

Winter 2012

# PT INSIGHT

A Publication of Drevna Physical Therapy Associates

Jonathan Andrews  
- Snowboarder

Back to the Slopes  
Thanks to DPTA!



Be Part of  
Something New!  
INTRODUCING  
**e-DPTA**

Want to learn more about health related topics?

We are introducing a new video newsletter entitled "Two Minutes to Better Health." You can access this free newsletter by simply submitting your email address to us.

These monthly emails are rich with educational features and relevant topics regarding exercise, fitness, posture, and recreational activity tips.

Our new electronic newsletter is designed to provide our patients with the latest knowledge and insight and will allow them to continue with a healthy, active lifestyle.

Call our office today to sign up.

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**PT INSIGHT**

## THE ESSENTIALS OF GREAT CARE

At Drevna Physical Therapy, Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA) play an essential role in patient treatment providing care in a variety of settings: inpatient, outpatient and most recently, home health. No matter the setting, PTA's are vital providers in the multi-disciplinary team of health professionals listening and empowering the patient to return to as safe and functional a life as possible.

The list of PTA responsibilities is diverse while providing interventions identified in the physical therapist's plan of care. Interventions involve teaching the patient appropriate ways to move or perform particular tasks to prevent further injury, and to promote health and wellness. They document the outcomes of treatment sessions and report the progress to the physical therapist supervising your care.

At Drevna Physical Therapy you will find assistants offering support, guidance, motivation and encouragement during your one-on-one supervised treatment. Working directly with a PTA can help ensure effective teaching and provide direction with any necessary modifications based upon a patient's specific needs or situation.

### HELPING YOU TO STAY FIT

Physical therapist assistants must graduate from an accredited PTA program and pass a state-governed national exam to obtain the licensure or certification required in most states. Amy Finnegan, Sherri Gagné and Amanda Zeamer all graduated from Central Pennsylvania College and average 10 years of experience working in our clinic. In addition to assisting PT's with patient care, PTA's also act as the liaison, or Clinical Instructor, for educating PTA students who are making their transition from school to the work force.

PTA's also help facilitate the Physical Fitness (P-Fit) program at Drevna PT. This personalized program is designed to assist patients in maintaining ongoing results realized during their rehab program. P-Fit does not have insurance limitations and is tailored to accommodate your busy schedule. Patients can choose to participate once a month or more frequently depending on their goals and needs.



## MEET OUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS:



### Amy Finnegan

Amy is a 1994 graduate from Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Rehabilitation Services Education. Balancing life as a four year student-athlete, she was both an active participant, and senior year, co-captain, of the women's track and field and women's cross country teams.

Self-motivation, healthy living, and the perpetual pursuit of learning have taken Amy on a variety of rewarding career paths. She has had the opportunity to lead an outdoor, adventure-based program for experiential learning for youth to young adults, as well as work with older adults with disabilities both in a workshop and on an organic farm setting, so as to build their social and job skills for competitive employment. In 1999, she received her Associates Degree as a Physical Therapist Assistant.

For 13 years, Amy has predominantly worked in the outpatient physical therapy setting, in the following genres: aquatics, geriatrics, basic healthy living and nutritional-based education, lymphedema, and orthopedic care. Amy's mantra: "gratitude is attitude," and "eat your brussel sprouts!"

Amy resides in Lancaster with her husband, and their two "furry" children - a dog and a cat.

### Sherri Gagné

Sherri was born and raised in Carlisle, PA. She graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Liberal Arts. Following graduation, she spent a year doing volunteer service in the Netherlands.

In 2004, Sherri continued her education at Central Pennsylvania College and received her Associates Degree as a Physical Therapist Assistant in 2006. Most of her professional experience has been in outpatient physical therapy however, she has also worked in a skilled nursing setting. Sherri is a member of the APTA and in 2011 she became an APTA Certified Clinical Instructor.

Sherri resides in downtown Lancaster with her husband and golden retriever. She enjoys photography, music, traveling and spending time with family and friends.

### Mandy Zeamer

Mandy was born and raised in Columbia, PA. She attended Central Pennsylvania College, where she graduated in 2003 with an Associate's degree as a Physical Therapist Assistant.

Mandy has spent her career working in outpatient physical therapy. However, she also has experience working in skilled nursing care. She is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and is an APTA certified clinical instructor. Mandy was awarded Advanced Proficiency for the Physical Therapist Assistant - Musculoskeletal by the American Physical Therapy Association in 2008.

Mandy enjoys the opportunity to make a positive impact with her patients and finds it rewarding helping people reach their optimal physical function.

Recently married, Mandy enjoys spending time being active outdoors with her husband, family and friends.



