

the Back in the Swing

cookbook companion guide



GRAB YOUR
walking SHOES!

INSIDE:
WHAT'S *the*
scoop ON SOY?

RECIPE SPOTLIGHT:
Bodacious
Broccoli Salad

A Dream Comes True

Along with a team of passionate, fun-loving, dedicated volunteers, I founded the grassroots, nonprofit organization Back in the Swing USA® in 2000 to fill the void in patients having access to personalized, comprehensive clinical breast cancer survivorship health care, education, and medical research.

Our name is our mission. Back in the Swing points consumers and their physicians to the one universal reason that every person with a diagnosis of cancer chooses to get treatment, why she goes to the doctor, and why she suffers the surgeries and insults to her mind and her body: To get back in the swing of life, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, for the rest of her life.

“Back in the swing of life” is where every woman wants to be the moment after she is diagnosed . . . and where she wants to be every day thereafter. So why not encourage— through grassroots education, awareness and fundraising—achieving that goal after experiencing breast cancer? I asked myself.

Therefore, Back in the Swing’s mission is to focus its work on the one area in the continuum of cancer care that represents the end goal of treatment: To improve and protect our health, and prevent cancer recurrence.

One of the first achievements of Back in the Swing was to fund and help launch the Breast Cancer Survivorship Center (BCSC) at The University of Kansas Cancer Center, in Westwood, Kansas (nearby Kansas City, Missouri). The BCSC has continued to be a template for other cancer centers and community hospitals, as well as oncology nurses, in how to build evidence-based, comprehensive programs and clinics in breast cancer survivorship.

My visits with Patty Ganz, MD, one of the pioneers in breast cancer survivorship research at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center at UCLA, and Carol Fabian, MD, medical director of the Breast Cancer Prevention and Survivorship Centers at the University of Kansas Cancer Center, both early advisers to Back in the Swing USA, encouraged my colleagues and me to sally forward in our grassroots work to spread the message to consumers about the powerful effects of cancer treatment and prevention therapies, and the need for appreciating these challenges, particularly the impact of nutrition and exercise for each individual’s physical and mental health. They and all of us are part of those seeing the dream of Back in the Swing—breast cancer survivorship clinical care as a right, not a privilege—coming true in the twenty-first century.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara", with a heart symbol drawn to the left of the name.

February 2012

INTRODUCTION

The past several decades of improved detection and treatment of cancer has led to an awareness of cancer survivorship as a distinct phase of cancer care. Experts have concluded that every cancer survivor needs to receive a Survivorship Care Plan, a document that includes a summary of her treatment and directions on lifestyle choices, personalized just for her.

This Survivorship Care Plan informs the survivor and her healthcare providers about the medications and treatments she received after her breast cancer diagnosis. It will also give her information about the possible immediate or long-term effects of these medications and treatments on her fatigue, joint pain, memory, sexuality, hormones, anxiety, depression, lymphedema, bone health, and heart health.

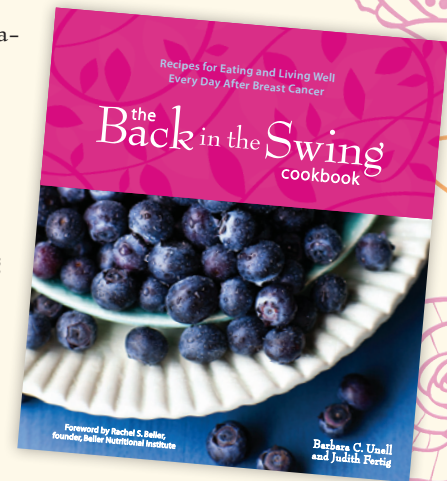
By January 2015, every medical facility accredited by The American College of Surgeons will be required to provide this Plan to every patient, in order for the organization to maintain accreditation.

While the survivor receives her plan, she may not receive detailed information about how to live the plan every day. Until now with the publication of this evidence-based, beautiful 288-page book, *The Back in the Swing Cookbook: Recipes for Eating and Living Well Every Day After Breast Cancer* by Barbara Unell and Judith Fertig, published by Andrews McMeel Publishing.

