

several other stroke survivors, Kate initially participated in a special 12-week physical therapy program offered by the University of Southern California and administered by physical therapy students in a hands-on educational environment. She has continued to use guidelines from the program as part of her ongoing fitness maintenance regimen. Stairclimbers, stationary bikes, exercise balls and certain resistance training machines have been an important part of Kate's exercise routine because they allow her to support her bodyweight on her good side while letting her weak side "go along for the ride," preventing muscle atrophy and maintaining muscle tone.

"With any exercise program, check with your doctor first and do what works for you," Kate advises. "I no longer have the image that I have to build up a sweat to get a good workout. Since my stroke, I tire easily and, therefore, have to be careful not to overwork my body. Some days, I have more energy than others."

One of the problems that Kate encountered – typical of many stroke patients – was the inability to swallow, so she literally had to relearn how to swallow food and drink liquids. The loss of control over swallowing elevates the risk of bacteria entering the lungs and causing pneumonia. There is also the very real danger of aspiration, which is when food meant to be swallowed enters the lungs (hence the saying, "the food went down the wrong pipe").

"I can eat really anything in moderation but, generally, I stick to healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, chicken and fish," Kate says: "I have a chopping board with two stainless steel nails so I can place an apple on it and slice it. Not having the use of my left arm makes it difficult to prepare meals, so things usually have to be simple and easy to prepare. I still have to be careful with things like rice because I can still get food caught in my throat."

In and out of the gym, Kate Adamson has been an inspiration. She has testified before Congress on behalf of the American Heart Association for more funding for stroke and heart research, and has become a national spokesperson for the American Stroke Association. She has served as a board member of the South Bay American Heart Association in Los Angeles and was appointed to the University of Southern California Department of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy Board of Counselors. As a member of the National Speakers Bureau, she is a sought-after keynote speaker. She has appeared on Fox News Channel, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *CBS Morning News*, *The Abrams Report* and many other major network programs.

Just two years ago she authored her best-selling book *Kate's Journey, Triumph Over Adversity* (now in its second printing by Nosmada Press) telling the story of her remarkable recovery against all odds. As actress Bonnie Franklin says, "Kate takes us on a journey from loss and despair to rebirth and hope with humor, grace, and faith. A remarkable triumph." ★