# PILATES

## for Improved Strength and Return to Activity

*What is Pilates? Is it only  
an Exercise Fad?*

Not at all! The Pilates method of body conditioning is a unique system of stretching and strengthening using exercises developed over 90 years ago by Joseph H. Pilates. It strengthens and tones muscles, and improves posture, flexibility, and balance. New studies prove that Pilates, at low to moderate intensity for 45 minutes, promotes strength, endurance and neuromuscular control of the abdominal muscles. Specifically, stability of the back and pelvis were improved. These changes occurred in only 4 weeks! Pilates has been shown to lower body mass index in teenagers and adult women. Women with breast cancer have experience increased endurance and diminished fatigue while exercising safely. Finally, Pilates has been shown to improve balance in older adults. No longer the secret of the dance world, Pilates is seen as a means to improve fitness and function for everyone, throughout the lifespan.

The Pilates "matwork," or exercises performed on a fitness mat, is designed to accommodate any level of fitness. All of the exercises can be modified. In a class format—with an experienced and accredited instructor—it is common to see several versions of each exercise. This allows each person to work safely, to be challenged, and to progress. In general, the exercises are done slowly, with great precision. There is a strong emphasis on strengthening the "Powerhouse," a term coined by Joseph Pilates to represent the "core," or abdominal muscles, hips, lower back and buttocks. There is an emphasis on flexibility and breathing. Upon leaving Pilates class, students often comment that they feel more energized as well as deeply relaxed. Pilates is unique! The goal: to have all of the parts of the body working in unison. This carries over into daily life and athletic performance. It is an excellent bridge between an injury and return to peak athletic performance. Come and give it a try!



## KNEE PAIN?

### STRENGTHEN MY HIPS? BUT IT'S MY KNEES THAT HURT!

Healthcare providers usually call pain at the front of your knee or under your kneecap patellofemoral pain syndrome. Most often, this pain occurs after exercise, but you may also feel it if you sit too long. Over time, your knee may begin to hurt during exercise or throughout the day. You may feel a nagging ache or an occasional sharp pain. This pain may cause you to limp and may limit your activities. This can be very frustrating, but there is good news: exercises can reduce knee pain and allow you to return to normal activities without needing surgery. Although we have known the benefits of exercise for some time, we were not sure which exercises were best at quickly reducing your pain. A study published in the August 2011 issue of JOSPPT provides new insight and evidence-based exercises to help answer this question.

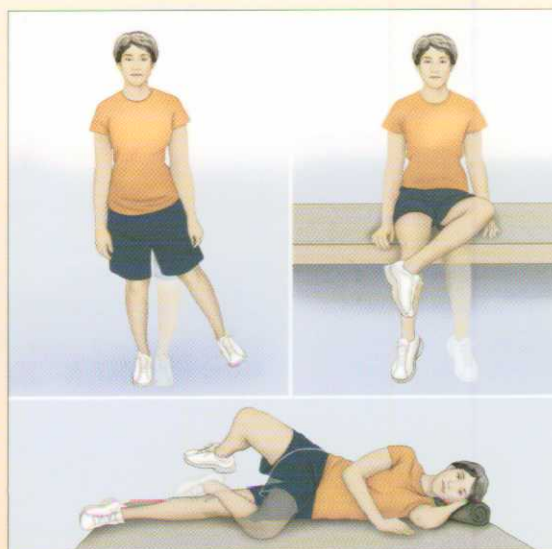
#### NEW INSIGHTS

Since this type of knee pain is more common in females, the researchers tested 33 females with patellofemoral pain syndrome. During the first 4 weeks of physical therapy, about half of the patients did exercises that focused on the thigh or quadriceps muscles, while the other half did exercises that focused on the hip muscles. All of these patients then did the same exercises for 4 weeks to improve the strength of the entire leg. The patients' responses on pain questionnaires and strength tests were used to determine which approach was better. By 4 weeks, the patients in the hip strengthening group had 43% less pain, while the knee strengthening group only had 3% less pain. Pain relief and function were similar for both groups by 8 weeks. However, only patients in the hip strengthening group had better hip strength on 1 of the hip strength tests.

#### PRACTICAL ADVICE

Patients with knee pain may benefit from starting with hip strengthening exercises. Potential benefits

include faster pain relief and better hip strength. You may be curious why the patients in the hip group got better quicker. This may be because the knee strengthening exercises actually irritated the knee, or perhaps because the exercises that focused on hip strengthening helped improve the mechanics of the entire leg and so reduced stress on the knee. Although starting off with hip strengthening exercises may decrease the pain sooner, it is important to follow hip exercises with specific functional exercises that target the muscles of the entire leg. You also need to consider the physical activities you perform and your response to this exercise approach to ensure your best outcome. Your physical therapist can help customize this approach for you.



**HIP EXERCISES.** The 3 pictures above show the hip exercises used in this study. These exercises were performed in different positions. In each exercise, the transparent image is the starting position and the solid image is the ending position.

This JOSPPT Perspectives for Patients is based on an article by Dolak KL et al, titled "Hip Strengthening Prior to Functional Exercises Reduces Pain Sooner Than Quadriceps Strengthening in Females With Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome: A Randomized Clinical Trial" (J Orthop Sports Phys Ther 2011;41(8):560-570. doi:10.2519/jospt.2011.3499). This Perspectives article was written by a team of JOSPPT's editorial board and staff, with Deydre S. Teyhen, PT, PhD, Editor, and Jeanne Robertson, Illustrator.