

MARI'S STORY



“I want every lymphedema patient to know about this new resource.”

A DETERMINED ADVOCATE

Mari is a strong advocate for herself and others with lymphedema. Even before her diagnosis with lymphedema, she was determined to learn what was causing problems in her hand and arm. Once diagnosed with lymphedema, she refused to become lost in the medical system or become a victim of the challenges of lymphedema. After much investigation, Mari learned of the Flexitouch® Lymphedema System. After trying the Flexitouch system, she was very pleased with her results, and enjoys an improved quality of life. Mari continues her advocacy efforts through educating others about lymphedema and the possibilities with the Flexitouch system.

With the soft hum of the Flexitouch system in the background, Mari spends one hour a day relaxing, reading, or catching up with relatives on the phone. She has come to embrace this quiet time each day—a time when, during her Flexitouch therapy, she can step away from the hustle of her daily work and social activities.

Mari is every bit as active now as she was when she was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1998. In fact, Mari continued to work full-time, even while recovering from a lumpectomy, and undergoing radiation treatment. Mari refused to let breast cancer slow her down.

So it was a concern to her when, at the end of radiation, there was a soft, spongy area on her left thumb. Mari suspected lymphedema and within a short time later her suspicions were confirmed and she was diagnosed.

JOURNEY WITH LYMPHEDEMA

Initially, when Mari visited a physical therapist, she underwent therapy with a traditional compression pump two to three times a week. Although Mari was diligent in her therapy, she was unable to maintain consistent reduction.

To learn more about her condition, Mari took a week-long course in lymphedema management. She found the course to be informative but depressing. Although her condition was only mild at the time, she worried about having to use lifestyle-altering methods to control lymphedema. Mari was also concerned about the time required to properly manage her condition. She felt overwhelmed. “I wondered if there would be life after lymphedema,” she recalls.

LIFE ALTERING ACCIDENT

Ironically, on the way to her car after the last lymphedema lecture, Mari slipped on the ice. With her books, bandages and other course materials in her right arm as she had been instructed to do in class, she could only break her fall with her left arm. This life changing accident caused a frozen shoulder that required eighteen months of physical therapy to correct. During this time, Mari's range of motion was severely restricted. She was unable to raise her arm above her shoulder and reaching behind was impossible.

As she worked to manage her increased swelling and frozen shoulder it became necessary to implement daily bandaging and use of compression garments. Mari also underwent two separate intensive therapy sessions, each three weeks in duration with a physical therapist in which she had professional manual lymphatic drainage every day. With this new routine for managing her lymphedema, Mari felt more in control of her condition.

Then, in 2002, almost exactly four years after her first cancer was discovered, Mari was diagnosed with a second breast cancer. This time, she required a bilateral mastectomy and chemotherapy. True to her spirit, Mari did not let this second diagnosis of breast cancer get her down, and fortunately, her lymphedema did not significantly worsen.

LEARNING OF THE FLEXITOUCH SYSTEM

Mari continued her proactive efforts and in 2004 learned of the Flexitouch system. With her doctor's approval she began a 30 day trial in January of 2005. She was delighted with her results from her use of the Flexitouch system. Her swelling was significantly reduced and she was able to effectively maintain the reduction at home.

Significant to Mari's lifestyle, she found that she could travel with the Flexitouch system and successfully treat her condition while on the road.

Using the Flexitouch system, Mari was able to eliminate most of her bandaging. "With Flexitouch, I no longer have to follow the tedious and time-consuming process of bandaging my arm every day. No more washing, drying, or rolling bandages. This in itself has made a positive impact on my lifestyle."¹

Based on her experience with the Flexitouch system,² Mari and her husband chose to invest in the company.

"My husband and I invested in Tactile Systems because we want the company to be successful. Flexitouch has been a godsend for me, and I want every patient with lymphedema to know about this new resource."

1) The Flexitouch system is not intended to replace the use of compression bandages or garments. Please consult your treating clinician before making any changes to your lymphedema treatment regimen.

2) Individual results will vary.



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