Weekly Classes
Join the Integrative Medicine fitness team throughout the summer for strength training and mind-body classes. All classes are $25 each. Talk to a care coordinator by calling 646-888-0800 for more information and to sign-up in advance.

Yoga for EveryBody
Try gentle yoga in a supportive and soothing environment customized for you.

Tuesdays, 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM
Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center

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Get to Know Our New Fitness Instructors
By Lauren DeMarzo

Integrative Medicine is excited to introduce two additions to our fitness team: Lauren Chiarello and Jeff Rochford. They join Clinical Fitness Specialist Donna Wilson in teaching group classes and providing personal training sessions to people with cancer, their families, and staff.

Lauren, you have gotten to know MSK from many angles. Tell us about your experience.
It’s true, and my journey has come full circle now. I first came to MSK as a patient. I was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma at age 23. In 2008, I was in remission and started working in the MSK Development Department. Just a few months later, I relapsed. I spent six weeks in isolation on M8 and received a stem cell transplant. Now, I’ve been in remission for ten-plus years. I ran the New York City Marathon with Fred’s Team in 2012 and 2013. It was incredible to be on First Avenue and see MSK in front of me — the magical place that saved my life!

What classes do you teach, and what ideas do you have for future fitness programs?
I teach group cardio-strength training classes on Mondays at the Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center. I would like to develop a young adult-focused fitness program with private sessions, group classes, workshops, and community events. This kind of holistic program has been missing from the cancer treatment and recovery process, especially for people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s.

Jeff, how did you become involved with MSK and Integrative Medicine?
My family has a long history with MSK. In 1998, I ran my first marathon with Fred’s Team. The whole experience was inspiring, and I was hooked. A few years after my first marathon with Fred’s Team, I created their coaching program. This is my 16th year as head coach. As a personal trainer, I am looking forward to using my coaching skills to connect with people with cancer and survivors and help them reach their fitness goals.

What exercises do you recommend for staying active when people are going through treatment and not feeling well?
It’s hard to keep moving when you’re not feeling well. If you are having a tough time, going for a walk is a good place to start. You can get your heart rate up by making a game of it. Speed walk every third light post. Keep reminding yourself how much better you’ll feel afterward.

TIPS FOR SAFE SUMMER EXERCISE

Try water sports to beat the heat
“I’m a huge fan of swimming, especially for people with mobility and balance issues.” — Jeff

Fuel your body with seasonal snacks
“Before your workout, opt for nonacidic fruits, such as watermelon, berries, and peaches. Afterward, try a homemade protein-packed smoothie. You will rehydrate and avoid the added sugars found in store-bought drinks.” — Jeff

Stay hydrated
“Chemotherapy can lead to dehydration. Drink more water throughout the day. Always have a bottle of water close at hand.” — Jeff

Create a summertime music playlist
“Your favorite songs will keep you motivated to stick with it, even when it’s hot outside. A few of mine include ‘Dog Days Are Over’ by Florence and the Machine and ‘Free Fallin’ by Tom Petty.” — Lauren

Try gentle yoga in a supportive and soothing environment customized for you.
Integrative Care for Cognitive Changes after Cancer: The Latest Research Findings Presented at ASCO 2019

By Christina Seluzicki

People with cognitive impairment have problems with memory, concentration, and other important mental tasks, such as learning, planning, and making decisions. This common burden facing cancer survivors can be made worse by poor sleep. Despite being widespread — up to 75 percent of people with cancer suffer from this distressing condition — effective treatments are lacking.

Now there may be hope. New research out of MSK’s Integrative Medicine Service found that acupuncture and cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) improved cognitive impairment in cancer survivors with insomnia. Further, the treatment effects differed, with participants in the CBT-I group showing improvement in their own perception of their ability to concentrate (known as subjective attention) and those in the acupuncture group demonstrating improvement in their performance on tests that required them to recall specific items (their objective memory).

“Our results lay the groundwork for understanding how to develop the best therapy for each person’s specific type of cognitive impairment.” — Jun Mao

In June, Service Chief Jun Mao presented these findings at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) in Chicago. “Our results lay the groundwork for understanding how to develop the best therapy for each person’s specific type of cognitive impairment,” says Dr. Mao. “It is our hope that future research will lead to targeted and personalized approaches to managing this incredibly challenging problem.”

ABOUT HERBS

Lavender

By Jyothirmai Gubili

A perennial shrub common in the Mediterranean region, lavender is grown as a decorative plant in many parts of the world. It has been used for cooking, cosmetics, and medicine for hundreds of years. Currently, lavender is used to treat headaches, palsy, toothaches, sore joints, skin diseases, and colic, and to reduce anxiety and depression. It is also commonly used by itself or in combination with other essential oils as a fragrance in soaps, cleansers, and moisturizers; for massage; and in aromatherapy (inhaling a fragrant essential oil obtained from a plant).

Clinical studies have suggested that when lavender is used as aromatherapy, it may improve memory loss in people with dementia. Lavender aromatherapy also lessens preoperative anxiety and reduces the need for pain medication following surgery. Additional studies have reported improvements in sleep quality, symptoms of dementia, severe menstrual cramps (dysmenorrhea) and emotional symptoms, and pain from kidney stones (renal colic). Inhaled lavender has also been shown to reduce the severity of migraine headaches.

Preparations of lavender taken by mouth were shown to ease symptoms in people with mild to moderate depression and in those with generalized anxiety disorder. Although laboratory studies have shown that lavender kills cancer cells, it did not benefit people with cancer having radiotherapy or boost the effects of massage. More research is needed.