

Therapy Has Her Dancing Again

Even if a specialist says nothing can be done for a physical problem, a customized physical therapy program can work wonders.

“My diaphragm is paralyzed on the right side, so I’m not able to breathe properly,” shares Elizabeth “Betty” DeThomas.

“I couldn’t get into the car at all unless the air conditioner was running, because I’d be gasping for air by the time I was outdoors.”

Betty’s breathing problem affected her life in more ways than that, she adds. Her leisure activities were also severely limited by it.

“For one thing, if I tried to dance for even a minute I would have shortness of breath,” she says. “It was terrible.”

Betty consulted a pulmonary specialist about the breathing problem, but he gave her a discouraging prognosis.

“He said nothing could be done for me,” she recalls, “so I was very, very upset. How can you tell me there’s nothing you can do if you’re a pulmonary doctor?”

Undeterred, Betty continued to pursue a solution. She went to Shands at the University of Florida, where doctors suggested she find someone who could do pulmonary rehab with her.

She then consulted Regional Rehab at the YMCA, and at her first evaluation appointment Betty met Regional Rehab director Charles C. Donley, PT.

“What I liked right away about Charles was that he gave me his undivided



Betty (r) shown here with Heidi Watson, PTA, CLT, has made remarkable gains with her carefully planned therapy regimen.

PHOTO COURTESY OF REGIONAL REHAB

and leg pain, and for headache relief.”

Thanks to the partnership with the YMCA, patients like Betty can benefit from aquatic-based therapy before progressing to land-based therapy with equipment like parallel bars, steppers, stationary bicycles and treadmills.

“New patients are sometimes unaware that aquatic therapy is not about swimming,” adds Charles. “We use the

buoyancy of the water to carry out specific exercises that would be unattainable for our patients on dry land. A pool workout of fifteen minutes is equivalent

to about a forty-five minute workout on dry land, for example, but the person experiencing it doesn’t feel fatigued.”

Heidi Watson, PTA, CLT, has worked with Betty for several months. She says that as a result of progressing from aquatic to land-based therapy, Betty’s breathing is much improved.

“When Betty first came to us, she was short of breath just walking from the front door in to us,” reports Heidi. “She even had trouble bending forward to put on her shoes.”

Aquatic therapy has helped Betty build up her endurance considerably.

“She originally started out with a half hour session in the pool, and now she’s up to about an hour and a half,” notes Heidi. “She does land-based activities in the gym as well as activities in the pool now, and because she has done so well with the aquatic therapy, she’s really been able to increase her endurance on land.”

“She also started out with one set of three minutes on the treadmill, and has now progressed to where she can do three sets of nine minutes each on the treadmill followed by three eight-minute

sets on the stationary bike.

“She’s definitely motivated, she has the right state of mind, and that makes a huge difference.”

“If a doctor says there’s nothing that can be done,” adds Charles, “if it involves shortness of breath, joint pain or comparable physical limitations, please call us. We’ll be glad to see what we can do through a complimentary consult or an evaluation.”

“It’s just wonderful”

Betty emphasizes both the extent and effectiveness of her physical therapy program.

“I was gasping for air when I first started therapy because my lungs were not functioning properly,” she says. “Now I’m making them stronger by continuing with therapy, because I go in the pool and do the aquatic therapy as well.

“In fact, I’m now able to do twenty minutes of jogging in the water with five-pound weights on my ankles. When I

“I’m truly blessed that I was sent there, and the individual care that they give you really is phenomenal,” says Betty. “They take interest in every case they have. And I can see that everyone who goes there is very happy to be there.

“Heidi and Brandi and Betsy have been extremely wonderful giving me the exercises that I need to do. The therapy is really helping me, and I am so, so happy that I found them. The staff is just too wonderful for words.” **FHCN**—Michael J. Sabno

Proven results

The experienced therapists at Regional Rehab look forward to working with you. Outpatient facilities are located in the Medical Arts Building at **10441 Quality Dr., Suite 206**, in Spring Hill, phone (352) 688-8066, and the Hernando County YMCA, **1300 Mariner Blvd.**, in Spring Hill, phone (352) 686-9970.

Regional Rehab

Charles C. Donley, PT

attention,” says Betty. “He was focused on me and finding ways to solve my problem.”

Personalized treatment

With nearly 22 years of experience working with virtually every type of pain and injury, Charles assures that each patient who comes to Regional Rehab has a comprehensive evaluation followed by a program of customized therapy.

“Combining a proper treatment plan with compassionate care can maximize a patient’s quality of life,” says Charles. “Customization is essential, because each patient has unique needs and medical considerations that can affect the treatment plan.”

Regional Rehab offers two full-service locations, explains Charles: one at the Medical Arts Building and one at the Hernando County Family YMCA.

“This enables our therapists to provide our community with a variety of modalities, including aquatic therapy. We have been in partnership with the Y for several years now,” he explains, “and in addition to aquatic therapy, we offer full physical therapy services and licensed massage therapy for back, neck, shoulder

Charles C. Donley, PT, is director of Regional Rehab. He earned his bachelor of science degree in physical therapy, graduating cum laude, from the University of Pittsburgh, PA. He is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association, Florida Physical



Therapy Association, and International Academy of Dance Medicine and serves on the board of the Hernando County United Way.



“PT Talk” with Charles Donley airs every Monday on Bright House Networks Channel 167 at 5:30 PM.

For more information check out <http://thecharlesdonleyshow.com>

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Mail to: Regional Rehab, Medical Arts Building, 10441 Quality Dr., Suite 206, Spring Hill, FL 34609