

Old fitness system has new use

A unique fitness training method long used by football players to build toughness, basketball players to jump higher, dancers to increase balance and golfers to improve their swing, is now being used by a South Pasadena physical therapist to help people heal their bodies. Dr. Chris Mallett, owner of ATP Specific Training, is using the new application of an 80-year-old system known as Pilates. "It is very effective in helping rehabilitate muscle and joint injuries," Dr. Mallett said. According to Dr. Mallett, who is also a fitness trainer, gymnast and boxer, Joseph Pilates invented the system in the early 1920's to help athletes develop strength and flexibility by way of a simple spring-loaded machine.

Unlike weight machines, which offer some body support while the user pushes or pulls against a weight, the Pilates method requires the user to support his or her own body while engaging in isometric or isometric exercises.

Mallett said that Pilates is especially good for rehabilitating lower back injuries because it strengthens core abdominal muscles. For football and basketball players, he said, it also serves as preventative medicine.

"The groin area inside the thighs is often weak in athletes and they a lot of injuries there," Mallett explained. "Pilates helps strengthen and stabilize those muscles, which results in more flexibility and agility and fewer injuries."

The method's ability to increase the functional strength

of specific muscles is so effective that basketball and volleyball players use Pilates training to help them jump higher," Dr. Mallett added.

Mallett's wife Tracey, also a fitness trainer whose background is in dance, said that she wishes she had used Pilates more when she was dancing professionally because it increases flexibility and range of motion - a major reason why many golfers are beginning to turn to Pilates, she said. "Pilates is about symmetry and improving balance and performance and it helps you learn how to strengthen all of those latent muscles that get forgotten where larger muscles take over."

Both Malletts agree that While Pilates is an excellent way to revive injured muscles



and joints it can also accommodate a diverse range of people seeking better physical fitness and elderly seniors can also benefit from Pilates training as much as high powered athletes.

ATP Specific training is at 1942 Huntington Drive and accepts many forms of insurance for physical therapy.

For information call (626) 403-6545