

Stay Flexible, Stay Strong:

Stretching for Everyday Life

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Aquacare Physical Therapy

Meet Your Presenter

- Amanda Adkins, MPT, MBA
- Chief Strategy Officer
- Aquacare Physical Therapy
- 25 Years in Healthcare Industry
- Lives in Easton, MD with my husband and golden retriever, Crosby.
- “As someone who believes in the power of staying active at any age, I’m excited to share these tips with you today!”



Meet Your Presenters

- Sharon Baxley PTA,
- Physical Therapist Assistant, Health Coach
- Aquacare Physical Therapy
- 30 years of outpatient physical therapy
- Lives in Milton, DE
- “As a physical therapist assistant and a health coach, it is my privilege to help people become healthier and have a better quality of life.”



Objectives

- Discuss what stretching is and different types of stretching
- Why flexibility matters at any age
- How to prevent injury and stay active
- Tools, apps, and programs including Stretch360
- How Aquacare & Fitness Forum PT can support your goals

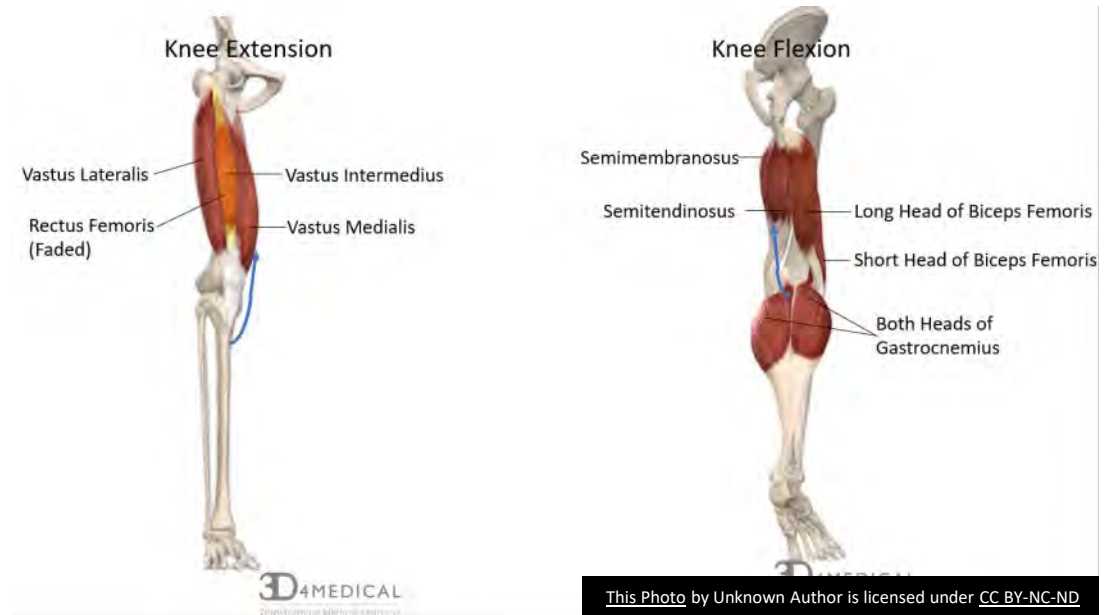
The Science Behind Stretching & Flexibility

Understanding flexibility helps us target it properly:

- Muscles and tendons allow stretching
- Ligaments support joints
- Fascia connects and stabilizes
- Joint mobility determines range of motion

Staying mobile requires care for all these components, especially as natural wear and tear occurs.

