

# PRIME TIMES

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AboutElderCare.org | (918) 336-8500  
1223 Swan Drive, Bartlesville, OK 74006



# Use it or Lose it

by Shelia Tucker

**L**ifelong or continuous learning is the process of keeping your mind stimulated at any age, by seeking out new experiences and knowledge. Continuous learning may keep our minds active and engaged, which can fend off symptoms of dementia. It can also help our mental health and cognitive behavior as well as memory. Mental exercise makes an impact on memory retention. Learning something new and expanding knowledge can boost an individual's confidence and self-esteem. There are different types of continuous learning, each offering benefits of their own.

Our brains are just like muscles, the more you use it then the stronger it gets. When you learn new things, brand new neural connections are formed, which improves your ability to remember. This is why it can be beneficial to try out new hobbies. You will not know what you enjoy with a new hobby unless you try it out! There are a number of different avenues you can take for continuous learning depending on your desires and abilities including formal classes or courses and informal learning in the form of extending your hobbies and interests further. There is the option of web-based learning using technology and online resources.

You can enroll in formal learning classes or courses, some of which may be offered by a local school, college, or public library. Formal learning gives you the benefit of improving your mind

through learning, while promoting interaction and socialization with other people.

Informal learning can be an extension of your hobbies and other interests such as cooking classes, photography, or arts of other types. You can benefit from an increase in your creativity, following your passions and the flexibility to do it at your own pace and unpressured.

Online courses are available and easily accessible if you have access to a computer or tablet. If not, you could gain access to these courses at your local library, so you are still getting out of the house. Online courses cover a wide variety of topics. You can even hone your diy skills from sites like YouTube by following video tutorials.

This offers the benefit of being a convenient and accessible option for those with mobility issues as you can complete the learning in the comfort of your own home. A wide range of topics are available at a self-paced manner and often there is no need to purchase equipment or tools.

Participating in continuous learning gives you the opportunity to use your brain to their maximum potential. It not only expands your knowledge but offers many benefits and advantages ranging from improvement in cognitive health, boost of confidence, preventing loneliness and keeping your mind sharp. As with any muscle, use it or lose it.

# Benefits of Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy

by Jessica Keith, DPT

Pelvic Floor Therapy can be transformative for individuals struggling with pelvic health issues. The pelvic floor muscles play a vital role in supporting organs including the bladder, bowel, and reproductive organs. They also play an important role for core stability and sexual health. Pelvic floor physical therapy (PFPT) is a highly effective, non-invasive treatment for a variety of conditions, offering numerous benefits that can greatly improve a patient's quality of life.

## Restoring Normal Bladder and Bowel Function

One of the best aspects of pelvic floor therapy is helping patients restore a great quality of life. Many people feel their symptoms are a normal part of life and aging, but it does not have to be the norm. We can help patients take back their life by helping them regain control over their bladder function and bowel function. Many individuals experience urinary incontinence, either from stress (leaking when laughing, sneezing, or exercising) or urge incontinence (a sudden, overwhelming need to urinate). PFPT focuses on strengthening the pelvic floor muscles and teaching patients how to coordinate them effectively. Through targeted exercises, bladder training, and biofeedback, we can help patients regain control, reduce leaks, and improve their confidence.

Similarly, patients struggling with constipation can benefit from strengthening and relaxing the pelvic muscles. PFPT not only addresses muscle weakness but also teaches relaxation techniques to reduce tension and improve bowel movements.

## Alleviating Pelvic Pain

Chronic pelvic pain can be debilitating and has the potential to affect all aspects of life. Many people experience pelvic pain due to muscle tightness, imbalances, or injury. By using hands-on techniques such as myofascial release, trigger point therapy, and deep tissue mobilization, we can address tight or restricted muscles, release tension, and promote healing. This helps patients experience relief from pain, improving their mobility and overall quality of life.



## Supporting Postpartum Recovery

For new mothers, pelvic floor therapy is invaluable in addressing the physical changes that come with pregnancy and childbirth. The pelvic floor muscles may be stretched, weakened, or injured during delivery. This can lead to issues like urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, or pain during intercourse. Therapy can help guide patients through exercises to restore muscle strength and function and by helping improve pelvic alignment and stability. Postpartum PFPT not only helps with physical recovery but also boosts self-confidence and emotional well-being during a transformative time.

