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Water Pilates makes a Splash

BY MICHELLE MARTIN
Staff Reporter

How do you make fitness more interesting? Add water.

The Kirksville Aquatic Center widened its horizons about three years ago with the addition of a water Pilates course. The class spices up traditional water aerobics by incorporating Pilates, a fitness regimen focused on breath awareness, spine alignment and torso strengthening, said Robin Loft, the class instructor and recreation specialist.

About three years ago, Loft and another fitness instructor created the class as an interesting alternative to traditional water aerobics, she said. The instructors originally formed water Pilates and water Yoga as separate classes but since have integrated the two.

The exercises provide similar health benefits to regular Pilates, modifying traditional Pilates postures for the pool, she said. A key advantage of doing Pilates in water is the decreased body strain on participants.

"Some people have complained that while doing regular Pilates, it's hard on their back and hard on their neck, and [with water Pilates] you have the support of the water," Loft said. "Also we're finding that people who could not do regular Pilates are able to do it in the water."

In addition, each individual easily can tailor the exercise to his or her own skill level, she said. For example, leg rotations are a prominent aspect of Pilates, and every person can rotate to a different degree.

A multitude of different fitness levels, from the extremely fit to the complete beginner, are present each week in the class, she said.

"We have college-age students and we have senior citizens," Loft said. "We'll work with everyone who comes and get them all on the same page."

They began teaching the class with a video then started modifying the poses themselves. "Anyone that's done water aerobics gets really tired of them really quick," Loft said. "Anywhere you go they're the same exercises, and there's just not a lot of variety. So we spent a lot of time researching things that were different and up-and coming in the water industry."

Many water Pilates participants have reported a loss of inches, though not necessarily a loss in weight, she said.

Kirksville resident Rochelle Bozarth said she has noticed numerous health benefits from the water Pilates class, including a loss of inches and a significant reduction in back pain.

"Now I go to the chiropractor two or three times a year versus one or two times a month before I started," she said.

The benefits of water Pilates probably stem from the exercises, which largely focus on strengthening the core, spine and lower back, Bozarth said.

The extra support of the water takes away the potential pressure on the body that regular Pilates can cause, she said.

"It just makes you just feel good," Bozarth said. "You don't have aches and pains or injuries because you're in the water so you have the buoyancy from that. There's not the stress on your joints."

Although Bozarth still goes to water aerobics for a cardio workout, she said she attends water Pilates on a regular basis for strengthening and stretching.

"It's just a good overall exercise for your entire body," she said. "It does not put any stress

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Pilates was developed in 1912 by Joseph Pilates, a self defense trainer for detectives in England. He refined his ideas while being detained by German troops during World War I.

With an emphasis on proper breathing, correct spinal alignment and deep concentration, pilates improves flexibility, strength and alleviates back pain.

Relaxation is a core component of pilates. It allows the release of unnecessary toxins in our bodies and helps us rediscover flow and movement in our hectic lives.



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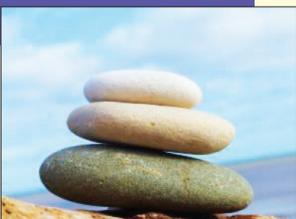
Around the **Ville**

Feb. 26

7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Bootcamp

Session of yoga and plate breaking to relieve stress
SUB 3203
Free



Feb. 27

7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Truman Live

Saturday Night Live-themed variety show performing 12 acts

Baldwin Auditorium
Free



Feb. 28

9 a.m.

Jazz Fest

Alpha Phi Mu hosts all day event with jazz music

Ophelia Parrish Performance Hall
Free

