

Sheridan grads prove good sports

OAKVILLE-Graduates of a unique and challenging program at Sheridan College (Oakville Campus) are helping to fill a workplace void by finding positions in a host of sports medicine clinics across the country.

According to faculty member Evert van Beek, more than 2,000 athletic therapists have graduated from the two-year full-time Sports Injury Management Program at Sheridan since it began in 1975.

But while the program's first graduates found employment with professional or semi-professional sports teams, more recent graduates are moving into positions with sports medicine clinics.

"It's really a reflection of the shift to clinical sports medicine and the rapidly changing job market. There are community clinics and sports injury clinics

now," said van Beek, adding more and more physicians are "filling the void" in the health care system by opening up sports medicine clinics directed at treating people who have sustained sports injuries.

"These doctors who have opened the clinics need our graduates," said van Beek, noting the program boasted a 100 per cent placement of its graduates last year.

The only one of its kind in Canada, Sheridan's Sports Injury Management Program is directed at meeting the demands of the changing job market by stressing the rehabilitative nature of injuries sustained in sports. Courses include team management, psychology of sport, anatomy, physiology, and sports injury assessment/rehabilitation, as well as a demanding field placement.

Every year the Division is forced to turn down prospective students from the rigorous program, which combines a heavy workload in both academic and clinical/field areas. Last year, 300 students vied for just 30 spots in the program.

A teaching/learning sports injury clinic at the Oakville Campus serves the dual purpose of serving the students at the College and people in the surrounding community. Staffed by faculty and up to five students at a time, the clinic has evolved into a community referral clinic, from one originally designed to serve the needs of the Sheridan sports teams.

"With more and more people active and into sports, we have had to change as well, and both our program and clinic reflect these changes," said van Beek.

Nordic Track promotes fitness

Chaska, MN-Some recent newspaper articles have heralded the end of the exercise boom, citing the sharp decline in the number of North Americans who jog regularly. But NordicTrack, innovator of cross-country ski exercise machines, says that people aren't abandoning exercise, they're simply turning to those that don't cause pain and injury.

"The exercise boom has not gone bust; it's just in transition," says Ed Pauls, inventor, founder and CEO of the Chaska, Minnesota-based company. "A recent Wall Street Journal article claimed that the exercise boom is waning. But from our point of view it's not that people don't want to exercise - it's just that they don't want to get in-

jured," says Pauls.

Running often causes painful and harmful injuries to the knees and shin splints, while high impact aerobics add ankle, low back and feet problems to the litany of likely injuries.

Research at the Institute for Biomedical Engineering at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, showed that running and jumping result in three to four times the increase in pressure on bones and soft tissues, as compared to normal walking.

"People aren't abandoning aerobic exercise, rather they're turning to walking and indoor exercise equipment such as NordicTrack," notes Pauls. NordicTrack duplicates the smooth,

no-impact motions of cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing is also cited by physiologists as being the very best exercise for developing cardiovascular fitness.

Cross-training is becoming increasingly popular, and many people combine NordicTrack with running, swimming, biking and other aerobic forms of exercise.

"Brisk walking is just as beneficial as running, and you burn the same number of calories walking a mile as you do running it," says Douglas A. Godfrey, M.D.

Dr. Godfrey, a Minneapolis internist who recommends walking to many of his patients, agrees that people want to find exercises that are safe and non-painful. "Running marathons really isn't beneficial - it's something you do because you want to do it. But if you do run a marathon, quit after one," he advises.

New research has also found that people don't need to exercise as long as was formerly thought in order to receive the benefits. NordicTrack is particularly beneficial for those who find it difficult to fit exercise into their busy lifestyles. "Using NordicTrack just 20 minutes a day, three times a week, will tone your body, allow you to achieve cardiovascular fitness, and help maintain your weight," says Pauls.

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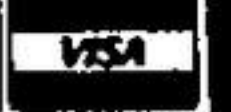
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