

North Seattle HERALD-OUTLOOK

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Rehab vs. 'Prehab': A look at recovering from injury

By Wade Isbell



Lake City physical therapist assistant and certified athletic trainer Tom Spencer and office manager Candace Ritchie demonstrate the slide board, which enhances hip, thigh and core strength by moving laterally. photo/Bradley Enghaus reiterated, it's not strictly a program for athletes.

"We also work with older people who want to get involved again," he said. "We try to get them to a base level of strength and conditioning and build from there."

The program he uses is called Sports Enhancement Training, which emphasizes core strengthening and sports-specific exercises. This means he doesn't stick to ordinary weight-lifting exercises such as the bench press or squats.

Each program is tailored to the patient's desire.

This individualized approach includes multiple stages.

First, the therapist performs a pre-screening to look at weaknesses.

Then each patient comes up with a set of goals, and they work together to devise a program to best achieve those goals.

Lastly, the patient begins his/her program with the help of the therapist.

Spencer hasn't found any limitations in the program and believes the key is emphasizing the improvement of weaknesses while maintaining strengths to create a healthier body.

"We're for doing whatever works," said Laurie Predmore, a physical therapist in Lake City. "Our main goal is to help the patient achieve his or her goal."

'Pre-hab'

Another approach is "prehabilitation," which uses a fairly new program called Circular Strength Training (CST).

CST was developed by Dr. Scott Sonnon, a Bellingham resident, and uses a three-wing approach that emphasizes "health first."

Brian Bentz, a Morningside resident and certified CST instructor, breaks down the three wings of CST:

z Intu-Flow (Intuitive Flow), which helps the body recover its mobility and teaches the joints how to move properly again.

z Prasara, a form of "flowing yoga" that increases mobility and agility while releasing muscle-tension buildup.

z Clubbells, which are weighted clubs that are swung in specific patterns and motions to increase joint mobility and strength.

Bentz initially became interested in CST because he was unable to work out for more than a couple months without sustaining an injury.

Whether you're a world-class athlete or an average Joe/Jane, one thing is certain: You like being in good health. But what do you do when you sustain an injury?

When it comes to healing, a couple of different approaches are currently being used in Seattle.

Rehabilitation

The first and more traditional approach is rehabilitation. This includes the use of physical therapy to overcome an injury or some other limiting factor.

Tom Spencer, a physical therapist assistant and certified athletic trainer in Lake City, said his goal is to improve strength and prevent future injury for his patients.

He encounters a wide variety of injuries that arise from sports, work, auto accidents, etc., but he said the majority of his work is with middle-school and high-school athletes.

He's helped many athletes improve their speed, vertical jump, core strength and agility, he said.

But as Spencer

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"Many people have these pre-conditions to injury or lingering injuries that never fully heal," he said. "CST takes that into consideration and gets you thinking about the exercise while you're doing it."

According to Bentz, there is a moving scale in CST that can adapt to everyone's needs.

The only required criteria for Bentz is that "everyone has to come in with a goal. Even if it is as simple as wanting to be healthier and more fit."

His current clients tends to be in the 30- to 50-year-old range. He noted that he had one woman over 60 who was simply hoping to complete ordinary tasks with greater ease.

Not exclusive programs

CST and physical therapy are similar in two ways: There is a pre-screening to find flaws, and then the emphasis is placed on strengthening problem areas.

"We target muscles and joints used for daily activities," Bentz said. "If you have to stand up and sit down a lot, we set up a yoga practice that will make it easier for you to do that."

Joel Seymour, a Loyal Heights resident and CST instructor, said the goal of the program is to help people achieve their goals and stress health as being first and foremost.

"It's different than bodybuilding or something like that, which is appearance-based; CST is health-based," he said.

A 45-year-old security analyst began taking a CST class to regain her strength and mobility. "I've done weightlifting, aerobics and yoga and have found they all have limitations for me," she said.

After shattering a lower vertebrae in 1992, she tried to find a program that would not only help her retain strength and mobility, but realign her body as well.

In the two or three months doing CST, she has noticed an increase in body awareness and range of motion.

Although these approaches to healing have their differences, they are not mutually exclusive.

"I recommend a combination of the two," Bentz said. "They can fit together nicely."

For more information on Circular Strength Training, contact Joel Seymour, at 713-0873, or Brian Bentz, at 380-6014. Or e-mail them at cstseattle@comcast.net.

For more information on Sports Enhancement Training, contact Tom Spencer, Peak Sports and Spine Physical Therapy in Lake City, at 417-1298.

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