

About Integrative Medicine

A Guide to Self-Care and Support | Spring 2024

CHIEF'S NOTE



Jun Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

As we embrace longer days and warmer weather, it's a great time to explore mind, body, and spirit. Take our daily Integrative Medicine at Home virtual classes with you wherever you go, visit us for massage and acupuncture treatments, or join us for a workshop or series with our talented integrative medicine experts. We are here for you every step of the way.

In this issue, we welcome the Exercise Oncology team to our service and talk with Integrative Medicine at Home fitness instructor Kareem Collins about how to include exercise as part of your self-care routine. We also learn about a new guideline recommending music therapy for adults with anxiety and depression and explore the evidence for omega-3 fatty acids.

Be well,
Jun

New Cancer Clinical Guideline Recommends Music Therapy for Adults Experiencing Anxiety and Depression

By Camila Casaw, MA, LCAT, MT-BC

Cancer as a life-changing and disruptive event, can bring emotional ripples that are felt from the moment of diagnosis and beyond treatment. The common experiences of anxiety and depression are a challenging aspect of the cancer journey that can impact a person's quality of life.

Music therapy can help address emotional needs within the safety of a therapeutic relationship and creative spaces for self-expression and support. In music therapy sessions, the patient works with a music therapist to learn how music can be a resource and develop skills to manage cancer-related psychological burden.



A new joint guideline from the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO), the leading professional integrative oncology organization, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the leading professional organization for oncology doctors, provides evidenced-based recommendations that include music therapy, for addressing anxiety and depression, during active treatment. A panel of experts in cancer care thoroughly reviewed published literature from randomized clinical trials, assessed the evidence, and made recommendations based on the strength of evidence.

The guideline recommends the following:

- Music therapy may be recommended to help manage anxiety in people with cancer.
- Music therapy may be offered to people with cancer to improve depression during active treatment.

Dr. Kevin Liou, an integrative medicine doctor at MSK, says, “Music therapy is a safe and effective option for managing anxiety and depression and promoting

mental well-being in people affected by cancer. Based on the latest clinical guideline, we encourage people to talk to their care team to discuss whether music therapy could be a good option for them.”

If you are interested in learning more about music therapy at MSK, please call 646-449-1010 or email musictherapy@mskcc.org.

IMS Welcomes the Exercise Oncology Team

By Christina Seluzicki



Lee Jones, PhD

Earlier this year, the Integrative Medicine Service was honored to welcome the Exercise Oncology (ExOnc) program to its family. Launched in 2014 by program director, Dr. Lee Jones, the mission

of ExOnc is to conduct innovative research investigating the impact of precision exercise therapy across the cancer continuum. The program’s objective is to change the landscape of cancer care by challenging the idea of exercise as a “one-size-fits-all” therapy to one in which it is matched to the individual.

To accomplish this important work, Dr. Jones and researchers Dr. Jessica Scott and Dr. Neil Iyengar are leading more than 20 different clinical and translational projects. These projects focus on understanding the effects of structured exercise therapy on physiological outcomes in people before, during, and after treatment. They also investigate whether exercise is an effective preventive or treatment strategy for cancer.

“ExOnc is proud to be joining the Integrative Medicine Service at MSK. IMS has a long and storied history of conducting landmark studies in the role of complementary medicine in the oncology field,” says Dr. Jones. “We hope that our program can contribute to continuing this fine tradition of high-quality work to better the lives of individuals with and at high-risk of cancer.”

If you would like to learn more about the research that the ExOnc team is conducting, visit <https://www.mskcc.org/research-areas/research-teams/exercise-oncology-program>.

Integrative Medicine at Home Membership Program



Start your membership online today! Visit [msk.org/athome](https://www.mskcc.org/athome).

MEMBERSHIP FEES

- Monthly membership: **\$25**
- Three-month membership: **\$60**
- Six-month membership: **\$120** (plus one free workshop)

AS A MEMBER, YOU CAN ENJOY:

- › Connecting with your cancer community
- › Staying active, with guidance from MSK experts
- › Learning new skills to increase resilience and decrease stress
- › Unlimited access to daily fitness and mind-body classes
- › Dedicated website with on-demand videos to help keep you moving on your schedule
- › Discounts on our small group workshops and mind-body series

The Importance of Exercise During and After Cancer



By Kareem Collins

Kareem Collins is a group exercise instructor and personal trainer who specializes in strength training, balance, stability, and coordination exercises. He teaches fitness as part of our Integrative Medicine at Home program.

