

Movin' & groovin' to Zumba

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 30 December 2010 20:32 - Last Updated Thursday, 30 December 2010 20:35



70+ women laud benefits of exercise.

After being knocked to the ground by the handle of a cart of bricks she was unloading, Mary Ostergard found herself lying on pavement.

She didn't know then—on an Oct. 2 Indian summer afternoon—that her left hip was broken. At the moment, all she knew and felt was pain.

After surgery and physical therapy and an astonishing four and half weeks later, Ostergard—who was 80 at the time—received clearance from her physician that her hip had healed.

“A physical therapist told me my muscle tone was very good,” she said.

Regular exercise before the fall, she's convinced, was the best therapy.

For Ostergard, toning her muscles on hydraulic equipment at a downtown fitness center known as Curves is something she's done since July of 2007.

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"It's also helped my arthritis," she said.

More recently, Ostergard started doing Zumba—an upbeat exercise program that combines Latin and international music with dance—twice a week at the fitness center.

Although the 81-year-old doesn't know what she thinks about Zumba yet, she says it's fun—a claim made by two other older women who earlier had gyrated to a Latin beat during the half-hour exercise session.

"It adds a little variety," said 82-year-old Elaine Finke.

Yvonne Derra, who is also 82, said she's lucky she can tone her muscles and move to music.

"I need to move and get out of my rocking chair," Derra said, chuckling.

For 74-year-old Elsie Cyriacks, Zumba is a change of pace.

Since she started working out, she claims pain from arthritis has eased plus she's lost inches.

Cyriacks likes that she's kept on track with her exercise.

"If I know I have to be there (at Curves), I'll do it even though I still walk because Leroy (her husband) won't buy me gas," she said with a laugh.

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Finke said she's lost inches, pounds and feels more agile.

"Exercise is also good for the heart," she said.

And keeping diseases like diabetes at bay, Cyriacks said.

After Derra exercises, she said she's full of energy.

Brittany Jesseph, who teaches Zumba, said it's especially important for older people to

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