The following pages demonstrate to the breast cancer survivor a sampling of the five evidence-based essential elements of The Back in the Swing Lifestyle from the Cookbook:

- 1) Survivor-specific medical care to support the ongoing health of breast cancer survivors
- 2) Movement
- 3) Nutrition
- 4) Positive Emotions
- 5) Relaxation and Mindfulness

This booklet is her guide to getting the most out of using *The Back in the Swing Cookbook*...and a quick taste of the areas of her life that impact her mental, physical and spiritual “swing” of life every day. These essential elements provide the survivor with the tools for joyful, healthy living every day, from diagnosis through cancer treatment, and into post-treatment care. Regardless of stage of disease, where she lives, and what resources are available to her, these tools will empower her to be an active participant in living her plan!





The New Horizons in Prevention

I have worked in the field of breast cancer since the 1970s and have witnessed phenomenal changes in the approach to breast cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survival. Surgical approaches, including breast conservation, were rare thirty years ago but are the norm today. Systemic therapy targeted to gene expression or protein markers on tumor cells for women who require adjuvant treatment, postdiagnosis, will produce better outcomes (reduce risk of recurrence) with fewer side effects. Currently, we rely on antihormonal therapies as a mainstay in endocrine-positive breast cancers, but newer therapies may have better tolerability with equal or better outcomes.

Natural products and lifestyle recommendations have been under investigation for years; the most powerful preventive we have seen to date targets lifestyle. It has been shown that increasing exercise and targeting a moderate weight are key factors that may reduce breast cancer risk. These factors also require constant practice, and the development of new skills and techniques, to help us keep moving and make healthy dietary choices.

~ Carol Fabian, MD, breast medical oncologist at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, where she directs the University of Kansas Cancer Center's Breast Cancer Prevention and Survivorship Centers

Are you searching for a medical provider to help you with questions about breast cancer prevention and survivorship?

- Do you wonder just how you will prevent breast cancer, hoping for a plan that will help you not get the disease like your family members?
- Do you have joint pain, fatigue, night sweats, lymphedema, osteoporosis, nausea, trouble with balance, sexuality issues, fatigue, neuropathy, depression, anxiety, and/or weight gain after treatment? Chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery for breast cancer often cause these and other side effects during, immediately following, and/or years after.
- Do you want a medical second opinion to address any side effects of your primary treatment (including, but not limited to, those above)?
- Do you have new questions weeks, months, or years after diagnosis?
- Do you want to know if new drugs or interventions have been developed to help prevent cancer from recurring or prevent new cancer from developing?
- Would you like access to a provider who understands your individual nutrition, exercise, mind-body needs, as they were affected by your cancer treatment?
- Do you want to be informed about the training in survivorship care of the medical provider you have chosen as a physician?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, find a survivorship center or program near you at BackintheSwing.org. Wherever you go, ask for a personalized survivorship plan to optimize your health, just as you were given a plan for primary treatment.

According to Jennifer Klemp, PhD, MPH, managing director of the Breast Cancer Survivorship Center at the University of Kansas Cancer Center, cancer survivorship care may be delivered in community oncology clinics or academic medical centers and may include physicians, nurse practitioners/ physician assistants, psychologists, nurses, physical and occupational therapists, navigators, nutritionists, cardiologists, exercise physiologists, and support organizations.

This field is still emerging, as a result of the rapidly increasing number of survivors due to early detection and more effective treatments. There is an active movement to research survivorship care delivery models and to improve prevention and treatment options for the late and long-term effects of cancer.

~ Jennifer Klemp, PhD, MPH, managing director of the Breast Cancer Survivorship Center at the University of Kansas Cancer Center

When it comes to your heart . . .

Certain breast cancer treatments, chest radiation, deficiency of exercise during treatments, and stress, have been found to make women more susceptible to heart disease.

“Most breast cancer therapies today—including new treatments still under development—increase long-term risk of cardiovascular disease,” says Lee W. Jones, PhD, an exercise physiologist and associate professor in the Department of Surgery at Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina. “We don’t know exactly how large the added risk is, but we believe it’s substantial. Recent gains in breast cancer specific survival could be markedly diminished by an increase in the long-term risk of cardiovascular death.”

