

the insider

A newsletter published for everyone in the Athabasca University community

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COVER IMAGE »

Most people believe that regular exercise is an important contributor to good health, but Dr. Jeff Vallance is involved in a study focused on finding hard evidence that exercise is a powerful tool in cancer recovery (See page 2).



Posted on The Landing:
<https://landing.athabascau.ca>

Athabasca University

Exercise May Extend the Lives of Breast Cancer Patients

DR. JEFF VALLANCE, AN ASSISTANT professor in the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies, is part of the [Alberta Moving Beyond Breast Cancer Study](#), the largest long-term study of its kind, focused on the relationship between exercise and breast cancer recovery.

Over the next 10 to 15 years, the research team will be following 1,500 newly diagnosed breast cancer patients, from the time of their diagnosis, and assessing them periodically using gold-standard measures for fitness, body composition, physical activity and even sedentary time.

“This is a critical and timely study that will examine how physical activity and fitness levels affect health outcomes after a breast cancer diagnosis,” Vallance said. “If we can understand these factors better, we can aim to improve breast cancer recovery and survival.”

Some evidence suggests that physically active breast cancer survivors live longer and have a reduced risk of cancer recurrence, compared to inactive survivors, Vallance said. However, none of these studies have assessed physical activity using benchmark, objective measures. “Using better measures to assess these factors will help to more precisely and accurately understand these relationships,” he said. “If we can better understand how modifiable lifestyle-related factors affect outcomes such as survival, fitness or even health-related quality of life, we can develop more relevant and targeted interventions and programs for these women.”

Vallance’s interest in exercise and breast cancer survival and recovery began about 10 years ago when he started his PhD with Dr. Kerry Courneya, a professor and Canada Research Chair in physical activity and cancer in the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Alberta.

“Working with patients who were on various exercise research trials and seeing



“If we can understand these factors better, we can aim to improve breast cancer recovery and survival.”

how exercise affects women with a diagnosis is very motivating and encourages one to keep developing and testing new ideas in this exciting area of research,” he said. “Many women who face a breast cancer diagnosis and treatments are very keen and motivated to do anything that can positively affect their health, and from our research, we know that exercise is one of the best things you can do.”

The research team, headed by Courneya, and Dr. Christine Friedenreich, a senior research scientist in the Department of Population Health Research at Alberta Health Services and an adjunct professor

at the University of Calgary, includes investigators with expertise in epidemiology, health psychology, physiotherapy, exercise physiology, physical activity/sedentary behavior and biostatistics. The research is being funded by a \$2.5 million grant from the Canadian Institute for Health Research.

Patients are being recruited over the next five years. Women are eligible to enrol if they are newly diagnosed, under the age of 80 and have not had a previous cancer diagnosis. More information on how to get involved is available on the [AMBER website](#).

The Insider Wins Gold



THE INSIDER HAS WON A 2012 GOLD MarCom Award in the employee publication/internal newsletter category.

The international *MarCom Awards* competition is sponsored by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals and recognizes outstanding creative achievement by marketing and communication professionals. Over 6,000 entries from the United States, Canada and several other countries were entered in the 2012 competition.

Many thanks to all of those who submit articles, columns, photos and ideas for helping *The Insider* to communicate to and on behalf of the AU community.

Poems from the Heart



“The poems she has birthed are lush and lucid, cleanly written, alive, and honour the living as well as the remembered”

REINEKKE LENGELLE, A FACULTY member in the Centre for Humanities, has published *White*, a new e-book of poetry and photographs.

Common threads in *White* include eulogies for her stepfather, the mystery and wonder of being mother to her daughters, her mindful walking and the way writing is central to her life.

Award winning poet Margot Van Sluytman has described Lengelle’s poems as evoking the clean, deep tears of mourning and including details that remind readers that loss is always a dance into the liminal. “The poems she has birthed are lush and lucid, cleanly written, alive, and honour the living as well as the remembered,” Sluytman wrote.

White is available through [Black Tulip Press](#).

