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# AQUATIC THERAPY

## Using water to “wash” away the problem

Painful hips have been a growing problem for Therese Hensley. So, like many aquatic therapy patients, Ms. Hensley’s orthopaedic specialist referred the Burlington woman to St. Elizabeth Healthcare for a round of the water-based remedy.

And she’s really enjoying it. As she puts it, “It’s a lot easier than (land-based) physical therapy was for me because it’s just a lot easier to move in the water.”

That’s one reason why St. Elizabeth Healthcare System Director for Rehabilitation Services and Sports Medicine, Ed Dobrzykowski, says there are so many ailments that can benefit from aquatic therapy. In fact, at the Town & Country Sports & Health Club pool in Wilder — where St. Elizabeth Sports Medicine conducts its sessions — therapists treat everything from chronic conditions like osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia and multiple sclerosis, to acute problems, like rehabilitation after orthopaedic surgery or an injury.

“We also treat patients who are overweight or sedentary and want to start exercising, but

find that land-based exercises are too strenuous because of other existing conditions, like a heart problem, stress on the leg joints, or other medical concern,” Mr. Dobrzykowski said.

“They get in the water and get started on an exercise program, and then in a couple of months, after they’ve progressed, they can move to land-based exercises.”

Water-based therapy offers the benefits of buoyancy, so it’s ideal for people who need to reduce stress on their bodies. In fact, when you move on land, you can place up to seven times your body weight on your leg joints each time you hit the ground.

“It lessens the impact of gravity and its force on the joints,” Mr. Dobrzykowski said.

“Aquatic therapy gives you a way to exercise for strengthening and flexibility in a gentler and more gradual manner.”

Sessions last 30 – 45 minutes for up to eight weeks for acute injuries. St. Elizabeth Sports Medicine offers the service — which is typically covered by insurance — three days a week at the Town & Country Sports & Health Club pool, under the expert direction of our aquatic therapists.

Most patients are referred by their primary care physicians, rheumatologists or



*Therese Hensley (left) takes part in the water-based therapy under the direction of Aquatic Physical Therapist, David Stepner.*

orthopaedic specialists. That’s how Ms. Hensley came to experience the therapy, and she says she’s very happy her doctor made the referral.

“It went very well — I really enjoyed it,” she said afterward. Aquatic Physical Therapist, David Stepner “really explained a lot of things I hadn’t heard or understood before. It was very informative and very helpful.”

For more information or to schedule a consultation, please call (859) 572-2360.

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*— Therese Hensley, Patient*