# Pelvic Floor Therapy

*continued*

## Improving Sexual Health

Pelvic floor therapy can significantly enhance sexual health by addressing pain or dysfunction during intercourse. For women, conditions like vaginismus (muscle spasms) or dyspareunia (painful intercourse) can be improved through pelvic floor exercises and relaxation techniques.

## Conclusion

Pelvic floor physical therapy is very beneficial for treating a wide range of pelvic health issues. PFPT offers a non-invasive, effective approach to improving quality of life by improving bladder control, bowel health, alleviating pelvic pain, supporting postpartum recovery, or enhancing sexual health. Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy is a wonderful tool for people to regain confidence, comfort, and function through targeted therapy and personalized care.

We're thrilled to announce that Jessica Keith, DPT is trained in pelvic therapy with the Herman and Wallace Pelvic Rehabilitation Institute! Jessica has been a physical therapist at Foundation Therapy Specialists for the past 9 years and is excited to broaden our scope of practice with this much-needed service. If you feel you would benefit from pelvic floor rehab, contact us at 918-766-0391 to schedule an appointment.

Take the first step toward improved pelvic health and wellness with Jessica's expert care!

## Employee Spotlight

### Michael Colaw



Elder Care is thrilled to welcome Michael Colaw as our new Development Director! A Bartlesville resident since 1990, Michael is passionate

about community service and brings a wealth of experience from both nonprofit and corporate sectors. With degrees in Pastoral Ministry and Leadership from Oklahoma Wesleyan and Indiana Wesleyan universities, he has dedicated 17 years to ministry, including roles at Bartlesville KLIFE and First Wesleyan Church.

Michael's corporate journey includes key leadership positions at ConocoPhillips, Phillips 66, and Arvest Bank, where he honed his skills in management and training. Beyond his professional achievements, he has actively supported local organizations, serving on boards like Visit Bartlesville and Ray of Hope. His contributions to Bartlesville's development and support for local arts and youth organizations demonstrate his longstanding commitment to enhancing the well-being of the community he loves.

# Joy in Holiday Solitude

by Deanna Dodson

The holiday season is often seen as a time for gathering with family and friends. But for many older adults, the holidays can bring feelings of loneliness, especially if loved ones live far away or are no longer around. However, being alone during the holidays doesn't have to mean being lonely. In fact, it can be a chance to discover new ways to enjoy the season on your own terms and create a special time of year to cherish.

Here are some tips for embracing happiness and finding joy while spending the holidays alone:

## **Be Yourself**

The holidays offer a unique opportunity to slow down and reflect. Take time to appreciate your own company and do things that bring you peace. Whether it's reading a good book, listening to your favorite music, or enjoying a cozy movie marathon, focus on activities that make you feel content and connected to yourself.

## **Create New Traditions**

Traditions aren't just for big family gatherings. Consider starting new holiday rituals that feel special to you. Perhaps you can bake a favorite treat, decorate your home in a way that feels festive, or even write holiday cards to friends or family members you haven't seen in a while. These simple acts can help bring a sense of joy and meaning to your holiday season.

## **Volunteer**

While you may be alone, you're not alone in your

community. Volunteering or helping others during the holidays can be incredibly fulfilling. Whether it's donating time to a local shelter, helping a neighbor, or even making phone calls to check on others, acts of kindness can lift your spirits and bring a sense of connection. There are many worthwhile charities in our community that would welcome your contributions, especially during the holiday season.

## **Stay Connected**

Although you might not be physically with loved ones, there are still plenty of ways to stay connected. Set up virtual chats or phone calls to catch up with family and friends. These moments of connection can help alleviate any feelings of isolation. Bartlesville often has holiday meals available for free to the community that anyone can attend. Look for one that you would enjoy and share a meal with others who may also be alone during this season.

## **Gratitude**

Focusing on what you have, rather than what you might be missing, can make a world of difference. Reflect on the positive aspects of your life—your health, your experiences, and the memories you've created.

Remember, holidays are about finding peace and happiness in whatever form that may take. Being alone can offer a chance to rediscover the simple pleasures of life and celebrate the season in a way that feels right for you.

# Goals with Heart: Make This Year Count

Dee Evans, Guest Contributor

As the new year rolls in, consider setting goals that truly resonate with where you are in life now. Rather than seeing goals as a list of tasks, view them as ways to stay vibrant, connected, and inspired. Aim for goals that foster health, happiness, and curiosity — whether that's by learning something new, deepening relationships, or investing time in a passion project. Let your goals fuel you, keeping each day engaging and meaningful.

