

(201) HEALTH

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF (201) MAGAZINE

A SUPPLEMENT TO (201) MAGAZINE

THE 411 ON
ANTIBACTERIALS

PATTI PETRULA'S
RECOVERY AFTER
BRAIN ANEURYSM
AND STROKE...

I SURVIVED!

GET THAT
PERFECT SMILE

MANAGING
CHRONIC PAIN

TREATING
INSOMNIA

PLUS:
TEEN MINDFULNESS

PRESCRIBING FOR
THE ELDERLY

REPAIRING A
TORN ACL

FEATURING
**BERGEN'S
TOP DOCTORS
& DENTISTS!**

*Mommy
Makeover*



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FITNESS

Surviving and THRIVING

*Paramus resident **Patty Petrula** comes back strong after a brain aneurysm and stroke*

WRITTEN BY **LUCY PROBERT** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ANNE-MARIE CARUSO**

It was going to be her year. Patty Petrula had been training hard for her first triathlon in February 2014 when she collapsed at her gym, suffering from a ruptured brain aneurysm. As one of the lucky ones who survives such an episode (they are fatal in more than 40 percent of cases, according to The Brain Aneurysm Foundation), Petrula says she's feeling better, and even "thriving," not only

because of her determination and drive but thanks to a strong team of family and friends behind and beside her.

"I just hit my two-year anniversary of that day," says Petrula, 45, a senior associate at KPMG in Montvale. "It's like a birthday for me. I got flowers and such an outpouring of love."

We talked to Patty about that day, her recovery and how exercising has kept her going.



STRONG SUPPORT

Patty Petruła does a lot of her training at HackensackUMC Fitness & Wellness in Maywood, where Jim Miaszkowski is the fitness manager.

(201): WHAT HAPPENED?

PETRULA: I was at the gym with my husband, Chris, and after running on the treadmill I told him I wasn't feeling the run and went off to do some weights. I put my stuff down on the bench and within 30 seconds I grabbed my head. It was simply the worst pain that I have ever felt. It felt like thunder in my head, that's the best way I can describe it and it's the last thing I remember. I grabbed my head, collapsed and fell to the floor. They sounded an alarm from what I was told and everyone moved quickly to help. At that point, Chris didn't know what was happening. He could tell someone had collapsed but until he looked across the gym and saw someone pick up my arm and recognized my hot-pink shirt, he had no idea it was me.

DESCRIBE YOUR MEDICAL CONDITION.

PETRULA: I don't remember anything for about 10 days. I was at Hackensack University Medical Center when I woke up. I was shocked and didn't understand what had happened. My doctor told me that along with my brain aneurysm, because my blood pressure went up over 220, I had also had a stroke. I spent about a month in the hospital.

HOW WAS YOUR RECOVERY?

PETRULA: I was lucky because I really have no health deficits. I never lost my speech. I never had any type of paralysis, the only physical issue I really had was a numbing in my hands that lasted about six months, and I have a shunt in my head. Shortly after going home, I joined a Facebook group for brain aneurysm survivors and it has been an amazing support group filled with helpful information. So many people said, "You'll start to feel better after six months," and like clockwork, six months later I did.

WAS RE-ENTRY BACK TO WORK DIFFICULT?

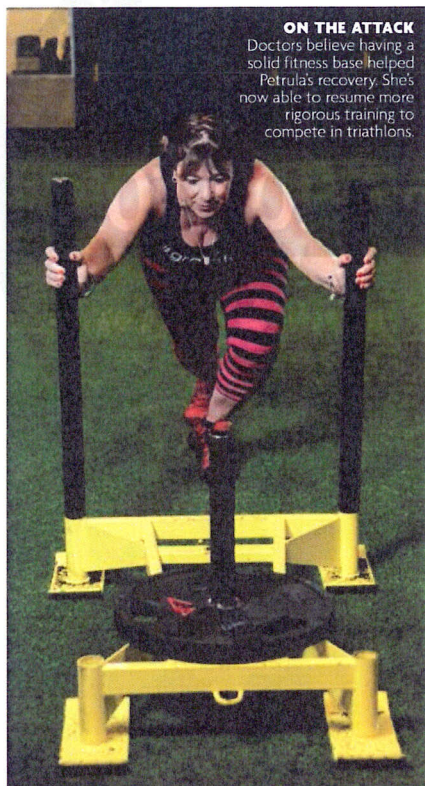
PETRULA: I went back to work two months early because I was going crazy at home. The outpouring of support at KPMG has been absolutely incredible. It's interesting because I've sort of gone back to doing things the old-fashioned way since I've been back. Because I was having issues with my hands, I made a point of physically picking up the phone to talk to people. And instead of sending emails I would walk to someone's office to see them, even if it was someone I'd never met and they were in a different building! It was little things like that - making connections with people - which were sort of life-changing for me. >

"When a doctor listens to my heart and tells me, 'You have the heart rate of an athlete,' that's the best compliment anyone could possibly give me."