Improving Dementia Care in Northern Alberta

DR. PAMELA HAWRANIK, DEAN OF the Faculty of Graduate Studies, is part of a team that has received \$10,000 in funding from the Aging and Quality of Life Small Operating Grant Program at the University of Alberta for the project Context Matters: Dimensions that Influence the Use of Best Available, Dementia Care Knowledge in Two Northern Home Care Centres.

Working in a rural health region can be a primary factor affecting knowledge transfer between home care providers, persons with dementia and their family caregivers. This study builds upon the findings of a previous study which showed that most respondents highly rated the connections they had with health care providers within their centre, their work culture and attributes of the person to whom they reported. However, formal interactions, informal interactions with health care providers in other organizations, structural and electronic resources and adequate space were all rated as less available.

Based on these findings, more in-depth exploration of the context of the home-care centres in Westlock and Barrhead in Alberta Health Services North Zone is needed as these will be the settings for the

Working in a rural health region can be a primary factor affecting knowledge transfer between home care providers, persons with dementia and their family caregivers.

proposed research in a CIHR Partnerships in Health System Improvement grant application. The research objective is to better understand the contextual dimensions of the home care centres in Westlock and Barrhead that influence the use of best available dementia care evidence from the perspectives of health care providers who work in these centres.

Research Buzz

Application Deadlines and Research Ethics Board Review Schedule

THE RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD Office will be closed from December 18 to January 4.

AU faculty and professional staff member researchers should ensure that projects intended to begin participant recruitment or data gathering in January are submitted for review at the December Research Ethics Board meeting and that projects intended to begin recruitment or data gathering in February are submitted for review at the January meeting, according to the application deadlines:

Application Deadline	REB Meeting
December 7	December 12
January 4	January 16
February 1	February 13

Student researchers may submit applications at any time, and they will be reviewed as expeditiously as possible, according to level of risk. Greater than minimal risk projects must be reviewed by the full Research Ethics Board and are subject to the schedule posted above (regular first Friday of the month application deadline). No reviews will occur during the AU seasonal closure, December 24 through January 1.

Graduate Student Scholarship Deadlines Extended

THE APPLICATION DEADLINES FOR the SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarships have been extended. Master's or doctoral students who are planning to apply should be advised to contact [Jill Calliou](#) for further information.

Further information about these scholarships is available on the [SSHRC website](#).

EdTech Innovation 2013

EDTECH INNOVATION IS A NATIONAL conference to be hosted by AU in Calgary from May 1 to 3, 2013.

The conference will bring together start-ups, researchers, technology purchasers and venture capitalists and will profile innovative research being conducted in Canadian universities and start-ups that are developing new technologies, products and services. Connecting researchers with start-ups will enable new forms of innovation and partnership opportunities to grow Canada's educational ecosystem.

Two hundred participants are expected for the event. A trade show to be held in conjunction with the conference will be open to the general public, allowing greater exposure for new educational tools and techniques.

Further information is available on the [conference website](#).

United Way

THE UNITED WAY BREAKFAST AT AU Athabasca got this year's campaign underway. Money was raised through bake sales, book sales, popcorn sales, gift basket raffle, 50/50 tickets, naughty and nice goodie bags and United Way pledges.



AU People in the News

Canadian Communications Foundation

TWO AU FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE been elected to leadership roles in the Canadian Communications Foundation, which provides the definitive history of broadcasting in Canada on its [website](#).



Fil Fraser, adjunct professor of communication studies, becomes the foundation's new vice-president, while Dr. Evelyn Ellerman, associate professor of communication, was re-elected to the board.



The Canadian Association of Broadcasters established the foundation in 1967 to "commemorate throughout Canada the development of electronic communications."

(PHOTOS: Fil Fraser, top, and Dr. Evelyn Ellerman, above)

Dry Land Workout

"[THE NEW DRY LAND WORKOUT: Practical Writing Exercises for Professional Hockey Players](#)," an article by AU graduate student and free-lance writer Jessica Scott-Reid and her husband Brandon Reid, a professional hockey player, has been published in the *Journal of Poetry Therapy* (Vol. 25, No. 4, 2012).

