



St. Charles Rehabilitation

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NEW ANTI-GRAVITY TREADMILL ACCELERATES REHABILITATION FOR ST. CHARLES ORTHOPEDIC PATIENTS

A treadmill that makes you feel up to 80% lighter with just one use may seem like a dream for anyone who is looking to lose weight. But this advanced technology is more than a work of fiction. The AlterG Anti-gravity Treadmill® is now a reality and it is available at St. Charles Rehabilitation, where physical therapists use it to return patients with orthopedic conditions to walking or running sooner following a muscle or bone injury.

“With an anti-gravity treadmill, patients who had ligament reconstruction surgery are back to running two months after the procedure. We normally may not attempt this until three or four months,” said Kaan Celebi, DPT, OCS, SCS, CSCS, Clinical Coordinator, St. Charles Rehabilitation.

The key to making this accelerated rehabilitation safe for patients is the way therapists can use the treadmill to precisely control how much stress is put on the lower body when reintroducing the patient to walking and running.

Originally created to train astronauts for walking in space, the AlterG Anti-Gravity® treadmill works similarly to aquatic therapy, in which patients are suspended in water to gain weightlessness. However, instead of submerging their lower bodies in water, patients using the AlterG are encased in a “balloon” from the waist down and then nearly lifted off the treadmill using air pressure inside the balloon. While

patients’ feet never completely leave the ground, the air pressure adjusts patients’ weight, making them temporarily lighter on their feet.

“We can reduce a patient’s body weight by a specific percentage, which is harder to do in water and more precise than relying on a patient to walk across the room on their injured leg using what they perceive to be 20% of their body weight,” said Celebi. “Having this much control is especially important for running, where the force of landing is about three times your body weight.”

While St. Charles is using the AlterG for patients who have had joint surgery or suffer from minor ankle sprains and muscles strains, the technology also has potential to help less active patients with other types of orthopedic conditions.

Celebi explained, saying, “The literature has shown successful outcomes with the elderly population suffering from spinal stenosis, a condition in which the bones in the spine become more compact, pinching nerves and making it painful to stand or move. Research is finding that using anti-gravity technology to unweight the patient and perform gradual gait training slowly increases older patients’ tolerance to standing and walking.”

For more information about rehabilitation at St. Charles Hospital, please call **(631) 474-6797**.

St. Charles Physician Assumes Directorship of Stony Brook's Residency Program in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Jennifer Gray, DO, physiatrist, St. Charles Rehabilitation, has been named residency program director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Stony Brook University Medical Center. In her new position, Dr. Gray will oversee the physiatry residents as they rotate between the VA Medical Center in Northport, NY, Stony Brook University Medical Center and St. Charles Hospital.

Dr. Gray is Clinical Assistant Professor and Credentials Committee Chair at Stony Brook University Medical Center.

At St. Charles, Dr. Gray is Medical Co-Director, *ThinkSMART!*[™] St. Charles Hospital's Concussion Management Program. She lectures extensively on concussion management to both clinical and community audiences and serves as site administrator for a joint Stony Brook-St. Charles research study.

Dr. Gray received her medical degree from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed her residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a fellowship in Neuromuscular Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH. Dr. Gray is board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Neuromuscular Medicine and Electrodiagnostic Medicine.

For more information about the residency program in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, please call St. Charles at **(631) 474-6797**.



St. Charles Rehabilitation Adds New Physiatrist

St. Charles Rehabilitation is pleased to welcome Kalliopi Nestor, MD. Dr. Nestor will treat patients in St. Charles Hospital's Outpatient Center.

Dr. Nestor is board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and has more than 10 years of experience in the field. She specializes in amputee rehabilitation, spasticity management, concussion management, and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal conditions, including treatment for neck and back pain. Dr. Nestor was most recently Medical Director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Charles Cole Memorial Hospital, Coudersport, PA.

Dr. Nestor received her medical degree at Ross University School of Medicine, Dominica, West Indies and completed her residency at Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh. She is a member of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, the American Medical Association, the American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine and the Medical Society of the State of New York. In addition to English, Dr. Nestor is fluent in Greek.

For more information about St. Charles, please call **(631) 474-6797**.

St. Charles Offers Free Falls Prevention Workshop for Seniors

St. Charles Rehabilitation will offer a free falls prevention workshop for seniors at the Rose Caracappa Senior Citizens Cultural and Wellness Center, 739 Route 25A, Mt. Sinai, beginning Tuesday, March 22. Classes will be held Tuesdays through May 3, 10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

The workshop, entitled **Stepping On**, is a CDC model program and is taught by St. Charles physical therapists.

