

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple-A-Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness segment that we feature weekly to talk about health and wellness news. May 25th is Senior Fitness Day; and along with that we have invited Sue Tungseth, who is an exercise trainer at our Physical Therapy Department who offers several really amazing classes for our senior population, to be our guest today and talk about senior fitness benefits and options for our community.

Good morning, Sue.

Sue Tungseth: Good morning.

Katie Johnson: Thanks for joining me. Let's start by talking a little bit about what your history with this program has been. How long have you been at Lake Region Healthcare, and how long have you been teaching these classes for seniors?

Sue Tungseth: I've been at Lake Region for eleven years after Al Yeutter was here, and he saw my experience with exercise classes. We thought it would be good to start something up for seniors, and so, I took the Arthritis Foundation training in 2008, and we've been having classes going since then. Then, I took the water exercise training there, also; so, we have these classes that are mostly for seniors since 2008.

Katie Johnson: When we talk about Senior Fitness Day we should talk about who's a senior, anyway. I mean, you have people in these classes where the age range really varies.

Sue Tungseth: Right, I have people in their fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties, and even a lady that will turn ninety this next week.

Katie Johnson: That's fantastic, so it really can benefit people of all ages; and who, as you mentioned, may have arthritis, may have other conditions that cause them pain or difficulty. They are really customizable to any age and any situation.

Let's talk a little bit about what the benefits you see of exercise for seniors, maybe some that are obvious or some that aren't so obvious.

Sue Tungseth: I think everybody can benefit from these, and they will actually feel better after they exercised. They'll feel more refreshed and have more energy. I've had some that have come to the class that do a lot more than this, and they do this as their stretching routine. We pretty much stretch everything from head to toe.

Katie Johnson: What do you think are some of the reasons seniors, in particular, are reluctant to exercise?

Sue Tungseth: I hear the "too busy" a lot, and they just haven't made it a priority. Some think that they're active enough, but I try to remind my group that there are exercises we do, that even if you're real busy, you don't get those exercises in.

Katie Johnson: Even if you're walking, for example, I find that that's a common: "Oh, I already walk a couple of miles a day"; but having the core strength and the stretching of, like you said, head-toe muscles, really brings some additional benefits.

Sue Tungseth: Yes, it really is helpful, that you just feel better. When I taught the little mini-class out at the expo that we had last month, there were people that came to my little mini-session there and were surprised how they could feel the exercises that we were doing were just stretching exercises. They were saying, "Wow!" They were surprised how much they felt that.

Katie Johnson: Exactly, how much you can feel those little things.

Let's talk a little bit about the specific classes that you offer. You've mentioned the Fit For Life exercise class. That used to be called the Arthritis Foundation class, is that right?

Sue Tungseth: Arthritis Foundation exercise class.

Katie Johnson: Tell me a little bit about what that class is like and when it meets.

Sue Tungseth: It's a head-to-toe total body work-out of exercise and stretching that will improve your strength, flexibility, and balance. The exercises have been proven to reduce arthritis pain and to improve your mood.

Katie Johnson: How long is the class?

Sue Tungseth: That class runs for an hour, Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00 to 12:00.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned, too, the Water Exercise class. For those who don't know, these classes are typically held at the Mehl Center, which we also call The Hub. Now, you're moving the Fit For Life class to Phatty Natty's for the summer, but the water class, obviously, can't move because that's where our pool is, right? And what a great pool it is, so nice and warm.

Sue Tungseth: It's a wonderful pool. My only complaint is that it's a little bit small, but we keep it very nice and warm. It's from 92 to 94 for my arthritis exercise classes. They're maybe not as rigorous as some of the water exercise classes like you could do at the Y; but the water is so wonderfully warm, and it's very soothing for anyone with any aches and pains, or even those that have just been out gardening for hours, and they're feeling sore. It just feels so wonderful to come in the pool.

It's a smaller pool, and there's a bench all the way around the edge, so you can sit. Can sit in front of a warm jet, and soothe those sore muscles; and, yet, there's enough room that we can march in place or cross-country ski. There are many exercises that we do in the pool. We use the noodles. Today we used a few weights. It's just wonderful.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned that class is offered every day. How long is that class?