Why is it important for people experiencing cancer to exercise regularly?

Exercise is an important component to one's health during and after cancer treatment. Even if it was not a regular part of your lifestyle choice pre-cancer diagnosis, a well-planned exercise program can have positive impacts on your life now. Some benefits for people with cancer include reductions in treatment-related fatigue, anxiety, and depression; maintenance of strength to prevent muscle loss; improved sleep and balance; and help in maintaining weight and promoting healthy weight loss.

What should an exercise program include?

Cancer treatments like radiation and surgery can cause weakness and muscular imbalances. These recommendations will help strengthen your body for a better quality of life and increased independence.

- **Stretching exercises** to improve flexibility and posture and promote blood flow and oxygen to your muscles.
- **Balance exercises** to help you regain function and mobility needed to return to daily activities safely.

- **Aerobic (cardio) exercises** to help strengthen your heart and lungs.
- **Strength exercises or resistance training** to develop your muscles and help make daily activities easier and less tiring.

I teach a weekly class through Integrative Medicine at Home called Mobility Aerobics Strength Training. It is a chair-based class that includes the fundamental components of mobility/flexibility, aerobics, strength training, coordination exercises, and fun.

What are some tips for getting started or returning to a regular exercise routine?

First, it is important to talk with your doctor and care team before starting any new physical fitness program.

- Start slowly. Always remember a little is a lot, so increase your exercise capacity in increments. For example, take a 10-to-15-minute walk at a brisk pace once or twice a week. Increase the frequency as you are able.
- Exercise in a safe environment. Make sure you have good ventilation and access to plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- You may want to exercise in a group to feel a sense of community and connection to others. Working with others can make you less self-conscious as you realize everyone has the same goal.

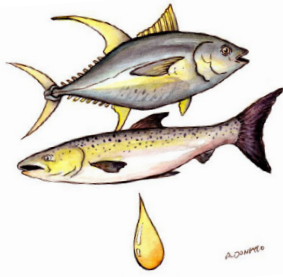
Returning to exercise after treatment or surgery is not a fast or easy process. Remember it is a marathon, not a sprint! So, take your time and let the benefits of exercise heal you and make you stronger.

If you want to learn more about fitness classes with Kareem and our other instructors, visit [msk.org/athome](https://www.mskcc.org/athome) to become a member of Integrative Medicine at Home.



Omega-3

By Jyothirmai Gubili, MS



Omega-3 fatty acids play an important role in many bodily functions including cell growth and muscle activity. They can be

obtained from diet or through supplements because our bodies cannot make them. Good sources of omega-3s include fatty fish, some plants, and nut oils.

Dietary supplements are available as fish, krill, cod liver, and algal oils. They are promoted to reduce inflammation, lower cholesterol and the risk of heart attack, and to improve memory.

Clinical studies have shown that omega-3s obtained through diet can have health benefits by

reducing inflammation and lowering triglyceride (a type of fat) levels. But there is no definitive data to support the use of supplements for preventing or treating cancer or cardiovascular (heart) disease.

For more details about Omega-3 fatty acids, see our [full write-up](#) on the About Herbs website or download the About Herbs app (available for Android via [Google Play](#) and iOS via the [App StoreSM](#)).

Upcoming Online Programming

Register online today to join one of these upcoming virtual wellness programs. [Scan the QR code](#) with your phone to sign up online or call [646-449-1010](tel:646-449-1010).



Workshops: \$20 members; \$25 non-members **Regular series:** \$100 members; \$125 non-members

APRIL

- › **Series:** Self-Care and Healing Through Ayurveda
Thursdays, April 11 to May 16
6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Balance and Uplift with Music and Meditation
Monday, April 15
6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

MAY

- › **Workshop:** Building Body Awareness With Core Strength and Yoga
Thursday, May 2
1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.
- › **Series:** Move & Groove: Dance for Cancer Recovery
Tuesdays, May 7 to June 11
6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Osteoporosis: How to Build Bones With Exercise and Nutrition
Thursday, May 16
1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

JUNE

- › **Workshop:** Ayurveda & Yoga: Summer Edition
Thursday, June 6
6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.



Celebrating 25 Years of

Innovation in Integrative Oncology

Recent Advances and Future Opportunities

Friday, May 17, 2024 / New York, NY

Join leading experts for a one-day, in-person conference exploring evidence-based, patient-centered care advancements in integrative medicine.

Learn more and register at msk.org/IntegrativeOncSymposium