Pamela S. Douglas, MD, chief of cardiology at Duke University and coauthor of an article in the October 2007 *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, said although the damage comes from chemotherapy, “the benefit of saving lives outweighed the risks and were just part inside the accepted cost” of the treatment. But with the success of treatment and developing survivor numbers, Douglas and her colleagues are urging physicians to take the long view when determining a woman’s breast cancer treatment. First, deal with the cancer, but don’t forget about cardiovascular health down the road.

Talk with your health care provider about whether your “treatment after primary treatment” care plan should include a cardiology follow-up. In addition, long-term use of aromatase inhibitors, drugs often prescribed for breast cancer patients, may increase the risk of heart problems for postmenopausal women, according to a Canadian researcher. If you are taking an aromatase inhibitor, talk with your physician about adding a cardiology component to your annual checkup. Clearly, cancer treatment consists of the right combination of medicine and living a healthy lifestyle.

Grab your walking shoes and smile.

As noted in the April 20, 2011, edition of *USA Today*, “There is a growing body of research showing that exercise not only helps with the side effects of [cancer] treatment but also decreases the recurrence risk and improves overall survival,” says researcher Melinda Irwin, an associate professor of epidemiology and public health at Yale University School of Medicine and principal investigator of the Yale Exercise and Survivorship study.

“Irwin says the verdict is still out on how exercise benefits cancer survivors, but she notes studies in which breast cancer survivors who exercise have lower levels of insulin, and some studies have shown that high levels of insulin strongly increase the risk for breast cancer recurrence and death.”

The *Journal of Clinical Oncology* first reported the findings of Irwin’s study in August 2008. Irwin says, “We not only showed an improvement in survival from breast cancer but survival from other causes such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, so exercise is really associated with a multitude of benefits.”

Get a jump on healthy living!

Some voices—family, friends, doctors, even our own—may tell us, “Don’t exercise, take it easy, you’ve been through so much . . . just rest.” But the scientific research tells us to ignore those voices and get moving, even if we’ve never exercised before.

Many studies show that being overweight at the time of breast cancer diagnosis and weight gain after diagnosis are linked to higher rates of recurrence and lower survival rates. To complicate matters even more is this fact: Treatment can cause weight gain. And we’re not talking about a pound or two. In an article in the December 18, 2011, issue of *HUFFPOST Healthy Living*, Dr. Wendy Demark-Wahnefried of the University of Alabama at the Birmingham Department of Nutrition says that in one year, women who received chemotherapy for breast cancer experienced muscle loss and fat gain that was similar to ten years of normal aging. So a forty-five-year-old may find herself with the body type of a fifty-five-year-old.

But wait, the news is good from the research published in the May 25, 2005, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, which says that physical activity after diagnosis can boost survival rates . . . even modest amounts of exercise. The greatest benefit occurred in women who performed the equivalent of walking three to five hours per week at an average pace. Numbers like these are hard to ignore . . . so try to get moving.



You'll discover more evidence-based information on the positive impact of movement in *The Back in the Swing Cookbook* on pages: 19, 25, 27, 55, 67, 80-81, 110, 165, 173, 202-203, 223, 226



BASIC INGREDIENTS OF

The Back in the Swing Cookbook

Each of us has a different reason for wanting to know nutritional information. For some, it's because we are trying to keep a certain number of calories as our daily food count; for others, eating low-sodium food fits the bill. Still others are, well, just curious. We have purposely not advised you about following certain calorie, fat, carbohydrate, sodium, or fiber restrictions; we suggest that you consult with your health care practitioner about the recommended nutrition you need to gain, lose, or maintain your optimum weight, as well as to create the healthy-for-you levels of certain nutrients for improving and protecting your blood, bones, and heart, for example. We provide the back-to-basics canvas here, and you're the artist, using these four easy brushstrokes proven to paint colorful dishes each day: evidence-based; lean-protein; low-fat; and plant-based recipes for the good life.

