

In The Center

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Now Hear This!

Billing Update

Just a reminder that monthly fitness rates will be changing effective April 1st, 2012. Notices went out explaining the change and included a listing on the new rates. If you are on automatic credit card payment, our billing department will be contacting you about filling out a new auto-debit form.

_____ Also, please be reminded that we do offer discounts for Senior Citizens and Students. If you think you might qualify for one of these rates, please contact the billing department.

Massage Memo

Massage therapy is a great medicinal alternative to help heal what ails you! Types of massage range from deep tissue to Swedish with many variations in between. Our massage therapist, Jeanie Chastant, is available Monday - Friday for 30, 60 and 90 minute massage appointments. Call us to schedule with Jeanie and start your 'hands on healing'.



Member Spotlight

We are beginning a series of articles that will allow us to share stories with you that we feel are inspirational. The stories will be those of members we feel have dedicated themselves to a healthier lifestyle and have seen progress and improvements in well-being. If you have a member in mind and think they would like to share their journey with us, please let us know. This month, we will begin with **Peggy Garrett**:



A Watershed Moment

Peggy Garrett has been a fitness member at the Fontana Center for almost 13 years. A lot has happened since then, health-wise, in Peggy's life, but if she could pin down one pivotal personal moment, it would be the decision to "play in the water," as her husband George so teasingly put. What playing in the water is to one person can be a "life saver" to another and that is exactly how Peggy pegged it, "a life-saver."

To understand Peggy's journey a little, you'd have to go back to her twenties when she received a diagnosis of arthritis. Many health related twists and turns have woven their way through her story as the years have gone by but one diagnosis was especially debilitating, that of fibromyalgia, followed by several other auto-

immune diagnoses. Fibromyalgia is a medical disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, making it a trying task to do the simplest things, like get out of a chair or get out of bed in the morning.

So, when Peggy heard about water aerobics being a possible palliative prescription, she dove right in. Her decision reaped benefits she could not have known, and threw a little cold water on George's teasing too. So what is all the splash about? The benefits of exercising in the water are often measurable and fast acting, using the body's natural movements to ease pain. Less pain can translate into less medication, and possibly less medicinal side effects. The psychological benefits can be just as remarkable - the return to one's activity level and pursuits - and the ability to say "I told you so" to George. George now encourages others to try water exercise - but he still prefers the gym.

Basically, water acts as a cushion or shock absorber for muscles and joints during exercise, decreasing the strain on them while still providing enough gentle resistance to increase strength and mobility. The increased blood flow to muscles and tendons decreases pain. Blood flow to needed areas also begins the healing process by providing nourishment to the cells. Less pain and more healing encourages more movement and the two processes build upon each other. In addition, the buoyancy in water allows movements not otherwise attainable during land exercise. The well-being felt during swimming is the final reward. Swimming with others who are benefitting in similar ways adds a social networking effect that has been found to alleviate anxiety, depression and the isolation that can be felt during debilitation.

Sometimes, seeing others experience good results is just the incentive we need to keep going. Laughter, encouragement and sharing results can be just as medicinal as a pill. (Laughter all by itself causes the release of natural painkillers called endorphins, moves lymph and oxygenates your organs!) Peggy likes the organized water aerobic classes instead of swimming on her own - they "encourage accountability to go to class, the class members are friendly and the instructors are great."

The value of water exercise isn't limited to fibromyalgia but includes arthritis, post-surgery joint replacement, back pain, heart bypass surgery (Peggy experienced this too but that still didn't stop her) and many other impaired mobility conditions.

Back to Peggy's results - there was a time when getting out of a chair seemed monumental, getting out of bed even more so. Now, Peggy has no pain getting out of bed, at all! Sometimes she still feels pain in the morning but it is greatly reduced and not every morning, as it used to be. Peggy feels no pain in the water and can be found in the pool several times a week, for about an hour or more. She reports that of all the regimens she has tried, water exercise is the most effective.

If you are looking for Peggy, she moves quickly, but is easy to spot - she is the one with a white robe, a water bottle around her neck, a twinkle in her eye, and a contagious positive aura - a story with a great ending.

Footnote: Peggy Garrett is no pushover when it comes to medical facts. She is a retired R.N. who has done her homework in the area of medical conditions, their treatments and results. Her opinion is supported by personal experience and a healthy dose of medical knowledge.
