Should I do Pilates?
by Randy St John, PT

We are always looking for ways for our graduated patients to be able to maintain a healthy back independently. Many of our patients have asked me whether or not I think Pilates exercises are okay for them. My response has always been "no", because there are so few facilities that have the necessary exercise equipment and therefore they only do the Pilates mat routine. In my opinion, that is the most difficult way to do Pilates. Therefore I have always told patients that they should not engage in Pilates upon graduating from physical therapy because it was too challenging at that stage. However, Pilates can be very effective at strengthening the inner core with the right instruction. Spine PT is very happy to announce that we have Pilates available at the clinic now for patients once they graduate. We are working with Marlayna Davie, BSN, CCE, Certified Pilates Instructor. She continues to work as a nurse in labor and delivery but has now established a studio in downtown Kalamazoo to teach Pilates. She will be doing one-on-one sessions and classes at Spine PT starting in July. The difference in the way that Marlayna does things is that she works with the patient one-on-one for at least a couple of visits to get to know their body and their strengths and weaknesses and what they can and cannot handle with the Pilates. In addition to that, she makes sure to keep her classes small (6 to 7 people maximum) so that way she can give a great deal of individual attention during the class.

We will have Pilates “open house” days on Wednesday, August 20 and Friday, August 22. Stop in to ask questions and talk with Marlayna. Sign up to be a part of a Group Mat Demonstration at 10am or 2pm on both days. Marlayna will share how she teaches Pilates and the use of the Reformer/Cadillac she has here at the clinic. Individuals can schedule a “hands on”, FREE, 30-minute demonstration of the Reformer/Cadillac on those days as well. Please call the Spine PT office to set up your demonstration.

Words from Marlayna...
“I have a love of being able to move freely and feeling strong! But I've not always been able to do so. I was devastated when I experienced losing that so early in my life. I did Yoga for years and loved what it did for me, but when I came to Pilates, I was amazed because it finally taught me how to create both of those things in my body again. It's exciting how many different kinds of people LOVE the way Pilates has helped them heal issues, grow stronger and feel better in their unique bodies. I appreciate that it’s something most anyone can do and that no matter how long you’ve been doing it, it feels great! It’s fun, healthy, empowering movement!”
http://pilatesinkalamazoo.blogspot.com

Spine Physical Therapy • 7125 Stadium Drive • Kalamazoo, MI 49009 • 269.492.6575 • www.spinept.org
Elderly and Resistance Training: What Intensity is Best?
by Kristin Dupuis

A classic sign of aging is the loss of muscle mass. This reduction in muscle mass makes everything from activities of daily living to recreation more difficult, compromising quality of life. Health experts agree that one of the best ways to fight functional decline due to aging is through regular resistance training. Resistance training can prevent or reverse muscle mass decline, increase strength and endurance, and therefore increase functional ability. It is never too late to begin resistance training; the body of an elderly person responds to resistance training the same way that the body of a young person does. Many elderly people are hesitant to begin a resistance training program because of fear of injury. However, studies have shown that resistance training is safe for even frail populations at high intensities (4). Before starting a regular exercise program, a person should consult their physician to discuss their health risks and to be cleared for exercise. He or she should also meet with an exercise or health professional to talk about safe exercise techniques including appropriate exercises and proper form. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that a person performs strengthening exercises at least 2 days a week. An exercise bout should consist of 8 to 10 exercises that cover all major muscle groups. Exercises should be performed at a moderate to vigorous intensity (2).

Exercise intensity for the elderly has been explored through a number of studies. One may question why resistance intensity is an issue for the elderly population; shouldn’t they be able to determine what amount of work is right for them? In a study published in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning, researchers discovered that when allowed to select the intensity of the resistance exercises, 81% of subjects selected a resistance load lower than recommended (2). A lower intensity is preferred by patients. It results in higher satisfaction and increased likelihood that the individual will continue to exercise. However, the intensity is often not high enough to stimulate improvements in the muscles (2). Other research has looked for a dose-response relationship between exercise intensity; does a more difficult workout translate into bigger improvements than an easier workout? The answer is a little complicated. Multiple studies have yielded results that demonstrate a higher intensity workout results in greater increases in strength (3)(4). However, moderate and high-intensity exercises resulted in the same increase in functional ability. In other words, greater increases in strength as a result from high intensity exercise do not translate into greater functional ability when compared to moderate-intensity resistance training.

