

Seniors In Motion: The Lebed Method



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The Lebed Method is a therapeutic exercise program that focuses on healing through movement and dance. The method helps participants regain and maintain range of motion after surgery, reduce the risk of lymphedema and back pain, and rebalance the body both physically and emotionally.

Women who have had any type of breast cancer intervention find the exercise most beneficial because it is very gentle and easy. The program is also ideal for senior citizens who suffer from arthritis, Parkinson's, chronic pain, or are unable to participate in more rigorous exercise programs.

Instructors must be certified through a Lebed Method class, offered around the country throughout the year. Tracey Towlen, physical therapist at Norton Clinic for Lymphadema and Physical Therapy, is a certified Lebed Method instructor who plans on introducing Lebed Method classes at her facility. A normal Lebed Method class has 10 participants, lasts for one hour, and meets once per week. In the hour, participants typically move and dance according to instructions for 10 minute intervals. Breathing exercises before and after the movement help the participants relax.

There are both physical and social benefits for practicing The Lebed Method. The gentle movements combined with relaxing music and the company of friends is healthy on many levels. Because many of the participants are overcoming an illnesses or injury, the participants in The Lebed Method may also serve as an unofficial support group.

Participants are encouraged to first receive permission from their doctor. Results among participants vary. For those with serious illnesses or injuries, the ability to lift one's arms higher than when first starting the program is a significant accomplishment. Engaged instructors will measure progress based on the participants' flexibility and overall fitness level.

Senior centers interested in starting their own Lebed Method class need only to find a certified instructor. Classes can take place in any gym or recreation room. The best ways to recruit participants is by contacting all nearby doctors and dispersing flyers at senior centers, community centers and local gyms.

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