- **Ref:** American Council on Exercise (ACE), 2021



Benefits of Stretching

- Improved flexibility and range of motion (ROM)
- Reduced post-exercise soreness
- Enhanced athletic performance and daily function
- Improved posture
- Enhances mobility and function
- Improved circulation
- Reduces injury risk
- Supports posture and performance
- Boosts overall quality of life
- Reduced muscle tension
- Enhanced coordination
- Mental relaxation
- Ref: NIH MedlinePlus, 2020

Why Flexibility Matters

As we age, flexibility plays a crucial role in:

- Maintaining independence in daily activities
- Reducing the risk of falls and injuries
- Supporting better posture and balance
- Easing stiffness and joint discomfort
- Flexibility also enhances your ability to garden, play with grandkids, or enjoy a walk on a Kent Island trail!
- **Ref:** ACSM Guidelines, 2022

Flexibility by Age Group



- **Children:** Naturally limber, no issues with flexibility
- **Adults 20–50:** Building or maintaining peak of flexibility
- **55+:** Focus on preventing stiffness and improving quality of life
 - Consistent stretching helps maintain independence.
- **Ref:** ACSM Position Stand, 2013

Flexibility by Gender

Men and women experience flexibility differently:

- Women: More flexible hips and spine
- Men: Tighter hamstrings and shoulders
- Hormones and muscle mass play a role.
- Tailored routines help both men and women stay mobile.
- **Ref:** Kubo et al., Eur J Appl Physiol, 2010



Injury Statistics: Youth & Adults

Understanding who's at risk:

- Youth: Overuse and poor warm-ups common (dance, base ball/softball, etc.)
- Adults 25–50: Hamstring, groin, low back strains
- 55+: Hips, Spine (falls)
- Most common injuries: low back strains, hip/knee pain
- Stretching is a powerful tool in injury prevention.
- **Ref:** CDC Injury Center, 2023



Common Myths

- "Stretching prevents all injuries" - It reduces risk but isn't foolproof.
- "Stretching every day is necessary" - Consistency helps, but flexibility gains can occur with 2-3x/week.
- "Stretching is only for athletes" - Mobility is crucial for everyone!
- "You must stretch before exercise" — It depends on the type (static vs. dynamic)
- "Bouncing helps you go further" — It can cause tears so beware!

Common Stretching Mistakes



Avoid these to stay safe:

- Stretching cold muscles
- Holding your breath
- Ignoring pain or discomfort
- Rushing through movements
- Poor form
- Ref: Mayo Clinic, 2022

Tools That Help Stretching

Using the right tools can improve effectiveness and comfort:

- **Foam Rollers:** Release muscle tightness and fascia
- **Stretch Straps:** Assist with deeper, controlled stretching
- **Massage Guns:** Provide targeted muscle stimulation
- **Yoga Blocks:** Offer support and stability during poses
- **Resistance Bands:** Great for dynamic warm-ups or advanced flexibility
- **Ref:** American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), 2023

Types of Stretching

There are several ways to stretch effectively:

- **Static Stretching:** Hold position, improves long-term flexibility, ideal post work out/sport, mental wellbeing,
- **Dynamic Stretching:** Movement-based, ideal pre-exercise, warm up
- **PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation):** Advanced technique involving contracting and relaxing, used with PT
- **Ballistic Stretching:** Bouncing; rarely recommended due to injury risk
- **Ref:** Behm & Chaouachi, Sports Med, 2011

Static Stretching Deep Dive

Perfect for after sport or activity (Ex. walk or gardening)

- Gently hold a position for 20–60 seconds
- Focus on breathing and relaxation
- Repeat 2–4 times for each stretch
- No bouncing or overstretching
- **Ref:** Simic et al., Scand J Med Sci Sports, 2013



Dynamic Stretching Deep Dive



Dynamic stretching helps prepare your body for an activity/sport

- Controlled, active movements (e.g., leg swings, arm circles)
- Great before walking, pickleball, or golf
- Increases circulation and coordination
- No set reps or time length
 - Usually completed up to 10 min prior to activity

- **Ref:** Behm et al., J Strength Cond Res, 2016

PNF Stretching Deep Dive

Often done with a partner or physical therapist:

- Contract the muscle, then stretch it further
- Builds strength and flexibility
- Used in rehab settings like Aquacare & Fitness Forum PT
- **Ref:** Sharman et al., Physical Therapy, 2006



