

Pilates and Physical Therapy: An Integrated Approach to Health and Fitness

As healthcare evolves, people are taking a more proactive approach to the prevention, maintenance, and treatment of their injuries & conditions. This proactive approach begins with exercise. Due to its low-impact nature, Pilates is ideal for clients of countless situations and conditions. Research is showing that Pilates is particularly suitable for: breast cancer patients, older clients with balance concerns, prenatal and postpartum clients, people with low back pain, people with neurological conditions, athletes, and many more.

Physical therapists and Pilates instructors have found that integrating therapy with Pilates can yield tremendous results for patients and clients. Pilates instructors can safely guide clients through exercise and recognize red flags requiring the attention of a physician or physical therapist. When a patient is transitioning from physical therapy back to their normal activities, Pilates can help condition the whole body which was likely affected in some capacity by the original injury.

Recently two physical therapists from Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital's Rehabilitation Services department completed a comprehensive teacher training program through Polestar Pilates. The Good Shepherd Health & Fitness Center is unique in that they train people to become professional Pilates instructors, including physical therapists, and the center's Pilates department both contracts and employs physical therapists who are also Pilates instructors. This allows members of the community to get expert training from physical therapists and highly skilled instructors all under the umbrella of Pilates.

Patty Jasonowicz PT CLT-LANA is excited to integrate the Pilates training into her treatment plan with patients who have chronic conditions such as cancer, arthritis, lower back pain or post surgical conditions. Due to the limited number of PT visits, high copays and therapy caps, patients have very limited time with the physical therapist.

According to Patty, "Working alongside Pilates instructors, we can offer our patients a continuum of supervised care in an environment that will help restore function, strengthen small stabilizing muscles, address soft tissue which has become tight or restricted, and overall improve biomechanics and breathing."

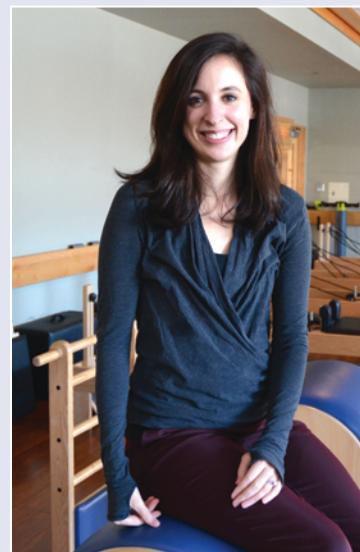
Advocate physical therapist, Peggy Johnson, said she decided to pursue a Pilates certification because optimal recovery and health is a continuous process. After illness, injury or surgery, physical therapy addresses the pain and disability concerns of the patient. Once these goals are achieved, Pilates is a natural follow-up to progress the client from the finishing point of physical therapy toward total body movement integration. At Good Shepherd Health & Fitness Center, with the client's permission, the physical therapist and Pilates instructor can communicate to better plan a program for the client. This partnership can potentially lead to a better quality of life with less pain, weakness and movement limitations.

One of Peggy's patients commented: "Working out in Pilates made me feel like a normal person again after having months and months of medical care." This is the magic of the physical therapy and Pilates partnership. It helps individuals progress from the illness/disability end of the continuum toward optimal health and wellness.

There are many techniques therapists learn and excel at to help their patients heal, however exercise is a key component not only for the strength training aspect, but also for helping to train motor control. Motor control is the brain's ability to coordinate your body's muscle activation and recruitment during movement. Therapists can strengthen muscles, release tension, and accomplish large gains for a patient but if motor control isn't addressed, the impact from therapy will likely be short lived. Pilates provides therapists with a plethora of exercises that can address any part of the body and modified to suit each individual.

KATE STROZAK, BA, LMT,
PMA-CPT

ADVOCATE GOOD SHEPHERD HEALTH &
FITNESS CENTER



Kate Strozak, BA LMT PMA-CPT, is the Pilates Coordinator for GSH&FC, an educator for Polestar Pilates and Oov Education. She believes in client empowerment, a mind-body approach to health and fitness, and finding creative and fun ways to help clients and instructors achieve their goals.

When looking for a new approach towards enhancing your health and fitness, consider Pilates and when necessary, Pilates integrated with physical therapy at Advocate Good Shepherd Health & Fitness Center. Group classes and individual instruction is offered 7 days a week throughout all hours of the day. For more information, contact Kate Strozak at 847-620-4514, or GSH-Pilates@advocatehealth.com.