



Terri was 42 when she discovered a large 7cm mass on her right breast. A few days later she went for a mammogram and ultrasound. The results showed a large tumour on her right breast and two smaller ones on her left breast. "They did biopsies on the tumours right there and then. I think I pretty much went into shock at that point. The next 3 days wait felt like the longest days of my life" says Terri.

Terri was diagnosed with infiltrating lobular cancers in both breasts. They were hormone based and very aggressive. Three weeks later Terri was in surgery and had a bi-lateral mastectomy. This was followed by 4 1/2 months of gruelling chemo, more surgery and then radiation treatment.

A month after Terri finished radiation treatment she was introduced to the Encore Programme through her physiotherapist. "She strongly recommended it for me, as I was struggling with just about every basic physical activity. I went along and discovered that I really enjoyed the swimming exercises. My body actually felt normal again in the buoyancy of the water. It was bliss! I also met the most amazing women there. I started to slowly feel more positive again."

Terri repeated the Encore programme one year later, again on the advice of her physio, as she had reconstructive surgery due and was still struggling to do everyday things. "This time I felt like I had truly come back to the person I once was. I don't feel disabled anymore. I could do all of the exercises on the floor and learnt so much more about taking care of myself. Lessons that I will need to carry through with for the rest of my life. I learnt more about lymphoedema and keeping it at bay. I learnt more about nutrition and foods that are good for cancer cells. I learnt how to relax and breathe again. And best of all I learnt how to laugh again."

Like so many women who are advocates of the Encore programme, Terri found the benefits were far greater than purely physical "The Encore Programme has helped me not just physically, but psychologically and emotionally as well. I find I am a calmer, more easy going person and I appreciate every day of life and those that I love."

In June 2012 Terri had tram-flap surgery. "It's a major surgery and will set me back again for a while, but I know that next year I will go and do the Encore Programme again. And again, will rise above the rollercoaster journey that cancer is with the help and support of my wonderful family and friends and the support groups like Encore."

