

# The Strength of Survival

## Letter from the Director

Hello Survivors,

We're in the full swing of summer now, and that means more outdoor activities. For many of you, it's triathlon season. I know some of you will be participating in your first triathlon this year, and I also know that some of you are a bit nervous about it. That's okay; it's perfectly normal to feel a little nervous the first time you try something new. Allow yourself to feel however you feel, and forge ahead with your plans! When I did my first triathlon in 2001, I was petrified. I was convinced that I couldn't do it because I was too old, out-of-shape, not athletic enough, blah, blah, blah! But I did it anyway. A big reason why I did it was to prove to myself that I could. Every once in a while, I like to do things that I'm afraid of. To quote Eleanor Roosevelt, "We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot." And that's true. When I was a child, my father told me that there's no such thing as the word "can't." I certainly didn't understand the concept at the time, but I understood as I got older. What if "can't" wasn't a word? Try taking it out of your vocabulary and see what happens. Just because you're nervous, or unsure that you'll be able to accomplish something, doesn't mean you can't or won't. Change your thoughts and change your life. Think you "can't" take a spinning class? Yes, you can. Think you "can't" change your diet? Sure, you can. Think you "can't" possibly finish a triathlon? I bet you can. Tell yourself that you can, and then go out there and do what you have to do to make it happen. It may not be easy at times, but the effort that you put into it will make the victory that much sweeter.



### New at Our On-line Store

Check out  
[www.cafepress.com/TeamSurvivorTS](http://www.cafepress.com/TeamSurvivorTS) for great new items.

### Upcoming Events:

- 8/24 — Mock Triathlon
- 9/13-14 — Danskin Women's Triathlon
- 11/2 — 2nd Annual Survive & Thrive Brunch

***You are never given a wish without being given the power to make it true. You may have to work for it, however.***

*-Richard Bach from "Illusions"*

**It's okay to pass me....  
I'm busy beating cancer**

## Countdown to Danskin: Focus on Biking

“It’s just like riding a bike.” For many adults, riding a bicycle is something we did as children and it should be easy to get back on that bike and go. Any bicycle that is maintained and that you enjoy is great. So get out on your bike, and get outside and enjoy the fresh air...but there are a few things that you need to do along the way.

First: take you and your bike to your neighborhood bicycle shop and get your bike fitted specifically for you. Small adjustments in seat height and positioning can make a huge difference in how you feel and how your hips and knees handle the work load being put on them.

Second: have a drink...from your water bottle...while on your bicycle...while moving. It is important that you get the hang of hydrating while on your rides. Start slow, literally slowing your pace down while you grab your water bottle. And you should be grabbing that water bottle with your left hand so if something were to come up in the path ahead you can brake with the right brake which controls your back wheel. So get riding...and have a drink with your left hand.

Third: practice the technical aspects when you are ready, most importantly, learn how to use your gears. One of the greatest benefits you get from having multiple gears is that you can vary how hard you work and the pace you are able to keep. You should strive to keep a fairly quick pace on a flat road – 80 to 110 rpm – and a slightly slower cadence – 60 to 80 rpm – on an incline. Use your gears to keep the right pace and it will maximize your speed while preserving as much of your energy as possible.

So get out there on a bicycle that fits you, and have a drink while you practice keeping your pace and speed up by using your gears. And most of all: have fun! It is as easy as riding a bike.



### What is the Danskin bike really like?

- The course is an out and back course that is closed to traffic.
- The beginning of the route has some very slight, rolling hills but the majority of the ride is flat.
- The bike course is between the bay and the ocean and can have a noticeable wind.
- The course is gorgeous; make sure that you look up and see the water sparkling to your side and the green of the trees. Enjoy the moment.



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH: Summer Veggie Stir Fry

Chances are your garden is overflowing with zucchini and beans this time of year! This is an easy, delicious, and healthy recipe that makes use of any of the seasonal veggies in your garden or local farmers market. This recipe also uses nutritional yeast, an inactive yeast with a nutty, cheesy flavor. It’s packed with vitamin B12, and can be found at your local health food store or Whole Foods Market.

