

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2024

When April Comes

by Virna Sheard (1862-1943)

When April comes with softly shining eyes,
And daffodils bound in her wind-blown hair,
Oh, she will coax all clouds from out the skies,
And every day will bring some sweet surprise, --
The swallows will come swinging through the air
When April comes!

When April comes with tender smile and tear,
Dear dandelions will gild the common ways,
And at the break of morning we will hear
The piping of the robins crystal clear --
While bobolinks will whistle through the days,
When April comes!

When April comes, the world so wise and old,
Will half forget that it is worn and grey;
Winter will seem but as a tale long told --
Its bitter winds with all its frost and cold
Will be the by-gone things of yesterday,
When April comes!

The Spring season is a transformative time offering many opportunities to experience the awakening of our outdoor world. Time spent in nature proves to be a rejuvenating force for our body, mind and spirit.

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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-or-

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THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISING OUTDOORS

<https://www.ontarioparks.ca/parksblog/healing-power-nature-seniors/>



Getting outdoors is important for people of all ages and walks of life and is a great way to relax and soak up the beauty of nature that surrounds us. Best of all, there are real benefits to enjoying the outdoors, especially for older adults.

Several studies confirm the benefits gained by those who spend time in nature. These are some of the top reasons older adults should make time to get outside each day:

Opportunity for exercise

Access to everyday green and blue spaces encourages physical activity and engagement. This can help improve cardiovascular and metabolic health, as well as lowering blood pressure and stress levels.

Provides socialization and diminishes the sense of isolation

Isolation can be an especially difficult problem for older adults, and safe social interactions outside can help alleviate some of this loneliness. Nature and nearby green space can increase social connections on and support a sense of belonging and community.

Improves mental health

Folks who feel isolated and alone are at risk of experiencing depression. Spending time in a natural setting, especially the waterfront, has been long been prescribed to improve mood and provide comfort to those who may be grieving.

Being outside in nature can make a person feel more alive and provide a greater sense of energy and vitality.



Activity: While adding some **colour** to the butterfly take slow, deep breaths. When finished, break up your sitting time with a nice brisk walk in a natural environment and be present with your surroundings.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



Hello!

My name is **Katie Ellery**. I am originally from St. Thomas, Ontario. I moved to Windsor to attend the University of Windsor and play on the women's soccer team. I am very active and enjoying weightlifting and trying new sports/activities.

I graduated from the University of Windsor with a Bachelors of Human Kinetics, specializing in Movement science, with a minor in Environmental Science. I have since, gained my Kinesiologist Registration.

I truly love nature and spend a lot of time hiking with my dog, named Bear. In addition, I also have 4 bunnies. I love to cook, having Celiac disease can make it hard, but I love to get creative and create recipes.

My experience volunteering in the Age-Wise program at Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare, sparked my interest in working with seniors. I plan on continuing to gain certifications into aging and geriatric health. I currently work within the Cardiac Wellness Clinic as Kinesiologist in the Exercise Program.

Working in an exercise setting truly makes me happy, and I love to see the social, physical, and mental benefits that participants can receive. I look forward to bringing my own flare and creativity to the program and I look forward to meeting and learning from all of you!



Monthly Feature:

VON SMART PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



My name is **Kim Panazzola**, I am currently in the role of Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator at the VON. I have worked for the VON since 2002.

I suffered from bone on bone pain in both my knees for many years. I would walk half way around the office, to the photocopier, holding on to the walls to support me, several times a day in this pain! Finally, in February of 2023, I had bilateral knee replacements on both knees at the same time.

Upon my return to work in September, I still had a lot of recovery left to do. I still am recovering.

I decided to join the VON SMART class, taught by Khrista Boon, at the office, on my lunchtime, to help me get well and enjoy wellness in my life!

I found it very difficult for me to do the simple things, like moving my arms and my legs at the same time! After a few classes, I started to get better at that, I started to feel less pain in my legs.

I continue to attend the SMART classes, as these classes have made a huge difference in my life.

I didn't fully understand the tremendous impact of exercise until I joined these classes.

Khrista helped me through the most difficult time in my life. She encouraged me, she taught me with such enthusiasm, as well as praise and she continues to do so.

I have met so many wonderful friends in my classes, and they continue to inspire me.

I am not sure where I would be now, if it weren't for Khrista and the SMART classes.

DID YOU KNOW?

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month



Parkinson's is a neurodegenerative disease. Movement is normally controlled by dopamine, a chemical that carries signals between the nerves in the brain. When cells that normally produce dopamine die, the symptoms of Parkinson's appear.

Exercise and Parkinson's

Cognitive impairments are highly prevalent in Parkinson's disease (PD) and can affect a patient's quality of life. These impairments remain difficult to manage with current clinical therapies, but exercise has been identified as a possible treatment. Some studies in Parkinson's disease have shown improved mobility, quality of life and a possibility of slower rate of disease progression when exercise is included. Exercise plays an important part in everyday life, whether you're young or old. If you are an older adult, experts recommend you aim to be as active as you can possibly be. Some of the benefits of exercising when you're a senior can include:

- Balance Improvement – which can prevent falls
- Strength Improvement – which can aid in independence
- Disease Delaying – such as heart disease, osteoporosis or diabetes
- Cognitive Function Improvement – leading to a better quality of life





Exercise is known to improve overall well-being in older adults and benefit cognitive functions of those with neurodegenerative diseases. Different types of exercises such as aerobics, resistance and balance training, have been shown to improve motor symptoms in Parkinson's patients. During some of the studies, it was found that any type and intensity of exercise has a positive effect on symptoms, compared to no exercise at all. Aerobics, when compared to other forms of exercises, tended to prove most impactful when it comes to memory in Parkinson's patients. Based on some clinical studies, evidence suggests that a more intensive aerobic exercise program, including strength and balance training can promote greater cognitive gains. However, low intensity and balance-based exercises also showed benefits.

Exercising Benefits on Parkinson's

While exercise is important to healthy living for everyone, for those living with Parkinson's disease, it is also a vital component to maintain balance, mobility, and daily activities. Exercise enhances the sense of well-being, even across different stages and severities.

Symptom Management

Research has proven that exercise can improve gait, tremor control, balance, flexibility, coordination and grip strength. For people with mild to moderate PD, targeted exercises can address specific symptoms for example: aerobic exercise improves fitness, walking improves gait, and resistance training strengthens muscles. There is one study that showed that people with Parkinson's disease who exercised regularly for 2.5 hours a week had a smaller decline in mobility and quality of life over the span of two years. Research is still ongoing to discover therapies that will change the course of the disease.

Balance Improvement	Strength Improvement	Disease Delaying	Cognitive Function Improvement
			
Helps to prevent fall risk	Helps to improve sense of independence	Helps to delay diseases such as heart disease, osteoporosis or diabetes	Helps to improve the quality of life

Exercises

Many people find that they achieve the most success when they exercise with a partner or in a group setting. Based on the stage of the disease, it may be best for people with PD to train in an environment where others who could offer assistance, are available. The best way to see benefits, is said to be exercising on a consistent basis. Those with PD who were enrolled in an exercise program for longer than six months, regardless of the intensity, have shown significant gains in functional balance and mobility when compared to programs of two week to ten-week durations.

Source: <https://www.parkinson.ca/resources/exercise-and-wellness/the-importance-of-exercising-your-brain-and-body/>