Moderate-intensity resistance training is ideal for the general elderly population. Moderate-intensity resistance training optimizes increases in functional ability without being so hard that individuals do not want to continue exercising. How does one know if they are working at a moderate intensity? A health professional like a physical therapist or personal trainer can assess the individual’s ability to perform a set of exercises at their current intensity level. A guide to determine what a moderate intensity is for you. Randy St John, PT explains that moderate intensity is a weight that is heavy enough to do 20-25 repetitions of an exercise before getting too tired to continue or form starts to deteriorate. Low-intensity resistance training can be be effective in the highly untrained or frail populations, but they should be progressed up to moderate intensity exercise as they adjust to an exercise program (1). Vigorous-level resistance training is appropriate and encouraged if the person is healthy enough and willing to work at such a high level.

Resistance training is a vital tool for the elderly in maintaining a high quality of life. Working at a moderate intensity will be enough stimulation for greater muscular strength and endurance without being too difficult or painful to enjoy. A safe, effective, and often enjoyable form of exercise, resistance training should be considered a vital part of a well-rounded exercise program.


June Bride Fit for 50th!
by Karen Kunze

Unfit (my word) was how I presented to Spine PT when—lame and in pain with a herniated lumbar disc—I began therapy in January 2012 with Randy St. John (to whom I had been referred by a good
friend and trusted source). Nineteen or so sessions later, I “graduated”. Post-physical therapy, I was on my own and embraced the opportunity to continue working out at the Spine PT gym with the same equipment that I had learned to use and appreciate during my therapy. I am still increasing in strength and fitness in the same safe and pleasant setting and surrounded by the encouraging staff who helped me in therapy.

During my first year on my own in post-PT gym time, I worked out 3X per week, determined to regain full strength in my left leg. The 2nd year I worked out twice a week to maintain my gains. Now, in my 3rd year, I continue working out at Spine PT twice a week, with some new exercises added during a couple of therapy sessions along the way. Scheduling and paperwork are a breeze with the accommodating and efficient front desk staff.

What a surprise, at age 71, to feel stronger than ever - eager and committed to maintain fitness into my future. Over this past hard winter, I was very able to take care of our hand snow shoveling (my husband prefers to heft our snow blower). Currently, I’m enjoying gardening and landscape work. I was so glad to be fit for our 50th Wedding Anniversary this past June!

I also started studying Tai Chi with Ed Kehoe and was so pleased when he began teaching at Spine PT. Tai Chi compliments my fitness workout beautifully. Going forward, I plan to incorporate more walking and at-home exercise into my personal fitness program. This summer I am going to learn how to kayak.

Many thanks to Randy St John and his team who help me get well and launched me into the world of fitness.

Simply Your Life By De-Cluttering Your Space

By Joy Whitaker, Owner of Simplify With Joy

Can we talk about letting go? As we gather, gather, gather more and more things, our homes and lives can become very stressful and chaotic. Having too much, or even keeping things that aren't Useful, Needed, Loved or Beautiful can cause stress. When our environment is orderly then it is more likely that our minds and hearts are more orderly too. When where we live or work is cluttered the clutter in our mind increases also.

People often get overwhelmed at the thought of organizing. A very important thing to remember is that organization isn't perfectionism. Organization is being able to find whatever you need, whenever you need it within 10-30 seconds. Does that sound good to you? It is possible, but only with less things. Once again, keeping only things that are Useful, Needed, Loved, or Beautiful will make it easier to manage your things. Having piles to go through, stuffed cabinets, drawers, closets, etc...make it difficult to know what you even own, let alone where something is. The old saying, “a place for everything, and everything in its place”, only works if you actually have enough space for everything that you own.

When you do decide to simplify your surrounding, take a deep breath & carve out a block of time. Whether it is 15 minutes or two hours, turn on some music and just dig in. Start with just throwing away any trash that you see and then go from there. As your home, office or car clear out, you will notice that your head and heart begin to clear out too. It is worth the physical and emotional effort to put your life in order—doing so reduces unnecessary stress.

You may feel overwhelmed at the thought of de-cluttering and organizing a closet, pantry, office or your whole house. If that is the case, then it is time to call in some backup. Call a friend or a relative who may be more objective when it comes to de-cluttering. Another option is to call a professional organizer who can be completely objective and also teach you some tricks and methods of organizing as you work together.

The biggest obstacle that stops most people from organizing their lives is that first step. I would challenge you, today, to take that first step. Start with one drawer in your kitchen or office. Just give it a try. You will be glad you did. I promise.

"Challenge is a dragon with a gift in its mouth. Tame the dragon and the gift is yours." – Noelia Evans

To have a truly organized and orderly life you have to shift your thinking. Keep only those things that you really will Use. That you really do Need. That you really do Love. And, that are truly Beautiful.

For more de-cluttering tips, contact Joy at 269-274-6163 or by e-mail at joyannwhit123@gmail.com