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Media Release – Lets Get Exercising for Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



## Lets Get Exercising for Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Breast cancer is the number one cancer for women in NZ** with 3000 women diagnosed each year. Even with rapid advances in research and treatment, over 600 women die from the disease each year.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and while the statistics make worrying reading, taking steps to reduce your risks and being aware of early detection make a huge difference to health outcomes for those diagnosed. The ten year survival rate for breast cancer diagnosed through regular mammogram is 92% (in comparison with 75% if a lump is the first sign).

Some women are at greater risk of breast cancer due to family members having the disease. This can cause worry, however, even among women who do have relatives with breast cancer, most will never develop it.

The causes of breast cancer are not fully known, but some of the factors that can contribute to it developing are known. Some cannot be controlled but there are steps that can be taken to reduce risk. Women who maintain a healthy weight, have a lower risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer in comparison to overweight women. There is also evidence that regular exercise and a low fat diet can reduce the risk of breast cancer.

Not taking up smoking is also a positive step. A study carried out by researchers at the Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Centre in Seattle, Washington found that young women who smoke more than a pack of cigarettes a day, have a much higher risk of developing the most common type of breast cancer.

In a 2013 study published in the American Cancer Society's journal, Lauren McCullough at the University of North Carolina and her colleagues looked into how much exercise is enough, and at what age women have to start being physically active to get from the breast cancer reducing benefits of exercise. The results of their study indicated that women were about 30% less likely to develop breast cancer when they exercised approximately two hours a day, for five days a week in comparison to less active women. The intensity of the exercise was not important. This study is great news for women who feel that a history of non activity will make taking up an exercise programme less effective, as this is not in fact the case. The benefits of exercise on breast cancer and other diseases are available regardless of exercise history.

For those who are dealing with the physical (and non physical) impact of a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, exercise can still be a regular part of your wellness routine. Regular exercise can help reduce symptoms and side effects of treatment. With the support of your medical professionals, and a personalised exercise plan from a NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) Registered Exercise Professional, you can keep benefiting from regular physical activity.

And for the many women who successfully beat breast cancer, getting regular exercise is important for continued health. Physical activity can help lessen certain side effects of treatment, such as fatigue and depression, and has been shown to reduce risk of recurrence and improve survival.

**References:**

<http://exerciseismedicine.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-Breast-Cancer-FULL.pdf>

<http://www.cancer.org/research/researchtopreventcancer/index>

<http://www.breastcancer.org.nz/news/research-news/smoking-2014>

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**Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?**

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the “Warrant of Fitness Check” that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction.

REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - [www.icreps.org](http://www.icreps.org)