Sue Tungseth: That class is also an hour long, and it meets every day. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday it meets from 1:00 to 2:00. Tuesdays and Thursdays there's a class from 2:30 to 3:30; and another class from 3:30 to 4:30.

Katie Johnson: A couple more classes that you offer, too, we should mention briefly. One is a matter of balance, and that one is really focused on helping people prevent falls.

Sue Tungseth: Yes, there is a couple of videos with that and a book that we go through, and that has proven to be very helpful. There are many exercise that we go through in that class.

Katie Johnson: When is that one offered? Is that regularly?

Sue Tungseth: When it's offered, it's been Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:15 to 12:15. We will schedule that as we get enough people signed up that are interested.

Katie Johnson: Finally, just a quick mention of the LSVT Parkinson's group exercise class. This one's really specifically for Parkinson's patients who have been through that program.

Sue Tungseth: Yes, that's a special program that the Physical Therapy Department has, and you need to go through that program. It's a sixteen session, pretty intense program. Once you've gone through that they're supposed to continue doing those exercises twice a day for the rest of their life. Then we meet once a week as a refresher, and to get together and share with each other, and keep up on our exercises, a little encouragement. That's Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00. If anybody was interested in that whole program they could come and join us one time and see what it's like.

Katie Johnson: Great! What kinds of successes have you seen? You've, obviously, been doing this for many years, and you get to hear and hear from the participants and see what a difference it makes in their lives. I'm interested to hear what kinds of stories you might have to share about those.

Sue Tungseth: Some have been coming since the very beginning in 2008, and all those years have really enjoyed it. The one gal thought we should re-name the class the laugh and giggle class, because we do try to have a good time. It's not just exercise. We laugh and share our lives with each other and make new friends; so, that's been a benefit.

I asked a couple of the people what they had to share about it, and one of the people from my water class that's ninety-one years old said, "It's helped me a lot. It's helped my leg and back pain." And she has a lot less pain. Another gal from my water exercise who's seventy-four, said she has much less back pain after back surgery. She's much more flexible after being in the pool in her hands and her knees. She looks forward to every Tuesday and Thursday, because she can come in the warm water, and it helps her arthritis. She shared if she stops coming she

would be in a world of hurt, and she said it lifts her spirits.

One guy in my water exercise class said that it just feels so relaxing. A couple gals said that it's refreshing and renews their energy. One said it was excellent physical therapy, but I can't take away from the therapist.

Katie Johnson: Right, right. An excellent addition to their physical therapy.

One other thing that I noticed, the Silver & Fit designation is something that's relatively new to Lake Region Healthcare, to be a Silver & Fit designated facility. Can you touch on what that means to participants?

Sue Tungseth: Some of the insurance companies offer this Silver & Fit program, and we just became a facility in December; so, if you check with your insurance company, if you have Silver & Fit you can call in and get a number and tell them you want Lake Region Healthcare to be your facility. Then, you get a number and you can come to the Fit for Life exercise class for free, and the Balance class for free. There is a three dollar additional charge for the pool; but that's a very good new benefit that is being offered.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely, that is a great deal! So, if people are interested in learning more about these classes, signing up for the classes, how should they go about finding more information?

Sue Tungseth: I do have a phone number that they could call. I'm sorry, I'm rarely at it, but they could leave a message, and I will get back to them. That number is 736-8315.

Katie Johnson: You're never there, because you're always too busy exercising. Right?

Sue Tungseth: Yes.

Katie Johnson: Anything else you want to share about the senior exercise classes offered at Lake Region Healthcare, or the benefits of senior exercise as we look to celebrate Senior Fitness Day this week on Apple-A-Day.

Sue Tungseth: I would just say to just come and try a class. If you're hesitant at all just come and join us one time and see how much fun we have, and how much better you feel.

Katie Johnson: I think that's great advice. Sue Tungseth, exercise trainer with the Physical Therapy Department at Lake Region Healthcare, my guest today on Apple-A-Day as we talk about Senior Fitness Day being celebrated on May 25th here on Apple-A-Day. Sue and Katie are both reminding you that there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it.

Have a great day!