Swimming in the lap pool at the Healthy Life Center – Cape Coral offers an alternative whole body workout when you can’t take the pounding of a treadmill or a high-impact class in the group exercise studio. For people with conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, and osteoporosis, warm water exercises in the therapy pool can help improve strength, flexibility, and balance.

“Our warm-water pools offer a great way to exercise that’s safe and healthy,” says Philippa (“Philly”) McMurrain, aquatics coordinator at Healthy Life Center - Cape Coral.

“Our therapy and lap pools use a salt-purification system instead of a traditional chlorine purification system. It’s more like swimming in a lake or ocean than a chlorinated pool.”

Aquatics Center visitors can enjoy a wide variety of activities in the lap pool, including water aerobics, a Masters swim program, a youth swim team, and lap swimming. The pool is 25 yards long with a dedicated lap lane.

To provide therapeutic benefits the therapy pool is kept about 10 degrees warmer than the lap pool, at 93 degrees. “The therapy pool is good for members who are managing arthritis, fibromyalgia or who are recovering from surgery or a serious injury that prevents them from participating in the weight-bearing exercise,” Philly says. Classes are also available for people with Parkinson’s disease and multiple sclerosis.

“We’re fortunate to have one of the few therapeutic pools in the area,” Philly says.

Swimming and warm water exercises promote joint flexibility and cardiovascular health. “Swimming also reduces your blood pressure, strengthens your heart, and improves your aerobic capacity,” Philly says. “As a low-impact exercise, swimming is one of the best.”

You can also lose weight from swimming, which burns about three calories per mile per pound of body weight. “To be effective for weight control, you need to swim at least two or three times a week for at least half an hour,” Philly says.

Aquatics Center classes are Monday-Saturday at both pools and Monday-Thursday evenings at the lap pool. Members who are 13 and older can participate in group exercise classes. To view the group exercise schedule for the current month at Healthy Life Center – Cape Coral, go to LeeHealth.org/exercise-schedule

Swim lessons are available to members and non-members of all ages and levels of experience, too. To learn more, go to LeeHealth.org/swim-lessons

- **Aquaerobics.** A workout that brings total body conditioning to the water. This class moves quickly and reaches all muscle groups.
- **Aqua Fit.** The warm-water workout uses props for overall strength, cardio, and toning.
- **Aqua Flow.** A gentle warm water class that incorporates Pilates movement for core strengthening, yoga stretches, and balance.
- **Aqua Fusion.** This workout uses circuit training and ends with a fusion of water-modified yoga and Pilates to help improve strength, flexibility, bone density, and balance.
- **Aqua Intervals.** A multi-level workout that targets both cardiovascular and muscle conditioning and includes both lower and upper body moves.
- **Splash Dance.** A high-energy workout where you will jump, shout, twist, and shake your body.
- **TAP.** “Therapeutic Arthritis Program” provides gentle warm water activities and exercises designed for people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis, and joint replacement.
Healthy Life Center – Babcock Ranch Opens Doors to Health and Wellness

Lee Health and Babcock Ranch share a vision of putting health and wellness in the center of people’s lives. Fittingly, Lee Health opened its Healthy Life Center in the Babcock Ranch Town Center in April to honor that vision. In addition to wellness and fitness services, a rehabilitation clinic initially will offer physical therapy services and, eventually, occupational and speech therapy. Later this summer, Lee Physician Group will provide Babcock Ranch residents and the surrounding community its first primary care clinic that will also feature telemedicine services.

“Our newest location here at Babcock Ranch brings to four the number of Healthy Life Centers,” says Lee Health wellness manager Justin Klein, MEd, CSCS. “Our continuing expansion supports Lee Health’s strategic priorities to advance the health of our communities by providing prevention and wellness services close to home.”

Healthy Life Series

Offering education in which members of the center and community will learn:

- About topics such as nutrition, chronic disease prevention, integrative medicine, balance, memory, sleep, stress reduction, and more. The programs are open to the public.
- To navigate health services including scheduling assistance with Lee Physician Group or an outpatient service, such as rehabilitation or testing.
- How to connect with community resources for healthy living.