Scott-Reid's articles on the plight of professional hockey players have previously appeared in newspapers such as the [Montreal Gazette](#) and the [Winnipeg Free Press](#).

Scott-Reid argues that writing can improve both physical and psychological health after a stressful experience, and her husband knows all about the stresses of hockey. Results, she says, include improvements to immune functions, drops in physician visits and better performance at school and work.

Mantracking

DBA STUDENT NADINE ROBINSON has co-authored a book, *Mantracking: The Ultimate Guide to Tracking Man or Beast*, with veteran tracker and television show host Terry Grant.

An article in the current [AU Business News](#) explains how, in 2009, Robinson's interest in the show led her to wonder if Grant had ever considered writing a book to share his tracking expertise. She arranged a meeting and soon found herself flying from her home in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., to Grants's ranch in High River, Alta., to spend a week learning the basics of tracking from the master himself.

Rich with photographs, *Mantracking* includes chapters on everything from the use of tracking in search and rescue operations to interpreting signs in a variety of weather conditions and terrains. It is available through the [Mantracking website](#). A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to Scouts Canada.

Graduate Studies Presentation

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE Studies will present "Grounded Theory: What's it good for?" a presentation by Dr. Paul Wishart, on Thursday, November 29, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

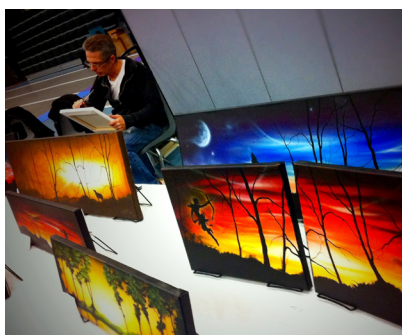
A grounded theory consultant and adjunct assistant professor at the University of Calgary, Wishart will provide a clear picture of the purpose of grounded theory and discuss relevant examples. Stories of the joy of discovery and the challenges encountered in trying to learn and do grounded theory will be shared. Input from participants, including questions and concerns about this exciting research methodology, will be welcome.

Those wishing to attend the presentation may do so in person or via Adobe Connect. Contact the [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#) to reserve a space.

Christmas Greetings



AU'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOW TOOK place November 16 in the Athabasca Regional Multiplex (above). Artisans displayed a broad range of wares giving people a chance to do some Christmas shopping. AU's Carol Schafer, with the Centre for Learning Design and Development, (on right) was selling her book *Lorenzo's Incredible Leap* and Gunnar Schwede with the Faculty of Business (below) displayed his art, which is inspired by landscapes around the Athabasca area.



Be Prepared to Welcome Winter

NOW THAT SNOW IS ON THE GROUND, the AU Occupational Health and Safety Committee has developed the following winter ready tips to ensure that everyone is properly prepared to endure the cold, snow and travel conditions in the upcoming months.

Vehicle Care

ENSURE YOUR VEHICLE IS PROPERLY maintained and ready for ice and snow. Install winter tires, get a good snow scraper and pack a blanket, extra clothing (gloves, hats, scarves, etc.), an extension cord, booster cables, a small shovel, a first aid kit and a winter survival kit in your vehicle.

The contents of a winter survival kit may vary according to your individual and family needs and your travel plans. The [Alberta Motor Association](#) and [Alberta Transportation](#) provide suggestions.



Check weather conditions and carry a winter survival kit.

Preparing for Travel Safe Travel

ALWAYS CHECK THE WEATHER forecast and road conditions before travelling and postpone your travel plans if necessary. There are several ways to check weather and road conditions, including:

- local television news or the Weather Network
- the [Alberta Motor Association](#)
- other provincial road report websites
- weather or road report apps

If travelling by air, be sure to check for any flight delays or advisories

AU Fleet Vehicles

IF YOU ARE USING AN AU VEHICLE, BE sure to familiarize yourself with it and its various functions (e.g., seat adjustments, lights, heater, cruise control, windshield wipers, radio, etc.) before setting out on the highway.