- 1 large zucchini, diced
- 2 cups green beans, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- large onion, sliced
- any other veggies
- nutritional yeast to taste
- olive oil OR vegetable broth to taste

Heat up enough olive oil or vegetable broth to sauté veggies. Add onions first, and sauté under medium heat until soft. Add zucchini, beans, other veggies, and garlic, and stir until soft. Add nutritional yeast to taste (start with 1 tablespoon and add more if desired). Enjoy!

## Build Your Muscles, Build Your Brain

An active lifestyle has benefits beyond the body. A new study suggests that being active can stimulate brain cell growth and lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

German researchers put 30 adult female mice in an "enriched environment" that included toys, a running wheel and unlimited food and water for 10 months.

Compared to mice kept in cages, the active mice grew five times more new brain cells and showed fewer signs of age-related brain degeneration. They also were more curious about their surroundings and better able to learn new things.

"Our study suggests that, in mice, we can reduce the effects of aging on the brain with a sustained active and challenging life, even if this stimulation is only begun in middle age," writes Gerd Kempermann, M.D., lead author of the study.

While study results in mice don't always transfer to humans, Kempermann suggests that people who change their behavior because of this study "will certainly do no harm" and that "they might even do something good for the brain cells that are involved in learning and memory processes."

Sources: *Annals of Neurology*, 2002; 52, 135-143, [acefitness.org](http://acefitness.org)

### **Fitness Tip of the Month: STRENGTH TRAINING**

Strength training benefits your body, mind and soul. It is empowering to become stronger, and strength training is one way to do that. If you belong to a gym, ask one of the trainers to show you the proper way to use free weights or the machines. Proper form is important to prevent injury. If you don't belong to a gym and would prefer to do your strength training at home, there are many DVDs you can purchase designed for all levels of fitness. If you are interested in an at-home program but aren't sure which DVD or what equipment is necessary, please contact TSTS. Our professional coaches and trainers will be happy to assist you in finding a program that works for you. You are also free to attend the strength training & stretching class on Saturdays from 12:30 - 1:00 pm at PEAC Health & Fitness in Ewing, NJ.

### **In the News: Higher BMI related to poorer survival rates**

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - A higher body mass index (BMI) is associated with lower survival rates in women with breast cancer, according to a report in the July 10th issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

"We have found strong evidence that high BMI and a recent pregnancy are associated with a poorer prognosis after a diagnosis of breast cancer," Dr. Gillian C. Barnett told Reuters Health. "Our study suggests that advice on weight loss should be given to all obese patients with breast cancer."

Dr. Barnett from Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, UK and colleagues investigated the impact of established risk factors for incident breast cancer on overall survival after a diagnosis of breast cancer, using data from the Studies of Epidemiology and Risk Factors in Cancer Heredity.

Women with the highest BMIs were 52 percent more likely to die than women with the lowest BMIs, the investigators report. BMI is the ratio of weight to height, which is often used to see if a patient's weight is outside normal parameters.

"The Women's Interventional Nutritional Study reported improved event-free survival in women randomly assigned to a reduced fat diet (associated with weight loss)," Barnett pointed out. "Further definitive clinical weight loss intervention trials in breast cancer populations are required to further clarify the relationship between breast cancer mortality and BMI."

SOURCE: *Yahoo! Health—Journal of Clinical Oncology*, July 10, 2008.

## PHILLY WOMEN'S TRI RECAP

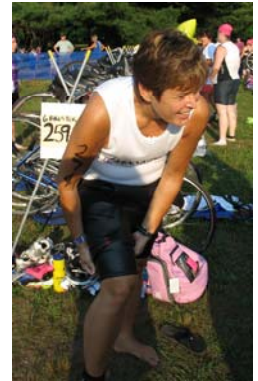


**The first wave (including survivors) preparing for the start in Philly. From this angle, the Schuylkill river doesn't look that bad.**

TSTS had another successful year at the Philadelphia Women's Triathlon on July 13. Congratulations to all the TSTS athletes who raced! Triathlon competitors included Janice Caldwell, Sharon Friedman, Donna Gunderson, Jennifer Polo, Amy Spiegel, and Melissa Walker, who won first place in the Survivors Category! Duathlon competitors included Susan Berowitz and Bonnie Crowley.



