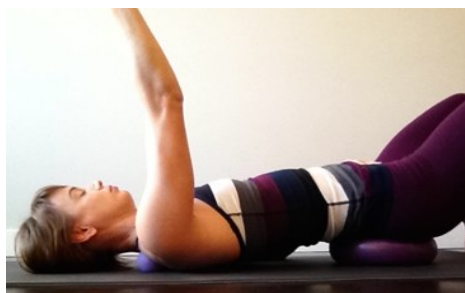
The trapezius is the large triangular group of muscles extending over the back of the neck and shoulders and moving up toward the head and over the shoulder blades.

There are two ways to target this muscle. First, find the trigger points on both sides of the neck (pictured top right).

The first option is to stand with your back against a wall. Place the balls on your trigger points between you and the wall (pictured far right). Slowly bend your knees and then return to a standing position.

The second option is to lay on your

back. Place a block/book under your hips to raise them up. Place the balls on the trigger points between you and the floor. Keep your body still, but move your arms in all directions. Moving your arms will create the massaging action.



Body position for laying position



Upper trapezius trigger point



Ball placement for standing option

New Calgary REACH Centre



Inside the exercise testing room at the REACH Centre

On November 2nd, 2015, testing for the AMBER study in Calgary moved from the Human Performance Lab at the University of Calgary to the newly renovated REACH Centre on the second floor of the Holy Cross Centre. REACH stands for **R**ehabilitation, **E**xercise **A**nd **C**omplementary **H**ealth. The space is being shared primarily by Rehabilitation Oncology, Psychosocial Oncology, Exercise

Oncology and the Department of Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention Research. The space contains a rehabilitation room, an exercise intervention space, an imaging room with a DXA machine, an exercise testing room and a mindfulness centre. The AMBER study is utilizing both the exercise testing room (pictured left) and the imaging room to perform DXA scans.

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