

Paddle for your life!

Dragon Boating for Breast Cancer Survivors

Dragon boating is the perfect exercise for women. Research shows the benefits of low-impact physical and cardiovascular exercise for cancer survivors, and dragon boating is especially beneficial. The paddling motion gradually works out the upper body and extremities, and you can self-adjust from mild to intense exertion. Even better is the camaraderie and support of fellow survivors—a “floating support group”. It’s an easy to learn, fun exercise that almost anyone can do.

Many dragon boat race festivals recognize breast cancer survivor teams by adding a survivor's division and ceremonies. Philadelphia's “Hope Afloat” team is our model — a cohesive team of all ages that competes around the world.

A dragon boat is a 40-foot canoe with a dragon motif based on ancient Chinese legends. It carries a crew of 22: One steering, one drumming the cadence, and everyone else paddling in unison.

The Steel City Dragons will start practicing again at the Fox Chapel Yacht Club in the Spring of 2006. Until then, we will be organizing and preparing our teams for the new season. Please contact us at info@steelcitydragons.org or 412-377-3063 and join in on the fun!

Selected research on dragon boating and exercise benefits

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Harris SR, Niesen-Vertommen SL. Challenging the myth of exercise-induced lymphedema following breast cancer: a series of case reports. *J Surg Oncol*. 2000 Jun;74(2):95-8; discussion 98-9.

Lane K, Jespersen D, McKenzie DC. The effect of a whole body exercise programme and dragon boat training on arm volume and arm circumference in women treated for breast cancer. *Eur J Cancer Care (Engl)*. 2005 Sep;14(4):353-8.

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