**TSTS Member, Melissa Walker (and hubby Steve) resting after the Philly race which earned her first place in the Survivors category**



**Janice Caldwell preparing for the swim in Philly.**



**TSTS Member, Anne Svonavec, volunteering at body marking in Philly**



**Sharon Friedman all set to race!**

*The miracle isn't that I finished. The miracle is that I had the courage to start.*

*-John "The Penguin" Bingham, on his first race*

## NJ STATE TRIATHLON RECAP

Congratulations to the TSTSers who participated in the NJ State Triathlon on July 27 in Mercer County Park! Sprint-distance triathletes included Janice Caldwell, Donna Gunderson, Susan Holden (and husband Scott), Martha Hostetter, and Baru Saul. Olympic-distance triathletes included Jean Deamond, Sharon Friedman, Jennifer Polo, and Amy Spiegel. These ladies participated in their very first Olympic-distance race! Congratulations also to our very own Tri Coach Tom Battaglia, who also participated in the Olympic-distance race.



**Member Susan Holden (and hubby Scott) after the finish at the NJ Tri**

Tax deductible donations always welcome: Please click "Make a Donation" at the bottom of our home page at [www.TeamSurvivorTriState.org](http://www.TeamSurvivorTriState.org)

## Inspiration Station at the Philly and NJ Tris:

Thanks to all of our members who volunteered to help make the Philadelphia Women's Tri and the NJ State Tri so successful. This year TSTS also ran "Inspiration Station", also known as the Kids Tent. Thanks go out to volunteers in Philly: Susan Holden, Martha Hostetter, Lenora Kandiner, Jacque Knuttel (with mom Louise Bomont and brother Andrew), Anne Lumberger, Barbara Matlack, Anne Svonavec, Shari Widmayer, and Executive Director Ronni Blaisdell volunteered their time and talents in Philly. Special thanks go out to the athletes who pulled double-duty as volunteers as well; Janice Caldwell and Donna Gunderson

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped TSTS again run the "Inspiration Station" in NJ: Debbie Belson, Executive Director Ronni Blaisell, Anne Lumberger, Karolyn Tucker, and Shari Widmayer (with husband Don and kids Hannah and Lillie). Special thanks to the triathletes who pulled double-duty as volunteers: Janice Caldwell, Donna Gunderson, Susan Holden, and Martha Hostetter.



**Kids Zone in NJ**

In addition to the fun and laughs working together, our members who volunteered are now very talented and experienced face-painters and tattoo artists! And your efforts helped TSTS raise over \$500! We couldn't have done it without you.



**TSTS Members in Philly, Martha Hostetter, Anne Lumberger and Shari Widmayer**



**Face painting at the Inspiration Station**

## My First Olympic Distance Triathlon

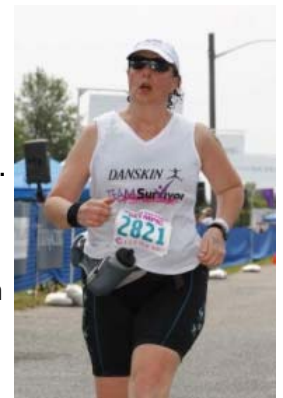
by Amy Spiegel

On Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, I was one of four TSTS members to complete the New Jersey State Olympic distance triathlon. Just writing the words still makes me shake my head in disbelief. I never thought I could do an Olympic distance because of the long swim, my weakest event. And to be honest, I still don't know how I ended up agreeing to do an Olympic distance. But my story is a lesson for everyone in overcoming the self-defeating thoughts, doubts, and fears we all harbor and facing a new challenge with confidence, curiosity, and humor – 'cause you know there really is humor in every activity you do with Team Survivor!

