



## *Get to Know:*

### *Shannan Leeper, PTA*

Shannan Leeper is a native of Upstate New York, coming to Ohio as an undergrad at Ashland University. Shannan graduated from Ashland University with a Bachelor's of Science in Physical Education. After working in the physical therapy setting, she continued her education through North Central State College and is currently licensed as a physical therapy assistant.

Shannan has 19 years of experience and loves the field. Her specialty is improving core strength and help patient's return to the activities they love best. Shannan enjoys working with patients of all ages, particularly those sport specific involving trunk and core strength and lower extremity rehabilitation. She feels the key to successful rehabilitation is to figure out why the problem is occurring, and work with the therapist to solve the problem. Shannan feels that encouraging and praising the patient is an important part of everyone's individual therapy.

Shannan ran track at the collegiate level and still enjoys running and staying physically fit, while working around her children's busy schedules. She has added cycling to her physical fitness program competes in duathlons and triathlons. Shannan mostly enjoys watching her children participate in various activities and spending time with her family. Shannan and her husband Mike live in the Olivesburg area with their three children, Nick, Kathleen and Mary.

## **Movement is the Best Medicine**

### *Why Exercise helps Osteoarthritis Symptoms*

Osteoarthritis affects some 27 million Americans. OA is characterized by the breakdown of cartilage – the part of a joint that cushions the ends of the bones and allows easy movement. As cartilage deteriorates, bones begin to rub against one another. This can cause stiffness and pain that make it difficult for you to use that joint. Over time OA may create a need for joint replacements.

Exercise is considered the most effective non-drug treatment for reducing pain and improving movement in osteoarthritis. Three kinds of exercise are important for people with osteoarthritis:

**Range of motion/flexibility:** Range of motion refers to the ability to move your joints through the full motion they were designed to achieve. When you have osteoarthritis, pain and stiffness make it very difficult to move certain joints more than just a little bit, which can make even the simplest tasks challenging. Range-of-motion exercises include gentle stretching and movements that take joints through their full span. Doing these exercises regularly – ideally every day – can help maintain and even improve the flexibility in your joints.

**Aerobic/endurance:** These exercises strengthen your heart and make your lungs more efficient. This conditioning has the added benefit of reducing fatigue, so you have more stamina throughout the day. Aerobic exercise also helps control your weight by increasing the amount of calories your body uses. Furthermore, this type of exercise can help you sleep better and improve your mood.

**Strengthening:** Strengthening exercises help maintain and improve your muscle strength. Strong muscles can support and protect joints that are affected by arthritis.



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