

# Dowling discusses cancer, recovery through Pilates

By Ashley Teitelbaum

Kip Dowling says he is a lucky man.

"If I hadn't had a colonoscopy done, my cancer [rectal carcinoma] would have gone undetected and spread," said Dowling, owner of Pacifica Del Mar and Pacifica Breeze in Del Mar. "And if I didn't have Pilates, I would still be in a lot of pain after my tumor was removed."

Dowling was diagnosed with cancer on Aug. 10 after he went to the doctor for a routine visit and colonoscopy.

"I was fortunate, my tumor was only 1.4 and I didn't have to

have chemotherapy," he said. "I had to have my tumor removed and work to repair the damage the removal and tumor had made."

See Dowling, Page 19



Julian Littleford takes Kip Dowling through a Pilates workout.

## Health & Beauty

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. In the U.S., cancers of the colon and rectum combined (colorectal) are the third most common site of new cases.

It is estimated that 148,300 will be diagnosed this year and that approximately 56,600 Americans will die of the disease this year.

Dowling credits his Pilates workouts with Julian Littleford, owner of J. L. Body Conditioning in Del Mar, for his comeback from cancer in both the physical and mental aspects.

"When I started doing Pilates again, after my surgery, my basic body alignment was completely off," said Dowling.

Littleford added, "He was holding his body to try to alleviate the pain but was in fact causing more pain to occur. We had to retrain his body and lengthen his muscles."

Abdominal muscles are damaged when tumors have to be removed due to colon or rectal cancer.

Dowling said he had no strength in his legs or abs after initial recovery from the surgery.

"I had lost 20 pounds and had no stamina," said Dowling.

Littleford knew the issues Dowling was facing, as many of his clients are cancer patients and is a survivor of testicular cancer.

"I can sympathize because I've been through it," said Littleford, who used Pilates for his own rehab. "It is so traumatic what the body goes through. You have to customize each person's Pilates work in regards to how they were operated on and in what physical condition they are in pre and post surgery. I also use a lot of breathing techniques which can help de-stress your mind and body."

Dowling said Pilates has helped lower his stress level tremendously along with taking some time away from work.

"I have a constant reminder, a scar, that lets me know that I can't get back into that trap of living an extremely stressful life," said Dowling.

Littleford says Dowling has made great progress in his alignment, strength and stamina. They work out together three times a week.

Dowling said he would definitely encourage other cancer patients to seek out Pilates as a way of coping with the stress

of cancer.

"It is a great all around exercise for men, in general, for alignment and stamina," said Dowling.

Littleford added that Pilates is great for men and women of all ages and fitness levels. It is challenging enough for the professional athlete and safe enough for pregnant women. His clients vary in age from seven to 87.

Dowling says he now tries to educate everyone he meets about the importance of early detection for colon and rectal cancer.

"We are so lucky to have tests like this [colonoscopy]," he said. "People should really take advantage of it. I hear men say they don't have time, but cancer is serious and you should always have time for your health. For some I think it is an ego thing. Men should forget their ego and issues and get checked out. It can save your life."

Anyone can get colorectal cancer, but over 90 percent of the cases occur after age 50.

As with all cancer, early detection is important. This cancer may exhibit no signs in its early stages. Gradually, as it progresses, any of the following may be noted: a change in bowel habits, diarrhea, constipation or a sense that the bowel is not empty, blood (either bright red, or dark) in the stool, abdominal discomfort, pelvic pain, weight loss for no apparent reason, constant tiredness and fatigue, anemia due to blood loss and vomiting.



Littleford helps Dowling obtain more strength and stamina post surgery through Pilates.

There are a few tests normally used to diagnose colon cancer. These include the fecal blood test, a sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy. The colonoscopy is often recommended as a follow-up to other procedures if there is evidence of possible cancer, and offers the most thorough look at the whole colon. It only needs to be done every 10 years if no cancer is found.

The most common conventional treatment for colorectal cancer is surgery. Usually this involves the removal of the primary tumor, part of the healthy colon or rectum, and nearby lymph nodes. Sometimes a temporary or permanent colostomy is required. Chemotherapy may be used, especially in later stages of colorectal cancer. Radiation is often used, even in early stages of rectal cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 90 percent of all colorectal cancer cases and deaths are thought to be preventable. Risk factors for colorectal cancer include a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, and inflammatory bowel disease. Other risk factors include a sedentary life-style (not enough exercise), high fat/low fiber diet and inadequate ingestion of fruits and vegetables.

As far as prevention is concerned, a diet high in folic acid, high in methionine (an essential amino acid) and low in alcohol intake, when followed for at least five years, can significantly reduced colon cancer risk in those with a family



Dowling and Littleford at J.L. Body Conditioning.

history of the disease.

For more information on colon, rectal and other cancers, visit <http://www.cancer.org/home.htm>.

For more information on Pilates and/or J.L. Body Conditioning in Del Mar, visit <http://jlbodconditioning.com/> or call 858-259-1682.