Back in the Swing Key Foods

OILS

Canola oil
Grapeseed oil
Olive oil

HERBS/SPICES

Basil
Cinnamon
Garlic
Ginger, plain or pickled
Italian parsley
Lavender
Nutmeg
Oregano
Rosemary
Saffron
Thyme
Turmeric

CANNED GOODS

Black beans
Garbanzo beans
(chickpeas)
Pumpkin puree
(not seasoned pie filling)
Roasted red peppers
Tahini (sesame paste)
Tomato products
Tuna in olive oil
Vegetable broth

NUTS/SEEDS

Cashews
Edamame
Flaxseed
Pine nuts
Sesame seeds
Walnuts

TEA BLENDS

Ginseng tea
Green tea
Lavender tea
Licorice root tea

DRY GOODS

Chiles (Jalapeño)
Dark chocolate
Cocoa powder
Coffee
Dried beans
Fruits
Nori (dried packaged
seaweed)
Oats
Pasta
Quinoa
Rice

FRUITS/VEGETABLES

Apples
Artichokes
Asparagus
Bananas
Bell peppers
Berries
Broccoli
Cabbage
Cherries
Cranberries
Endive
Fresh greens
Juices
Kale
Onion
Peaches
Pineapple
Pomegranate
Red grapes
Root vegetables
Squash
Sweet potatoes
Tomatoes

SWEETENERS

Agave nectar
Brown sugar
Honey
Maple syrup
Sorghum

LEAN PROTEINS

Beans, dried or
canned, such as black,
cannelli, garbanzo, navy,
pinto, or other shelling
beans
Bean and vegetable based
protein such as falafel,
Seitan, tempeh, tofu
Beef, lean cuts or de-fatted
after cooking
Chicken and turkey
Dairy, lower fat or hard
grating cheeses such as
Parmesan
Eggs
Fish, especially halibut,
salmon, and tuna
Shrimp
REFRIGERATED
Almond milk
Eggs
Greek yogurt
Hard grating cheeses
Milk
Miso

Bodacious Broccoli Salad

Gayle Ortiz, the founder and owner of Gayle's Bakery and Rosticceria in Capitola, California, says, "This is one of our customers' favorite salads. It's tangy, rich with cheese, and crunchy with a bit of sweetness from the raisins. Give it a try, it's easy and super delicious." We wholeheartedly agree—it's amazingly addictive, with complementary flavors in every bite.

Serves 6–8, 1-cup servings • Prep Time: 10 minutes

½ cup (scant) mayonnaise

2 tablespoons **apple
cider vinegar**

2 tablespoons sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon pepper

1 pound **broccoli**

¾ cup golden **raisins**

½ cup toasted
sunflower seeds

1 ¼ cups grated sharp Cheddar
cheese (5 ounces)

2 tablespoons grated
red onion

1 Whisk together the mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper in a small bowl for the dressing and set aside.

2 Cut off 1 inch of the woody bottom of each broccoli stalk. Cut off the florets. Chop the florets into ½-inch pieces and grate the stems using the grater attachment of a food processor. You should have about 4 cups broccoli. Mix the broccoli, raisins, sunflower seeds, cheese, and onion in a large bowl. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss well.

Calories 198 • Total Fat 10g • Saturated Fat 1.5g
Carbohydrates 25g • Protein 4.5g • Dietary Fiber 5.5g
Sodium 598mg

Tip: Key ingredients are listed in **boldface type** in each recipe. They can be found on several lists of the most nutritious foods that scientific research has demonstrated contribute to optimum health.

Carrot Cake Cupcakes with Pineapple–Cream Cheese Frosting

Who doesn't love carrot cake—or cupcakes? These luscious beauties, trimmed down with egg whites, applesauce, and low-fat cream cheese for the frosting, encourage you to savor your favorite treat in a handy travel size!

Makes 16 cupcakes; serves 16 • Prep Time: 25 minutes • Cook Time: 20 minutes

CUPCAKES

- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups old-fashioned rolled **oats**
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground **cinnamon**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened **applesauce**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup skim **milk**
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup wildflower or clover **honey**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup refrigerated **egg** white product or egg whites
- 1 tablespoon **grapeseed oil** or **canola oil**
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups finely shredded **carrots**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup golden **raisins**

PINEAPPLE–CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

8 ounces Neufchâtel or low-fat cream cheese, at room temperature

- 1 (8-ounce) can crushed **pineapple**, with juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar, or more as necessary

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line 16 muffins cups with paper liners and set aside.

