



### What is Strength After Breast Cancer?

Strength After Breast Cancer (Strength ABC) is a program designed to teach breast cancer survivors that slowly progressive weightlifting performed twice weekly can reduce the onset or worsening of breast cancer-related lymphedema. Participants in the program get an evaluation with a physical or occupational therapist who is specialized in Breast Cancer Rehabilitation, exposure to a lecture called the Lymphedema Education Session (LES), and four sessions with a therapist to learn the exercise program.

### Why are we doing this program?

Strength ABC was chosen because of the positive outcomes demonstrated by the PAL trial, a large clinical trial conducted at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, composed of 154 BrCA survivors WITHOUT lymphedema and 141 BrCA survivors WITH lymphedema. Women who participated showed these benefits:

- 50% reduced likelihood of lymphedema worsening*
- 70% reduced likelihood of lymphedema onset among women with 5 or more nodes removed*
- Improved strength and energy*
- Improved body image*
- Reduced body fat*
- Prevented declines in physical function that can occur after breast cancer*

The current Strength ABC program was developed by the PAL researchers to put the PAL intervention into practice.

### Who is eligible for Strength ABC?

Individuals who have had breast cancer. Most will have finished treatment, but patients still in treatment can be evaluated to see if they are ready. Patients who have recently had surgery will need to be cleared for 'usual activity' by their surgeon.

*BrCA survivors with or without lymphedema.*

*BrCA survivors who have no medical conditions that would preclude participation in a weight-training program.*

*Currently free of cancer (not metastatic)*

### Program Details

All patients must be scheduled for an evaluation with a physical or occupational therapist before beginning Strength ABC. This is true even if the patient does not have lymphedema. A physician prescription is required.

### Is this an insurance-based program?

Yes. Follow all the same rules with this program as with other patients. Patients must pay any co-pays or deductibles as per their insurance. If they have an HMO and are not capped to your organization, they can receive treatment with you for their lymphedema-related issues out of capitation.