My approach to doing my first Olympic distance was to remain calm, try my best, and be proud of making the attempt. Notice that the word "training" doesn't appear. Well, that's because I don't like to train. I admit it. I like to run, but I don't like to swim, nor do I like to bike. However, I've done numerous sprint triathlons and so I figured I could make it through the Olympic distance if I focused, tried hard, and prayed. And let me tell you – once I saw the length of the swim, my praying became fervent!

I could relate the details to you of every portion of the race from setting up in transition, seeing the actual length of the swim course for the first time, exulting at exiting the water, fighting through dehydration on the bike course, and running every step of the 10k. You would laugh, gasp, and exclaim and most likely, you too would shake your head in disbelief. But I prefer to share my thoughts on the overall experience.

I must tell you that doing this event with other TSTS members is what made the experience so special. Crossing the finish line and seeing the other TSTS members waiting for me with huge grins on their faces, bottles of water for me, and open arms for hugs was intensely gratifying and rewarding. These are women who understand my struggle to overcome lingering side-effects and after-effects of treatment, who appreciate the difficulty of re-training my body to be active, and who know my profound fear of never recovering my sense of self. They recognize the effort I made to get to that finish line more than anyone else I know. They are the reason "can't" is no longer in my vocabulary.



**TSTS member, Amy Spiegel, heading to the finish line of her first Olympic triathlon**

## Exceed Your Expectations: Think You Can't? Think Again!

Those two little words can control what you do or don't, and even who you are. They limit your possibilities and keep you exactly where you are. Even if you aren't looking for a change, imagine if ridding those two little words, "I can't" had the ability to open endless doors in your life? Would you then consider dropping them from your vocabulary just to see what was in fact *possible*?

At my ripe old age of 42, I was clear about what I could and could not do. I was a couch potato of the 80's, yet dared a marathon in the year 2000 and then set my sights on a Triathlon, clear that swimming was on the *can't* list. Not as clear as when I set out for my first 2 laps, though, unable to breathe and ready to call it a day.

To make matters worse, my friend who created this challenge for us in the first place, had an even larger fear of drowning and was ready to throw in the towel as well. At that point, it seemed only natural to give him a little coaching, putting my own fears aside.

"You *are* going to do this," I said. "Just imagine what will be possible to you once you face and defeat the biggest fear of your life?" I listened to my own words and did an internal check as well. *Could I really do this?* I really wasn't sure, but knew I had spent too much time and money to back out now.

"Fear keeps you small," I added. "Defeat your fear and the possibilities of what you can accomplish will be endless."

Even as the words played back in my head later, I knew they were words to live by and would recite that same speech to myself as I stayed committed to my goal.

Well, after weeks of training, in spite of the little voice in my head that kept telling me that an old dog can't learn new tricks, I felt I was as ready as I was going to be, even with my moments of doubt.

And so, against the advice of the race crew saying, "If you are not certain you can complete this race, do not start", I did it anyway, clear of my own skepticism and the knowledge that I was well-trained. I not only got in that dark, deep lake, but completed the Triathlon with a kick at the end. It wasn't until later that I thought about those 2 little words that had changed to: *I can* and then to, *I wonder what else I can do?*

Try it. Even if just for the day, or the week, take the words out of your vocabulary and see what you can accomplish, without your lines drawn in the sand. You will be amazed to see how they transfer into your life and the things you do on a daily basis. You will also be amazed to see how contagious it can be as others, say, *hmmmm...maybe I can too!*



Business coach, Lesley Geller, recently hosted a seminar for Team Survivor Tri-State

Lesley Geller is a Business Coach. She helps successful professionals exceed their expectations of growth. She works with small business owners, as well as individuals in large corporations looking to reach the next level. Lesley graduated from the University of Maryland is certified as a Coach through the Coach Training Alliance, which is recognized by the International Coach Federation. She is also a Freelance Writer and co-author of: *101 Great Ways to Improve Your Life*. For more information about how to reach the potential you're capable of, visit her website at [www.LesleyGeller.com](http://www.LesleyGeller.com) or E-mail her at [Lesley@LesleyGeller.com](mailto:Lesley@LesleyGeller.com).

### Coming next month:

- *Countdown to Danskin: Running*
- *More great news and tips!*

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