2 For the cupcakes, place the rolled oats in a food processor or blender and process until the mixture resembles coarse flour. Transfer the oat flour to a medium bowl and stir in the all-purpose flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. In a second medium bowl, stir the applesauce, milk, honey, egg white product, and oil together until well blended. Stir the applesauce mixture into the oat flour mixture until just moistened. Stir in the carrots and raisins. Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling two-thirds full.

3 Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes.

4 For the frosting, place the cheese and pineapple in a bowl and mix with a hand mixer until fluffy. Beat in the confectioners' sugar until the frosting has a spreadable consistency. Frost the cupcakes.

Calories 160 • Total Fat 4.5g
Saturated Fat 2g • Carbohydrates 26.5g
Protein 4g • Dietary Fiber 1.5g
Sodium 102mg

Check *The Back in the Swing Cookbook* for more nutritional information on more than 150 delicious, good-for-you recipes.



To Soy or Not to Soy?

According to Frank Hu, MD, PhD, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health, meats and many plant-based foods, such as soy, can provide equal amounts of protein.

But here's the catch: Soy foods are a major source of phytoestrogens called isoflavones. Although many studies have found soy foods to be protective against cancer, previous research studies have suggested that soy's isoflavones fuel breast cancer cell growth and possibly interfere with treatment. And a 2011 study reported research demonstrating that soy foods "appear" to be safe, in small amounts, for breast cancer survivors.

It is important to look at the details of scientific reports when using the data for decision-making. As mentioned, "eating small [our emphasis] amounts of dietary soy may be safe for breast cancer survivors," concludes a March 2011 study published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

In this study, researchers followed over 3,000 breast cancer survivors for a median of approximately 7 years. When comparing those survivors in the study who had high soy/isoflavone intake (about 1/2 cup of soy milk or 2 ounces of tofu per day) with those who had the lowest (little to no reported intake), there was no significant difference in cancer recurrence or death, either alone or in combination with tamoxifen treatment.

This study did not evaluate the highest amounts of intake possible, such as the amount found in a high protein shake or energy bar, which contain more than 10 grams each. The authors report that the highest intake of those in the study was 16.3mg/day, which is significantly less than what the soy protein intake would be if someone's daily diet included 1/2 cup soymilk, 2 ounces of tofu, a soy protein bar, and a shake.

The jury is still out, we have concluded, on the impact of high-soy protein foods. Therefore, check with your health practitioner on balancing your sources of protein, which may include a small amount of dietary soy/isoflavone.



Note: Soy fillers are additives in many processed foods, and the amounts are not normally listed on the label. So it is often challenging to determine the amount of soy you actually eat on any given day.

Sex. You knew we'd get around to it sooner or later.

“Sexual problems are among the most common and least talked about side effects of breast cancer treatment,” according to researcher Susan R. Davis, MD, PhD, Monash University Medical School, in Monash, Australia, published in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* in January 2011, “About 70% of the women in our study were experiencing a meaningful loss of desire and sexual function a full two years after diagnosis.”

Use of aromatase inhibitors almost always results in extreme vaginal dryness related to estrogen depletion. As a result, sex can be extremely painful.

“Every woman who is put on these drugs should be told it is highly likely they will experience symptoms related to menopause, including vaginal dryness, but that isn’t always happening,” Davis says. “And women may be reluctant to talk about the issue with their oncologist.”

Talk to your oncologist or nurse about recommending the appropriate treatment if you are experiencing any of these side effects to help you get your sex life back in the swing, too.



Friends are good medicine.

Extensive research has shown that not only do friends ease your mind, they can lower your physiological responses to stress, as well. In July 2010, researchers from Brigham Young University reviewed 148 studies that tracked the social habits of more than 300,000 people. They found that people who have strong ties to family, friends, or coworkers have a 50 percent lower risk of dying over a given period than those with fewer social connections, according to the journal *Plos Medicine*.

