

Cancer survivor stays fit

Fitness consultant endured three surgeries and chemotherapy

Many fitness instructors have remarkable stories of triumph to tell their clients, but none quite like that of John O'Meara.

O'Meara, COO of Extreme Fitness Clubs in Thornhill and Pickering, was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus in May 1997. The 35-year-old was a non-smoker and fitness consultant in the United States for 15 years.

At the time, doctors told O'Meara that statistics showed people in the 60 to 70 year age range usually get this form of cancer, and that the survival rate was only five to 15 per cent. O'Meara had surgery that removed about 20 cm of his esoph-

agus and 1/3 of his stomach.

After the operation, he underwent six months of chemotherapy and was told that if there was a reoccurrence, nothing could be done for him. His doctors told him to take three months off work and a minimum of five months of no exercise. O'Meara was back to work in one month consulting and working out after recovering for seven weeks.

Cancer reoccurred

His cancer reoccurred one year later. Even though he was sick, O'Meara kept training and because of his physical condition, doctors decided he could handle a second operation. He underwent surgery again in May 1999 and had 1/3 of his lung removed.

After this operation, doctors again told O'Meara that he should take three months off work. He went back to work in ten days and competed in his first natural bodybuilding show ten months later and placed second.

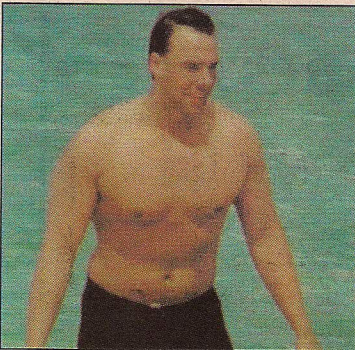
During his ordeal, O'Meara lost 70 pounds after both operations. He endured several trips to emergency rooms for stomach problems due to constant pain, as well as check-ups and cat scans every three to four months. He

also lost his business.

O'Meara came to Canada and was hired by Extreme Fitness in December 1998 (during his illness) on a consulting basis. In November 2000, his cancer was rediagnosed during a routine check-up. He has since returned to the United States and undergone surgery for a third time.

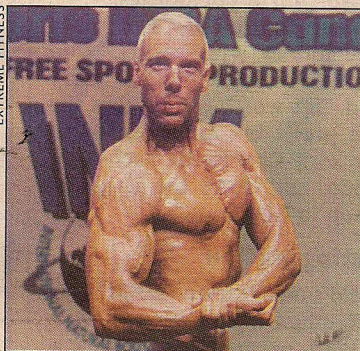
Remarkably, the Markham resident's passion for life continues, and less than a month after surgery he is back at work at Extreme Fitness as well as working out. O'Meara's message to everyone is that if you exercise, maintain a healthy lifestyle and eat properly, you can overcome any obstacle in life as he did. (Metro)

EXTREME FITNESS



O'Meara before undergoing the first of three surgeries for cancer.

EXTREME FITNESS



O'Meara in his present form, shown here at a recent competition.