## Start Small, Dream Big

Instead of diving straight into the deep end, ease in with something enjoyable. For example, try a 15-minute walk around your neighborhood rather than a strict workout routine. The goal is to build momentum, not to burn out. You could also experiment with something new, like a dance class or a water aerobics group. Take it one step at a time and soon you will feel stronger and more energized.

## Discover (or Rediscover) What You Love

A new year is a great time to take up a hobby you've always wanted to try, or revisit one you haven't touched in years. Whether it's starting a birdwatching journal or picking up an instrument, hobbies bring joy and satisfaction. Plus, they're perfect for cozy indoor days when you're looking for a creative outlet.

## Experience the Magic of Friendships

Goals don't have to be solo missions. Make it a priority to connect with others. Schedule coffee dates with old friends or commit to weekly phone calls with family members. Consider joining a local

club or group—book club, a walking group, or a cooking class. Connecting brings fun, laughter, and an added boost to your mood.



## Keep Your Brain Buzzing

Learning doesn't stop after school, and it's more important than ever. Pick up a new book series, dive into an online course, or challenge yourself to learn a new language. Continuous learning keeps your brain sharp, curious, and engaged. Plus, you'll impress your friends with all the fun facts you've gathered for your next conversation.

## Be Prepared, Feel Peaceful

Although it might not sound as exciting as taking on a new hobby, organizing your important documents can be a big relief. Updating your will, setting up advance healthcare directives, or simply sorting through essential papers can bring peace of mind. Knowing everything is in order helps you feel secure and provides reassurance for your loved ones. Setting goals doesn't have to be a stressful marathon. It's about finding ways to enrich your life — whether it's through health, learning, socializing, or giving back. Small, realistic steps are key, so aim for goals that feel exciting but manageable, letting each one enrich your life in a way that feels right for you.

## Prime Times

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## Program Management

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*Administrative Director*

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*Development Director*

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Frank Danel  
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Deanna Dodson  
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Programs and services are  
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# Giving for Impact

by *Michael Colaw, Development Director*

Philanthropy is defined as “the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money to good causes”. I personally like the layperson’s translation that states, “People give money because they want to change the world”. As we approach the close of another year, we reflect on the incredible impact our community of supporters has had on the lives of aging adults in our area. Thanks to your generosity, we’ve been able to continue our mission of helping older adults live happy, healthy, and independent lives in the comfort of their own homes.

In the last year alone, Elder Care served 1,262 individuals across 13 counties, providing critical support to those in need. Of those, 21.7% were living below the poverty line for Oklahoma, underscoring the importance of our programs in reaching those most vulnerable.

While financial contributions are essential, impactful giving comes in many forms and is not limited to monetary donations alone. Volunteerism is a powerful way to contribute by sharing your time and talents, bringing companionship, assistance, and expertise to programs that support our community’s seniors. Others may choose to give by donating necessary equipment—such as medical supplies, mobility aids, or home care items—that enhance the quality of life for our aging community. Each of these forms of giving is vital to our mission, proving that there are numerous ways to make an impact.

Your support directly impacts the success of our programs—DayBreak, Foundation Therapy, Advantage Services, and In-Home Services—which empower aging adults to maintain independence, stay connected to their communities, and receive the care they need to thrive. Every donation, no matter the size, has made a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

Giving isn’t just about supporting others, it’s a deeply personal way to make a meaningful difference in the world. As you give, you create a ripple effect that goes far beyond the immediate impact on those who benefit. You help strengthen the very fabric of our community, offering hope and encouragement to those who may feel isolated or forgotten. The joy of giving enriches the lives of both the giver and the receiver, creating bonds of kindness, compassion, and shared purpose.

I want to thank you for making a lasting impact. Your generosity helps ensure that we can continue to provide vital services to those who need them most. Together, we can create a community where aging adults live with dignity, independence, and the support they deserve.

# This Month's Donors

In appreciation of contributions to Elder Care in November 2024

Bill and Sandy Bath  
Ralph and Lois Bergstad  
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*We sincerely apologize for any unintended error or omission. Due to publication deadlines, acknowledgment of gifts may take up to 60 days in Prime Times Publication.*

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