For upcoming events, go to LeeHealth.org/HealthyLifeCenter.

ENJOY THESE BENEFITS OF AQUATIC THERAPY

- Warm water promotes muscle relaxation and increases peripheral circulation.
- Water provides resistance for strength training.
- Warm water stimulates body awareness, balance, and trunk stability.
- The low gravity in the pool lets the patient stand and begin gait training and strengthening exercises without damaging healing structures.
- Warm water and buoyancy produce less pain sensitivity.

Ask the Doc

Sal Lacagnina, D.O., is the system medical director of wellness & employee health for Lee Health. He is board certified in internal medicine and has been in practice since 1993. As a regular part of Words on Wellness, Dr. Lacagnina answers your health-related questions. Send your questions to AskTheDoc@LeeMemorial.org.

Question

For what conditions would the therapy pool at the Healthy Life Center – Cape Coral be most beneficial and why?

Answer

Warm water therapy is indicated for many health conditions including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic musculoskeletal conditions, for those with neurologic diseases that affect balance and mobility, for those with significant weight problems to help de-stress the joints, for general conditioning, and for overall health and wellness.

The warm temperature is soothing. In the water it’s easier to move, making the individual feel better psychologically. The aerobic exercise helps to control high blood pressure and strengthen the heart and vascular system. Similar benefits relate to lung function. Exercise, in general, is also helpful to lower blood glucose and to help with diabetes.

Water therapy supervision is necessary even for those who swim well. Safety is the number one priority.

Find a primary care doctor through Lee Physician Group starting in summer 2018.

The 24,600-square-foot Healthy Life Center offers Babcock Ranch residents and surrounding community members the following programs:

- Fitness. Stay fit with equipment, workout classes, basketball and pickleball courts, and a lap pool.
- Mind and Body. Pilates, hypnotherapy, brain boosters, and massages will help you break through barriers and nourish your spirit.
- Education. Discover essential ways to prevent chronic conditions, enrich your nutrition knowledge, and uncover truths about hot new trends.
- Rehabilitation. Living with pain? Our physical therapists will help you regain mobility and improve strength and function.
- Medical Care. Find a primary care doctor through Lee Physician Group starting in summer 2018. Check-ups, screenings, treatment for illness, and disease management—everything families need to stay healthy.

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Cardiac Rehabilitation Phase III Moves to Two Healthy Life Centers

Phase III of Lee Health’s three-part cardiac rehabilitation program has moved from HealthPark Medical Center to Healthy Life Centers at Cape Coral (formerly Wellness Center – Cape Coral) and Fort Myers (formerly Wellness Center – Fort Myers.

“Phase III participants can now exercise whenever the Healthy Life Centers are open,” says Kathy Gardner, lead exercise specialist, cardiac rehabilitation at Healthy Life Center – Fort Myers. “HealthPark Medical Center has limited access for some patients.”

Cardiac rehabilitation has three parts: Phase I (inpatient); Phase II (outpatient); and Phase III (maintenance).

Phase III is a maintenance program for heart patients who have completed Phase II or need less supervision and monitoring. The program emphasizes independence while helping the patient to maintain a heart-healthy lifestyle.

“The cardiac rehabilitation program includes exercise, risk factor education, lifestyle modification classes and support,” Kathy explains. “The program is tailored to each patient, but the overall goals are the same: to improve cardiovascular function, overall health, quality of life while reducing symptoms and risk of future heart problems.”

HealthPark Medical Center will continue to offer Phase I and Phase II of cardiac rehabilitation.

Lee Center for Rehabilitation and Wellness will continue to offer all three phases of the cardiac rehabilitation program. Like the other phases, Phase III requires a physician referral. Program components and membership fees are specific to each location. Because Phase III is considered a maintenance program, the membership fee is usually not covered by insurance companies.

Exercise and Energy: Keys to Living with Parkinson’s Disease

Living with Parkinson’s disease can be a challenge, but patients still have a chance to be active and learn to thrive as they go about their daily lives. In fact, experts say exercise is essential for patients who need help and want a better way to cope with the disease.

