



PHYSICAL THERAPY AFTER BREAST CANCER



Many treatments for breast cancer can include side effects that leave the patient with less motion, strength, and endurance to perform daily activities.

Let's look at some common changes that cancer and cancer treatments can have on the body and how Nesin Physical Therapists can help navigate those changes:



DECREASED MOTION

Many patients experience a decrease in shoulder, neck and chest motion, making daily tasks more difficult. This can be caused by surgery and/or radiation, which can cause scarring and tissue damage. Manual techniques performed by a physical therapist, including soft tissue and joint mobilizations, can improve the mobility of restricted areas.



LOSS OF STRENGTH & BALANCE

Chemotherapy can affect strength and balance through tingling or numbness in the extremities, muscle atrophy due to a decrease in caloric intake from lack of appetite, and increased risk of osteoporosis. Muscle weakness or poor balance can lead to difficulty walking, standing or lifting. A physical therapist can use several skilled techniques to improve balance, gain muscle strength, and guide the patient through weight-bearing exercise to limit bone loss.



LYMPHEDEMA

Lymphedema is swelling as a result of damage to the lymphatic system, which can result from any cancer treatment, including radiation and surgery. Physical therapists must be specifically trained in the care of lymphedema swelling; they utilize specialized techniques to reduce swelling and assist the patient in becoming independent in their own lymphedema care.