When to Stretch

- **Dynamic stretches:** before activity to warm up muscles
- **Static stretches:** after activity to cool down and reduce tension
- As a reminder: Daily stretching helps maintain joint health and flexibility.
- Ref: ACSM Position Stand, 2021



Dynamic Stretching



Static Stretching

Stretching Examples – Neck & Shoulder

- Upper trapezius stretch
- Doorway chest stretch

Doorway Pec Stretch - Low



Stretching Examples – Back and Spine

- Cat-cow stretch
- Seated spinal twist



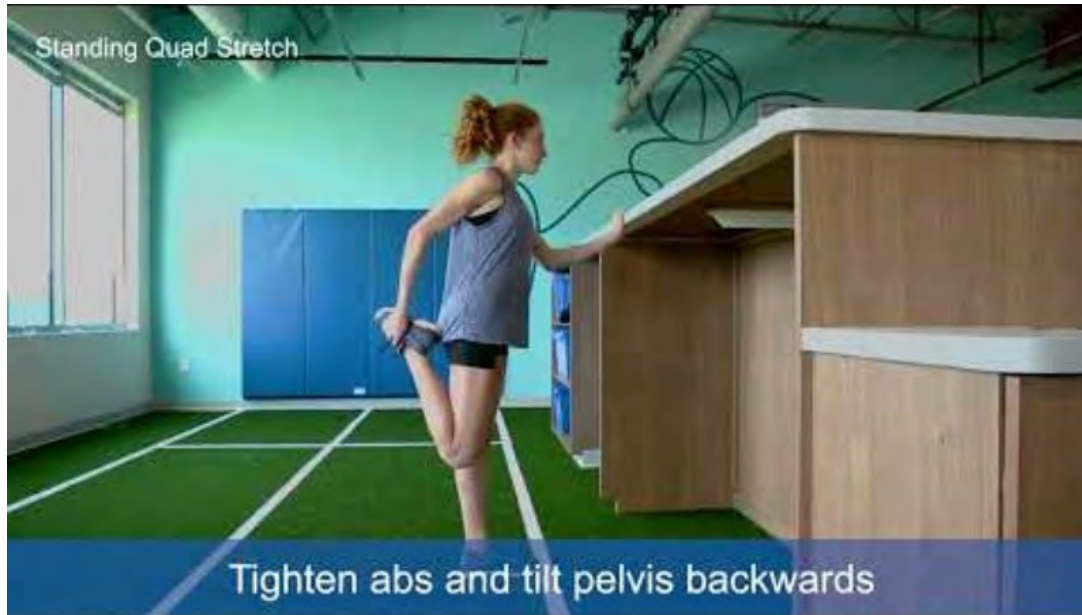
Stretching Examples – Hips and Glutes

- Figure-four stretch
- Hip flexor lunge



Stretching Examples – Hamstrings & Quads

- Standing quad stretch
- Seated hamstring reach



Seated Hamstring Stretch Edge of Bed - Left



Stretching Examples – Calves & Ankles

- Wall calf stretch
- Standing calf stretch



Dynamic Stretching Examples



At-Home Stretching Routine

Try this quick 10-minute daily set:
Each 2x20sec

- Seated hamstring stretch
- Wall chest opener
- Gentle spinal twist
- Ankle circles and shoulder rolls
- Ref: AARP Health & Wellness, 2021



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Office Stretching Breaks

Staying flexible at your desk: dynamic

- **Shoulder shrugs and circles**
- **Wrist and hand stretches**
- **Seated spinal rotations**
- **Shoulder blade retraction**

Stretch breaks reduce tension and fatigue.

- **Ref:** Occupational Health & Safety Admin, 2020



Stretching for Runners & Walkers

Stay limber for your next jog or walk: static and dynamic

- **Calf and hamstring stretches**
- **IT band stretches**
- **Hip flexor lunges**
- **Ankle mobility drills**
- **Ref:** Runner's World, 2023



Stretching for Seniors

Focus on safety and comfort:

- Gentle, chair-supported stretches
- Daily movement of all major joints
- Hold each stretch longer as tolerated

Flexibility reduces stiffness and improves energy.