Before providing vehicles to employees, Facilities and Services ensures that they are all inspected and ready for use and that they contain a cell phone and winter survival kit. It is your responsibility to ensure that you know how to properly operate the vehicle before driving it and that you operate it in a safe manner.



Monitor and adjust your speed to the road conditions.

FOLLOW THESE SAFE WINTER DRIVING TIPS:

- Whether you are setting out on a long highway trip or just driving to or from work, ensure that your car is properly warmed up before hitting the road. In extremely cold weather, not allowing your vehicle to warm up increases the risk of vehicle malfunctions, such as the gas pedal sticking or the vehicle stalling in traffic.
- Monitor and adjust your speed to the road conditions. To maintain full control of the vehicle and its speed at all times, consider not using cruise control.
- Be aware that it takes considerably longer to slow down or stop on ice or snow than it does on dry, bare roads.
- When the temperatures are in the -5 to +5 degree Celsius range, be aware of freezing and thawing conditions, as frost may release from the road or humid air may freeze on the road, creating very slippery black ice conditions in which the ice on the road may not be detectable until you lose control of your vehicle.
- Be extra cautious when driving in rain or freezing rain. If the rain is freezing or sticking to your vehicle, it is also freezing on the road.
- Always be aware of oncoming traffic. Reduce your speed in wintry conditions and be prepared to react if other drivers lose control of their vehicle.
- Stay a safe distance behind vehicles you are following. If you cannot see both side mirrors of the vehicle in front of you, you are too close.
- Alberta's Distracted Driving Law is now in effect. Do not talk on a hand-held cell phone, text or email, enter GPS information, use other electronic devices, read or write or do personal grooming while driving. Use hands free technology or pull safely off the road to talk on the phone. Be sure to always keep two hands on the wheel to maintain full control. When you are hungry, stop and take a break to eat.
- Do not drive when you are tired. Postpone your travel until you get some rest. If you become tired while driving, pull safely off the road and take a 20 to 30 minute nap.

Be Prepared [continued]



Dress for the weather, not for the length of time you plan to be outdoors.

Winter Clothing

CHECK THE WEATHER FORECAST before choosing your clothing for the day. Choose clothing, outerwear and footwear suitable for the weather and for sudden changes in weather. Ensure that outerwear provides protection from the cold, wind and possible precipitation. Dress in layers so that you can adjust for temperature changes. Keep an extra sweater at the office. Choose outdoor footwear with good grip, insulated insoles and a high enough boot cuff to walk through snow without getting your feet wet.

Dress for the weather, not for the length of time you plan to be outdoors. You never know when you may lock your keys in your car or get locked out of a building. It takes very little exposure to extreme cold for hypothermia to set in.

Snow Removal at AU

PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH THOSE responsible for providing us with safe roads, parking lots and sidewalks at work. Staff are doing their best to clear the snow and ice in a timely manner. Use caution and wear appropriate footwear at all times as even a seemingly clear sidewalk may have invisible black ice. Keep at least one arm and hand free when you walk to help ease into or break a fall should you slip. The risk of suffering a head injury in a fall is greater if both hands are full.

Report Unsafe Conditions

THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND Safety Committee is committed to the health and safety of everyone at AU and would like to remind everyone that we all share responsibility for our own health and safety and that of our co-workers. Please report unsafe conditions to your supervisor or contact the [OHS Committee](#).

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Athabasca University's Facebook page has over 2,000 fans. Check it out at [facebook.com/Athabasca University](https://www.facebook.com/AthabascaUniversity). If you would like something posted onto the AU Facebook page, please contact [Michael Shouldice](#).



The Insider is published for AU faculty and staff members and other members of the AU community by the Advancement Office.

Please send any information or photographs for inclusion to the [co-ordinator](#). If a photo opportunity presents itself, please contact [Blaise MacMullin](#). Due to FOIP regulations, a release form must accompany all photos. Please contact *The Insider* co-ordinator for a copy of the release form.

The next edition of *The Insider* will be published on December 10. Deadline for submissions is November 30.

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