When surveyed by *Back in the Swing*, breast cancer survivors ranked their friends as one of the most helpful sources of their getting back in the swing.

Grateful

*"We can only be said to be alive in those moments
when our hearts are conscious of our treasures."*

~Thornton Wilder

Renowned positive psychology research pioneer Barbara Fredrickson, PhD, has revealed that seeking joy, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, love, and gratitude are ways to "broaden and build" our thinking in positive ways. Joy in life is associated with the senses being alive . . . and being in tune with the sights, sounds, and smells in your world. Get creative and discover the possibilities of "broadening and building" your mind by combining flavors that work just for you in these recipes. Own your taste buds! Omit an ingredient, such as peanuts, if you have allergies or you'd rather substitute almonds, for example. Although the given nutritional analysis will not still be accurate, you will come up with a recipe that is right on target for you.

Are positive emotions positively positive?

Our "Professor Positive," Sarah Pressman, PhD, was the principal investigator in a joint study between the University of Kansas and Gallup, presented in March 2009 at the annual meeting of the American Psychosomatic Society in Chicago. The research investigated whether feelings, such as happiness or sadness, matter to the health of people who have more pressing concerns, including getting enough to eat or finding shelter.

During the study, the researchers analyzed the data from the Gallup World Poll involving more than 150,000 adults. The participants reported their emotions and also answered questions about whether their most basic needs like food, shelter, and personal safety were adequately met.

Results showed that positive emotions, such as happiness and enjoyment, are unmistakably linked to better health, even when taking into account a lack of basic needs. On the other hand, negative emotions, such as worry and sadness, were predictive of worse health. The association between emotions and physical health was more powerful than the connection between health and basic human physical requirements.

You'll find more evidence-based information on healthy effects of positive emotions in *The Back in the Swing Cookbook* on pages: 5, 12-13, 17, 45, 97, 115, 131, 140, 151, 164-165, 171, 178-179, 187, 202-203, 233



Meditation goes mainstream.

It is important to fill yourself up . . . I learned to receive the love and support of others and give time and attention to my “self.”

~Carol LaRue, author and occupational therapist

Meditation and relaxation . . . even the words themselves sound good. Although controlled research on meditation/relaxation is relatively recent, there is considerable evidence documenting its stress reduction benefits.

According to an article in *Brain Behavior and Immunity* in August 2008, preliminary research has shown that practicing mindfulness can lead to improved immune function, a higher quality of life, and better coping with stress in women newly diagnosed with early stage breast cancer.

The positive effects of mindfulness meditation on pain and memory may result from an “improved ability to regulate a crucial brain wave called the alpha rhythm,” according to an April 21, 2011, news release from Massachusetts General Hospital, citing research reports from Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A benefit of meditation may be this “turning down the volume” on distracting information, which helps the brain deal with overstimulation.

“Modulation of the alpha rhythm in response to attention-directing cues was faster and significantly more enhanced among study participants who completed an eight-week mindfulness meditation program than in a control group,” according to the researchers.

The concept that the mind is important in the treatment of illness is integral to the healing approaches of traditional Chinese medicine and ayurvedic medicine as well, dating back more than two thousand years. Hippocrates also noted the moral and spiritual aspects of healing and thought that treatment could occur only with consideration of attitude, environmental influences, and natural remedies.

Meditation and relaxation have also been shown to be beneficial in the treatment of: postoperative, cancer-related, and chronic pain, and chronic insomnia. People use meditation to increase calmness, improve psychological balance, cope with illness, and enhance overall health and well-being.

Try this simple introduction to meditation from *YogaJournal.com*.

Sit comfortably in an upright but relaxed position. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your nostrils. As you breathe notice the subtle sensation of cool air passing into, and warm air passing out of, your nose. Without manipulating the breath, simply notice the sensation. Maintain your attention to every breath. Staying relaxed and mentally alert, become curious about each passing breath as if it were your first.

If your attention wanders, simply notice the distraction and patiently return to the sensation of the breath. Your ability to stay present deepens by consistently returning to the current moment.

