



Introducing...

Karen Cornish

AQUATIC THERAPY

As a physiotherapist, I spend a lot of time with patients who are trying to regain function – people who want to return to their normal everyday activities, and who are limited by an injury or a surgery, a medical condition like arthritis, or just simply by lack of fitness that ‘snuck up on them!’ For many years, along with the physiotherapy treatment I provide, I have been suggesting extra physical activity – walking outside, going to the gym... anything to become more active. When my family moved to Kimberley three years ago, I was thrilled to find such a wonderful pool here; another possibility for physical activity!

Well, I am the first person to admit – I am not a hard-core athlete!! I needed more information to be able to tell my patients what to do in the water. So, although I did some aquatic therapy training in university years ago, I was happy when the opportunity arose to become certified in WaterArt Rehabilitation in 2007. I now believe that aquatic therapy is one of the most useful and widely applicable rehabilitation tools I know.

Aquatic physiotherapy has many advantages. The buoyancy of the water removes most of the effect of gravity, so that the load on the joints is much reduced. Weight and stress on the joints is decreased, and there is no jarring or jolting. This means that people with arthritis, severe muscle weakness, restricted weight-bearing after a fracture, injury, or surgery, or who are obese, can move with greater ease, and do exercises that they may be unable to do on land. It is possible to do early gait training and effective strengthening for people who have had total joint replacements, once their incision has healed and they have their surgeon’s approval.

The viscosity of the water provides resistance, which provides muscle strengthening, often without the use of weights needed on land. Through changes in body position, it is easy to do a light workout for people with limited physical fitness, or a heavy workout for athletes recovering from an injury. An example of that would be deep water running and exercises for a runner with a stress fracture in their foot.

The hydrostatic pressure of the water improves circulation, decreases swelling, and allows for greater ease in moving stiff joints. The improved circulation can speed healing, and most people find they have less pain when moving in the pool than on land. The pool also provides a way to improve proprioception (or ‘joint sense’) and balance, without the fear of falling – a good exercise alternative for those who are nervous about walking outside when it’s icy or cold. It is also possible to do an excellent core workout.

The greatest advantage I find is that aquatic therapy is FUN! You get a great cardiac and strengthening workout, leave the water feeling relaxed, and almost everyone can benefit. I often hear people remark with amazement on how they are able to move in the water, and I frequently see people using a wheelchair or walker on land, but walking independently in the pool. And you don’t have to be a swimmer to take part; exercises can be done with equal effectiveness in the warm shallow pool as well as in deep water.

Currently I offer physiotherapy to individuals in the water through Kimberley Rehabilitation Centre. This allows an on-land assessment prior to beginning the pool therapy, so that the program can be designed with your needs and goals in mind. I also teach a therapy swim at the Kimberley Aquatic Centre 2-3 times/week. Come join me in the water!

Kimberley Rehab Centre

Call today for your appointment.

Clinic Hours: Mon - Fri 8am - 6pm

KIMBERLEY

Rehabilitation Clinic

**3, 260-4th Avenue
Kimberley, BC V1A 2R6**

250-427-7087

CRANBROOK

Physio Clinic

**28-11th Avenue South,
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Cranbrook Physiotherapy Clinic