

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2024

Spring Renewal. We exist within cyclic rhythms, akin to the Earth. These cycles emphasize transformational wisdom which, when observed and utilized, have the potential to propel us forth in our personal evolution. As we come closer to the fulfillment of Winter and the emergence of Spring, we are entering a time of renewal and revitalization. The endurance required to withstand winter's challenges is thus meaningful; there is a reprieve in sight. The thawing of the ice is a time of joy and resurgence, and a welcoming of new life.

Winter gifts to us the space for thorough introspection and deliberation; it is a time of reflection on the experiences of the last cycle. We may mindfully decide what to bring with us moving forward. Which parts of the last cycle encourage us to grow and evolve into our best selves? How do the patterns we have established, within the last year or perhaps even longer ago, affect us? Do we find ourselves stuck in old patterns, or have we found a refreshing momentum? Taking the time to reflect on our individual experiences can reveal the lessons they have to offer; wisdom is the application of those lessons.

We've adopted the tradition of spring-cleaning; a ritual of clearing out that which no longer serves us and organizing our belongings in ways that help us function more efficiently. In similar ways, we can utilize this process of re-orchestrating our physical world and apply it to our mental world. What do we have stored in our mind which we no longer need to hold on to? What can we release, so that there may be room for something new? What, within us, can we allow to thaw? As the snow of mountaintops melts into streams which feed the fertile ground, so can we release the things which bind us to a frozen state and sow the terrain beneath us with potential.

Words by Molly Stanley

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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DID YOU KNOW? MARCH IS MUSIC THERAPY MONTH

Source: <https://www.musictherapy.ca/about-camt-music-therapy/about-music-therapy/>



What is music therapy?

Music therapy is a discipline in which Certified Music Therapists (MTAs) use music purposefully within therapeutic relationships to support development, health, and well-being. Music therapists use music safely and ethically to address human needs within cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physical, social, and spiritual domains. (Canadian Association of Music Therapists, September 2020)

Who benefits from music therapy?

Music therapy is used with individuals of various ages, abilities, and musical backgrounds in clinical, educational, community and private practice settings. Some examples include:

Acquired Brain Injury	Critical Care	Developmental Disabilities
Emotional Traumas	Geriatric Care	Hearing Impairments
Mental Health Difficulties	Oncology	Pain Control
Palliative Care	Personal Growth	Visual Impairments

Intervention Techniques:

Music therapists use various active and receptive intervention techniques according to the needs and preferences of the individuals with whom they work. These techniques include, but are not limited to the following:

Singing is a therapeutic tool that assists in the development of articulation, rhythm, and breath control. Singing in a group setting can improve social skills and foster a greater awareness of others. For those with dementia, singing can encourage reminiscence and discussions of the past, while reducing anxiety and fear. For individuals with compromised breathing, singing can improve oxygen saturation rates. For individuals who have difficulty speaking following a stroke, music may stimulate the language centres in the brain promoting the ability to sing.

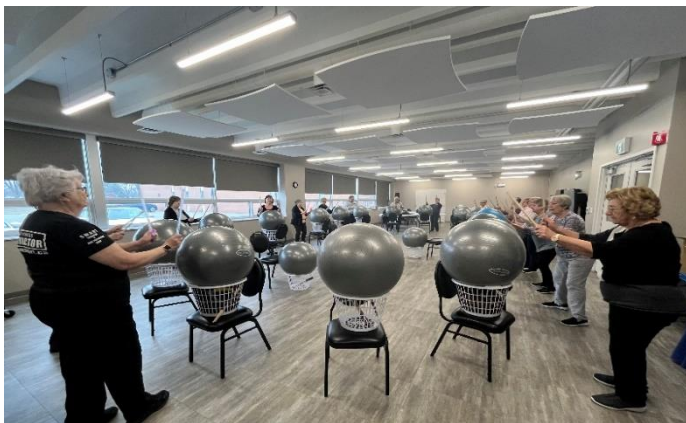
Playing instruments can improve gross and fine motor coordination in individuals with motor impairments or neurological trauma related to a stroke, head injury or a disease process. Instrumental ensembles can enhance cooperation, attention, and can provide opportunities for practicing various leadership-participant roles.

Rhythmic based activities can be used to facilitate and improve an individual's range of motion, joint mobility/agility/strength, balance, coordination, gait consistency and relaxation. Rhythm and beat are important in "priming" the motor areas of the brain, in regulating autonomic processes such as breathing and heart rate, and maintaining motivation or activity level following the removal of a musical stimulus. The use of rhythmic patterns can likewise assist those with receptive and expressive processing difficulties (i.e. aphasia, tinnitus) to improve their ability to tolerate and successfully process sensory information.