Do this exercise for 10 minutes once or twice a day, gradually extending your sessions to 20 or 30 minutes each.

Take a deep breath!

You may not realize it, but many people breathe incorrectly, especially during times of stress. Breathing incorrectly is not only a problem for your athletic activity, it can also lead to health problems, aches and pains, and fatigue. Believe it or not, six breaths per minute is considered optimal, according to a study published in *The Lancet* in May 1998.

Try counting your breaths on your own and you might be surprised to find out that you may be more than doubling this rate. Try closing your eyes and breathing more slowly and deeply with your belly for a few minutes. You will likely notice that you are in a more relaxed state. Slowing down your breathing not only reduces your heart rate but it also improves your heart rate variability. Both of these measures are tied to better health and relaxation, so take a deep breath!



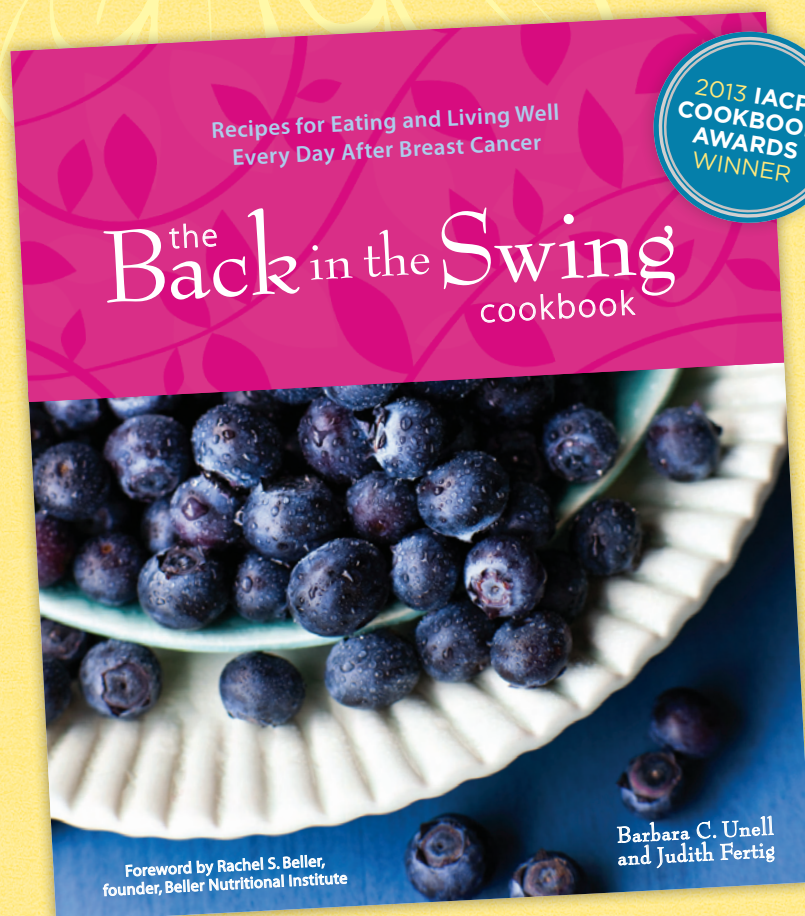
You'll learn more about the benefits of relaxation and mindfulness on pages: 70-71, 154, 159, 194-195, 202-203, 213, 216, 223, 236-237





Barbara C. Unell is the founder of Back in the Swing USA, and the author of more than a dozen books about healthy family living. Also the creator of national publications and nonprofit programs dedicated to education, health and parenting, Barbara has been a speaker and media contributor on social issues around the country. She has appeared on *Oprah*, *NPR*, the *Today show*, *Good Morning America*, and *NBC Nightly News*, and in the *New York Times*.

Judith Fertig is the author of more than twenty cookbooks, including *Heartland: The Cookbook*. Her work has appeared in *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Bon Appétit*, *Cooking Light*, *Saveur*, *Natural Awakenings*, and *Vegetarian Times*. She cooks, writes, and blogs about the things that help create a wonderful life—food, family, and friends.



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