PATTY PETRULA

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FITNESS



HAS EXERCISE HELPED IN YOUR RECOVERY?

PETRULA: My doctors said I recovered so well because I was in such good shape before this happened. That's what keeps me going even now – it fuels me. I participated in three triathlons last year, so I exercise a lot. A typical day might be an early morning swim, then a spin class or a run. I'll go to work then do some strength training in the evening. I try not to drink more than a cup of coffee a day so exercise gives me that boost. It helps me get through the day when it can be a struggle. Mentally, my brain doesn't work quite like it once did, so the exercising really helps. I wish I could bottle how I feel when I'm exercising and for the short time afterwards.

HOW IS YOUR FAMILY DEALING WITH EVERYTHING?

PETRULA: They have been so supportive. Last year when I competed in the YMCA's Wyckoff/Franklin Lakes Triathlon, it was a struggle but I did it. I came in last, with the police escort behind me, but my friends and family ran the 5-mile leg with me, which was amazing. I want so much

for my daughter, Shay, 16, and my stepdaughter, Camryn, who is 10, to see that I'm not giving up. I want them to see what it is to fight for something and achieve it. I just want to continue to get better.

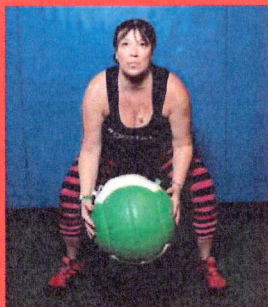
WHAT IS IN YOUR FUTURE?

PETRULA: People are shocked that I want to still do triathlons. They tell me, "You already proved yourself last year." But this year I want to do it without the police escort. I'm grateful that I finished, and believe me I'm proud, but now I want to be in it. I want to do better and continue to do better. When a doctor listens to my heart and tells me, "You have the heart rate of an athlete," that's the best compliment anyone could possibly give me.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ADVICE FOR SOMEONE GOING THROUGH THIS?

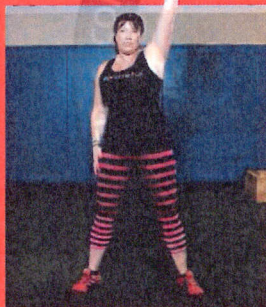
PETRULA: You have to have patience. I'm still dealing with that every day. You have to listen to your body and make progress, but don't look for perfection. That's what I always keep in the back of my head: "Progress not perfection." ♦

JOURNEY TO RECOVERY



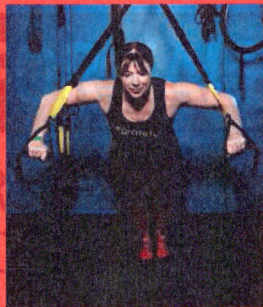
• Patty Petrula has been ardent in the pursuit of recovery. She has established a comprehensive strength and conditioning routine that takes her around the county in pursuit of fitness.

• "I do the majority of my triathlon training at the Hackensack University Medical Center Fitness and Wellness Center in Maywood," Petrula says. "I swim several days a week, do weights, spin classes and Pilates. I go there normally very, very early in the morning. I'll swim at around 5:15 a.m. and then take a spin class at 6:00 a.m."



• At Next Generation in Wyckoff, Petrula does her strength training and works on her endurance. She also brings her daughter there. She believes the strength work has significantly helped her with her training. "It makes me happy to do this with my daughter so she sees how important it is to exercise," Petrula says. "I come here two to three times a week on evenings and Sundays."

• Also part of the training is a few lunch hours at The Gym in Montvale, where Petrula runs and does weights. As she puts it, "I'm basically getting fit all over Bergen County with the help of many friends."



• In warmer months, Petrula runs and rides a bike outdoors along the Wyckoff bike trail or the Ridgewood Duck Pond path.

• Petrula says that she owes much of her success to Dr. Jerry Yoo, a coach/physical therapist that has been with her since the beginning. "Dr. Yoo really helps and guides me with everything I do and looks out for me," Petrula says with gratitude. "He stayed with me every step of the way for my first triathlon and made sure I was OK. I don't know what I would do without him quite honestly. He has been a huge part of my recovery and I am so grateful for him."