Listening to music has many therapeutic applications. It helps to develop cognitive skills such as attention and memory. For example, for those facing surgical procedures, it allows the individual an opportunity to exert a sense of control over their often-unpredictable environment. In situations where cognitive perceptions are comprised, such as in early to mid-stage dementia, listening to music can provide a sense of the familiar, and increase orientation to reality. For those with mental health challenges, music listening can facilitate increased openness to discussion and provide motivation for engaging in social activity.



Getting Fit Together



Monthly Feature:

VON SMART GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES

It is undeniable, exercise is medicine and offers endless benefits to our health. It can also get you out in the world, putting you in touch with other people which can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Prioritizing fitness with a group of individuals that have similar values and goals enhances a sense of belonging, community and quality of life.

VON SMART group exercise program participants share the following words to describe how they feel after an exercise session:

- ❖ Motivated
- ❖ Accountable
- ❖ Comfortably challenged
- ❖ Respected
- ❖ Included
- ❖ Supported
- ❖ Recognized
- ❖ Sense of purpose
- ❖ Accomplished
- ❖ Happy
- ❖ Strong and confident
- ❖ Energized and alert!

Embarking on or revitalizing your fitness journey can start at any point in your life; it's never too early or too late. Plus, you don't have to do it alone! Your VON SMART fitness friends will be moving right along with you!



Resources

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Stretching away the pain: How do different stretching exercises compare for knee osteoarthritis

www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org



Osteoarthritis is a condition marked by the deterioration of cartilage in the joints, such as the knees, hips, hands, and spine (1;2). Between 1990 and 2019, the number of people living with osteoarthritis increased by a whopping 113% to around 528 million worldwide. In sixty-nine percent of cases, or 365 million, the knee is the affected joint (1).

The health of our knees holds important implications for our independence and well-being (3;4). This is no surprise given that they are critical to our ability to walk (3;5). For instance, imagine having to be mobile and perform daily activities of living like getting out of bed, reaching the bathroom, showering, getting dressed, and transporting yourself to the kitchen to make breakfast all while experiencing symptoms of knee osteoarthritis such as pain and stiffness (3-8).

A variety of treatment and management options are available to help people living with knee osteoarthritis. But initial recommended strategies are those which are non-invasive—meaning they do not involve breaking of the skin or entering of the body—and are not medication-based (3;9). Exercise programs, including resistance, aerobic, and stretching exercises, are a great example of this (3;9;10). Zeroing in on stretching exercises, we see that evidence of their effectiveness in managing symptoms of knee osteoarthritis remains uncertain.

To help us learn more about this strategy and compare different stretching exercises, let us look at a recent systematic review that examined the effects of stretching exercise programs on pain management, stiffness, and physical function disability in older adults with knee osteoarthritis. These strategies were compared to control groups consisting of no stretching exercise, an exercise program with no stretching, health education, acupuncture, or usual care (3).

What the research tells us

To start, stretching exercise programs within the review consisted of one of the following: 1) static stretching (e.g., get into stretch position and hold), 2) proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation stretching (e.g., assisted stretching or muscle contraction against resistance), 3) mind-body exercises—like Tai Chi, yoga, Qigong, and Baduanjin—plus lower-limb stretching, and 4) multi-component exercise programs with a stretching element.

The review found that different stretching exercise programs can be effective in improving symptoms of knee osteoarthritis, but success varies by program and symptom.

For example, all four stretching exercise programs assessed pain. In comparison to the control group, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation and mind-body exercise appeared to reduce pain by a large amount, while multi-component exercise did so by a moderate amount. Static stretching was not effective, but the results were based on just one study, and as such need to be interpreted carefully. Additionally, when compared to one another, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation was found to be superior to multi-component exercise programs; helping to reduce pain by a large amount.

All in all, there appears to be multiple stretching exercise programs that folks living with knee osteoarthritis can explore with their healthcare team. Discussions should include what symptoms patients are looking to manage, and the pros and cons of the different program options available in relation to that person's needs and abilities.

SMART PROGRAM UPDATES:

We are excited to offer a new SMART exercise class at:

First Lutheran Church
27 Spruce St., N Kingsville
Wednesdays at 10:00am

Interested? Call 519-254-4866 Ext. 6225 to register.

NO CLASSES:
FRIDAY MARCH 29TH &
MONDAY APRIL 1ST

