

## video/audio review

### *Yoga and the Gentle Art of Healing: A Journey of Recovery After Breast Cancer*

with Susan Rosen

Review by Kathy Peterman, RN, MA



[Del Mar (CA): S. Rosen; 2002]. 858) 573-0090; www.YogaJoyofDelMar.com; 43 min; \$15.00

**F**or every eight women who live to an advanced age, one faces breast cancer in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup> By providing methods of early detection (mammography and clinical breast examination), you—the health care practitioner—are doing all you can to reduce the likelihood that women will die of the disease. Yet most of our medical advances have not touched on the psychosocial and spiritual needs of women who are trying to heal themselves after having breast cancer.

**One in eight women ... may benefit from this video.**

Susan Rosen, a breast cancer survivor and yoga instructor at Kaiser Permanente's Positive Choice Wellness Center in San Diego, has created a special video, "Yoga and the Gentle Art of Healing: A Journey of Recovery After Breast Cancer." This video helps women heal after breast cancer surgery or after radiation treatment. Rosen presents yoga in a nurturing and supportive way; women need not bend like pretzels or be in particularly good physical condition to benefit from using this video.

Rosen starts by briefly sharing her own story of discovering yoga 14 years ago, when she was seeking relief from shoulder pain. After she had studied yoga for many years and become a yoga teacher, breast cancer was diagnosed. After giving her personal introduction, Rosen gently and clearly guides participants through various yoga poses.

The video is organized into various types of poses to enable each woman to easily choose exercises for which she feels ready. Each section of poses (including gentle wall poses, chair poses, floor poses, and relaxation) opens with information on what a woman needs for assuming the pose. Rosen is practical, using blankets and items found easily in the home. Her instructions are delivered in a tranquil, reassuring voice while soft music plays in the background to add a sense of being nurtured. The poses are simple and soothing, allowing a woman who may have postsurgical pain to begin the process of emotional and physical healing. For example, one pose begins with lying on the back with arms

extended out to the sides and gently supported on blankets. This pose opens the chest area, aids circulation, and relaxes the body.

The day I reviewed this video, a dear friend of mine, Jane, was starting radiation therapy after having surgery for breast cancer. I gave Jane the video, hoping that it would be useful to her.

The timing was perfect: Jane was very glad to have the support. Here is the letter she wrote me several weeks later:

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for sharing Susan Rosen's yoga video with me. The journey of recovery after breast cancer proved to be more challenging than I expected.

Although I was feeling good and my energy was returning, my ability to raise my arm and do normal lifting was limited. As you know, my life is very full, and I'm used to doing most things myself. Everything seemed to take twice as long, and I was getting really frustrated!

The yoga exercises on the video made an amazing difference. The gentle stretches quickly improved my range of motion while diminishing the tight, hard feeling of the scar tissue. In addition, the video is beautifully and professionally done. I especially appreciated the introduction given before each set of poses to explain what items would be required.

It would be a great service if doctors would make this video available to their patients

Blessings to you and to Susan Rosen.

Jane Westerkamp<sup>a</sup>

Through her own experience, Rosen shows that yoga practiced after breast cancer surgery or treatment:

- calms and centers the mind
- releases tension and stress
- improves range of motion
- aids in reducing the effects and discomfort of scar tissue

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- relaxes the gripping feeling in the chest area, and
- energizes the body, mind, and spirit.

The video "Yoga and the Gentle Art of Healing, A Journey of Recovery After Breast Cancer" is professionally done and has a running time of 43 minutes. Easy to follow, the video offers women a chance at physical, mental, and spiritual healing after surgery and treatment. Ms Rosen provides excellent instruction and support and speaks directly from her own survival experience. Health care practitioners would be well advised to share this video with patients, friends, or family members who are facing breast cancer. They will

find support, and their healing journey will be enhanced by the physical and mental renewal they gain through using the video. Cost for the video is \$19.95. For more information about the video, visit [www.YogaJoyofDelMar.com](http://www.YogaJoyofDelMar.com) or call 858-573-0090. ❖

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#### Reference

1. Feuer EJ, Wun LM, Boring CC, Flanders WD, Timmel MJ, Tong T. The lifetime risk of developing breast cancer. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 1993 Jun 2;85(11):892-7.



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## Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare

Review by Vincent J Felitti, MD

**T**he *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare (JTT)* is now in its seventh year of bimonthly publication by the Royal Society of Medicine (London). The journal is designed to bring together reports of successes and failures in a new, exciting, and rapidly expanding field where an impressive number of innovative ideas are being tested around the world.

Clearly, electronic storage and transfer of information is currently important in medical practice and is essential to its future. Use of computers, personal digital assistants, and the Internet by physicians and patients has become common. But expectations are rising faster than are experience and practical use. For instance, resolution of operational problems is now commonly postponed with the statement, "That will be solved when we get the electronic medical record."

Browsing through *JTT*, the reader finds a number of remarkably imaginative projects that have already been instituted, often in remote parts of the world. Telepathology, teleophthalmology, videoconferencing, telepsychiatry, home monitoring, and teleradiology are all used, although not necessarily successfully. The reader of *JTT* also finds that the technology itself is

usually only a minor part of the equation for successful medical collaboration at a distance. Repeatedly, *JTT* reports project failure traced to inadequately addressed issues of interpersonal cooperation, hidden competitiveness, and a naïve hope that investment in technology can somehow solve problems that have not been thoroughly analyzed. When we also recognize that successful telemedicine approaches are volume-dependent (because of costs that must be capitalized), we realize that any smoothly running, high-volume operation depends first on a leader who organizes human efforts for cumulative effect.

The *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare* would be a good investment for Kaiser Permanente's in hospital medical libraries as a way to develop interest, stimulate imaginative thinking, and yet maintain realistic expectations among Permanente physicians contemplating the rapidly expanding field of telemedicine. Some physicians may wish to subscribe, but others might want to use the free alerting service with Table of Contents posted on the Internet at [www.rsm.ac.uk/pub/jt.htm](http://www.rsm.ac.uk/pub/jt.htm). A free sample issue may also be viewed at that Internet address. ❖

**Vincent J Felitti, MD,** has been with the Southern California Permanente Medical Group since its opening in San Diego in the late 1960s.

Yoga and Breast Cancer is a practical, how-to guide to using yoga to manage stress, relieve pain, and gain the strength necessary to make it through this illness. This seminal work follows the authors' own research, which has shown a proven correlation between yoga practice and better health outcomes after a breast cancer diagnosis. More than simply an exercise primer, the Yoga and Breast Cancer is a practical, how-to guide to using yoga to manage stress, relieve pain, and gain the strength necessary to make it through this illness. This seminal work follows the authors' own research My yoga practice was one of the greatest gifts I could have received from my breast cancer, and it is because of this that I am so passionate about being able to share its healing beauty with other people. It has been 10 years, and now I live in Geneva, Switzerland with my husband and two children.Â Michelle Didner is a certified yoga instructor. After graduating from Boston College with a BA in literature she initially pursued a career in the fashion industry. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002 at the age of 38, she found personal healing, empowerment, and compassion in the practice of yoga.Â Thank you for sharing your healing journey and I wish you a very happy life ahead. April 03, 2013 Michelle Didner says