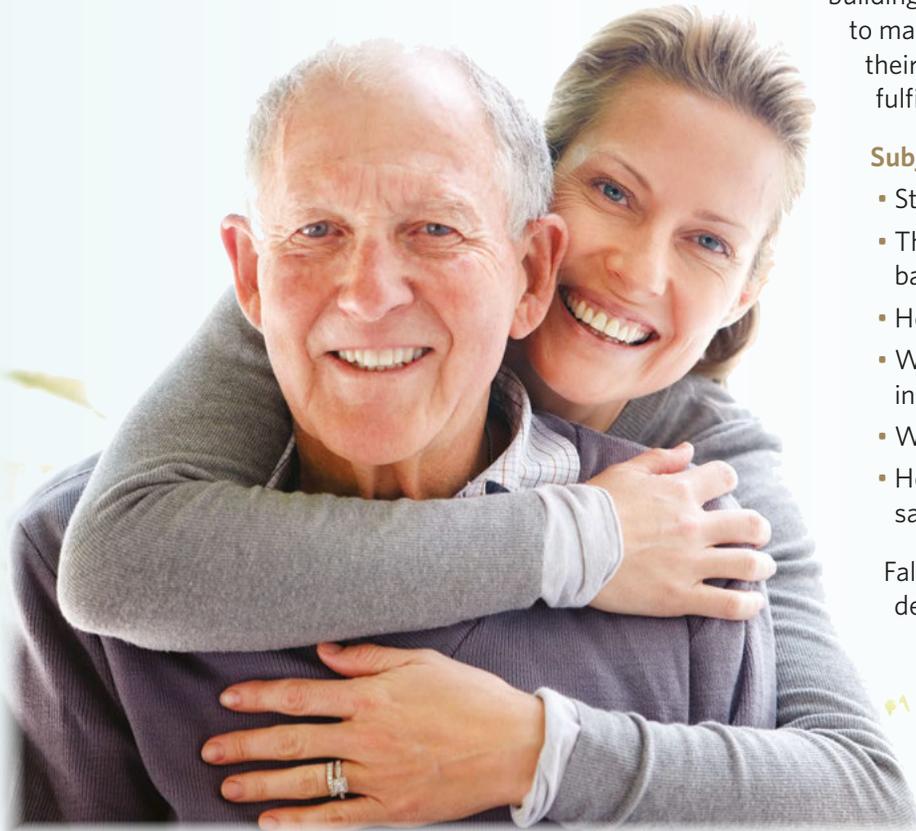
Stepping On covers improving balance and strength, home modifications, community safety, vision, medication review, safe footwear and sleep habits. The course is designed specifically for people who are: 1) at risk of falling, 2) have a fear of falling, or 3) who have fallen one or more times. Classes are highly participative with mutual support and success building participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health behaviors, reduce their risk of falls, and maintain active and fulfilling lives.

Subjects covered include:

- Strength and balance exercises
- The role vision plays in keeping your balance
- How medications can contribute to falls
- Ways to stay safe when out and about in your community
- What to look for in safe footwear
- How to check your home for safety hazards

Falls are the leading cause of injury and death among individuals age 65 and older. Up to 30% of people who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as lacerations, hip fractures or head traumas.

To enroll in the **Stepping On** workshop, call **(631) 474-6797**.



Ten More from St. Charles Become Certified Rehabilitation Nurses



Ten nurses from St. Charles Hospital's adult inpatient rehabilitation and pediatric traumatic brain injury units recently earned designation as certified rehabilitation registered nurses (CRRN). They join a growing number of St. Charles nurses who have achieved this certification. CRRN certification demonstrates knowledge, experience and commitment to excellence in comprehensive care for people with physical disabilities and chronic illnesses in all specialties and settings of rehabilitation.

"Nurses are critical members of the rehabilitation team at St. Charles and we are thrilled to have nurses of this caliber working to help our patients reach their fullest potential," said Jennifer Semel, MD, medical director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, St. Charles.

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Patient Spotlight: Brad Bjorndahl

Two months after his 13th birthday, Brad sustained a traumatic brain injury while riding his bike and was air-lifted to the hospital. He was on life support and not expected to live through the night. Although Brad survived the night, doctors told his parents that he would never wake up from his coma. Brad, however, had other plans.

A month after being hospitalized, Brad was transferred to the Inpatient Pediatric Rehabilitation Unit at St. Charles. Still in a coma, the rehabilitation specialists at St. Charles were able to remove Brad's tracheotomy, begin coma stimulation, and work to bring him back. After several months, Brad was "awake" enough that he began re-learning everything he lost - how to walk, talk, eat, drink and think.

Five months after arriving at St. Charles, Brad returned home. He continued rehabilitation on an outpatient basis and, to the astonishment of many, he proudly graduated on time from high school with his NYS Regents diploma.

Today, Brad is a thriving young adult. He recently graduated from St. Joseph College with a degree in marketing, works as a DJ, volunteers and has a girlfriend. He tells people to never take life for granted. And, even when facing a difficult path in life, he urges, "Don't lose faith in yourself and your ability to handle the bumps in the road."

As a traumatic brain injury survivor, Brad offers this advice with the voice of experience.

To read more patient stories, visit www.stcharlesrehab.org.



St. Charles Rehabilitation named Brad the recipient of the 2015 Josephine McCarthy Award. The annual award was established to recognize and honor individuals who demonstrate outstanding courage, determination and strength of will during the rehabilitation process and who embody the altruistic value of giving back in order to improve the lives of others.