April is Parkinson’s Awareness Month. According to the National Parkinson’s Foundation, more than one million people in the United States suffer from the disease.

Symptoms such as resting tremors, slowness of movement, and abnormal stiffness are common and can threaten the patient’s safety. The loss of mobility increases the risk of falling or suffering other physical injuries.

Physical therapist Janice Smeigh, PT, helps Parkinson’s patients maintain balance and mobility and get into the habit of staying active. “We want you to become mobile and stay mobile,” Janice says. “Parkinson’s is a progressive disorder, so it’s very important that you continue to move.”

Healthy Life Centers offer a variety of different pathways and techniques that can help patients cope with Parkinson’s, slow the disease’s progression, and offers a place for support, hope, and healing.

Janice also recommends trying exercises at home. “Some exercises can improve your mobility, decrease your fall risk, and increase your strength,” she says. “Exercises such as stretching, resistance training or strength exercises, yoga, biking, and walking are beneficial.”

Patients should talk to their doctors before starting any new program, Janice adds. Healthy Life Centers offer many events and classes for patients and their families. For more information, call 239-424-3220.

Integrative Medicine Heals from the Inside Out

More patients are searching for modern ways to treat a variety of health conditions these days. Many are turning to integrative medicine, which combines traditional medicine and alternative approaches to focus on the “whole” patient through mind, body, spirit, and lifestyle.

“Integrative medicine endorses both conventional medicine and alternative therapies that have been scientifically tested,” says Dr. Heather Auld, a board-certified integrative specialist with Lee Health. “By combining the two, there is a broader spectrum of treatment options and fewer side effects because the treatment used is often natural and less invasive.”

Dr. Auld says integrative medicine facilitates the body’s innate healing response and can be used to treat nearly every aspect of patient care, especially the prevention and treatment of chronic conditions including menopausal symptoms, type 2 diabetes, stress, high cholesterol, and stomach issues.

Integrative medicine also can help treat obesity and weight loss challenges, Dr. Auld adds.

“People often see me for metabolism disorders when they can’t lose weight. They don’t want to go on diet pills because of their bad side effects,” Dr. Auld says.

Integrative medicine treatment includes acupuncture, yoga, massage, herbal medicine, and stress reduction techniques. These treatment options are desirable to patients because they are less invasive and result in fewer side effects.

Dr. Auld says people are attracted to the concept of integrative medicine because they want to take charge of their health.

“Integrative doctors are trained to deal with the safety and efficacy of herbs and dietary supplements and their interaction with prescription medications—the combination of conventional and alternative medicine,” she says.

For more information about integrative medicine, call 239-495-4480.
Lifestyle Improvement Exercise Program

Participants in the Lifestyle Improvement Exercise Program have a variety of exercises to choose from each week: maybe core training one week, interval training the next, resistance-band strength training a week later, and after that, cardio or yoga.

“The Lifestyle Improvement Exercise Program offers a lecture and a discussion session, along with different physical activities each week,” says certified health and wellness coach Sarah Mitchell. “A health and wellness coach leads the program. We set a 30-day goal together and establish achievable weekly goals.”

Also, a Lee Health registered dietitian meets with the group twice during the 8-week program to provide nutritional information and answer questions. Sarah says the coach and the dietitian are available during the week.

“At the first and last weeks of the program, participants receive a biometric test that measures their height, weight, body mass index, and blood pressure,” she says. “We’ll talk about what the results mean and how to improve and maintain healthy lifestyles. All the physical activities can also be done at home, with or without equipment.”

The Healthy Life Centers at Coconut Point and at Cape Coral offer the Lifestyle Improvement Exercise Program. The centers also provide individual Lifestyle Improvement Exercise Program and Lifestyle Coaching Sessions.

MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL!
2 months for $99 with ZERO enrollment fees. Applies to any two months between May and July. Call Today to Join!

The Lifestyle Improvement Exercise Program Starts Soon!
11 a.m.-Noon, May 14
Healthy Life Center – Coconut Point
For more information call 239-495-4475.

5-6 p.m., May 17
Healthy Life Center – Cape Coral
(formerly Wellness Center – Cape Coral)
For more information call 239-424-3231.