

Defying injury: Rehab equipment that changes how we age

For seniors trying to quickly recover from injury, exercise equipment made for older bodies may be a game changer.

As a facility specializing in the active and aging population, Belleair Health Care Center adds equipment to help patients safely recuperate. Their equipment operates with air resistance and physical injury gets help with movement that is less jarring. Research shows the equipment moves with less added force, which is a positive for arthritic joints.

Belleair obtained the equipment because it can be patient-customized during therapy. If someone is just out of knee surgery and only needs 70 degrees of knee bending with 2 pounds of resistance, one touch of a button makes it happen. The exactness allows therapists to better tailor a patient's safe workout.



What's more, the majority of their equipment is award winning. The International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), an association that leads, connects and defines the active-aging industry, recognizes their patented rehabilitative equipment.

The awards come from features consisting of age-friendly access and low-impact air-resistance technology, which allows injured and weak individuals to start exercising with near-zero resistance.

Another ICAA award-winning machine is called Kinesis. Because it operates in three dimensions and can be customized in 360 degrees of motion, experts in rehabilitation say it engages the whole body to mimic human function. Whether that is playing golf, painting a room or washing a car, the resistive cable device offers functional fitness training.

It also gives an increase in upper and lower body strength, an increase in muscular endurance and gains in muscle mass that is not achieved by traditional strength training, according to research performed at the Cooper Aerobics Center & Institute.

The Kinesis is low impact, which means it provides a more comfortable exercise experience that will help improve balance, core strength, flexibility and muscular coordination in more than 550 possible movements.

Other advanced machinery includes the newer recumbent elliptical devices. They operate with improved brake technology, so there's no grating movement and it's safer for injured joints to handle any change in resistance.

Their recumbent bike, called the Nustep, won the ICAA, "Inspire Award." Because many injured seniors can't get on a standard stationary bike, the newer recumbent styles improve access. Even the foot pedals have a no-slip border to improve continuity of pace.



Unlike an ordinary bike, the padded seat rotates and handlebars move in order to descend to the seat. The moving handlebars are a bonus for upper extremity exercise.

Heart rate monitors come standard on the latest equipment and give further information about exercise tolerance.

The need for appropriate exercise equipment for those 50 and older has become urgent in the last decade. Since 10,000 people a day are turning 65, there are more senior needs.

Those professionals who treat seniors and rehab their injuries have noticed that specialized equipment can help transform the active and aging population.

Belleair Health Care Center, a 5-star ranked facility, is located at 1150 Ponce De Leon Blvd., in Clearwater, Florida. For more information regarding advanced therapy options, call 727-585-5491.