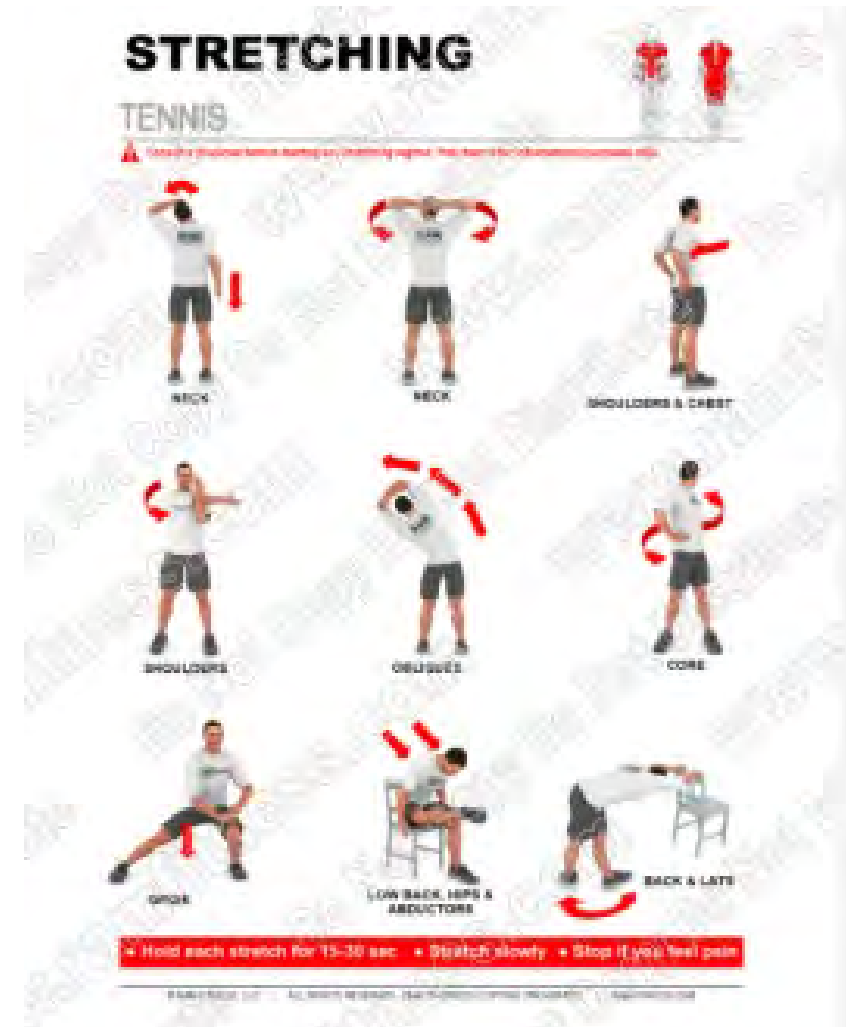
- **Ref:** National Institute on Aging, 2023



Role of Stretching in Sports

Whether it's pickleball or walking:

- **Prepares muscles for movement (dynamic)**
- **Helps prevent sprains and strains**
- **Aids recovery afterward (static)**
- Ref: Sports Health Journal, 2015



Fall Prevention & Stretching

Key to maintaining independence:

- **Improve balance and coordination**
- **Keep joints supple**
- **Support reflexes and reaction time**

Combine stretching with strength and balance exercises for best fall prevention.

- **Ref:** CDC Fall Prevention Facts, 2022



Stretching & Balance



Balance is a full-body skill:

- **Ankle, hip, and core flexibility support stability**
- **Stretching reduces fall risk when paired with strength**
- **Try balance-friendly stretches daily**
- **Ref: NIH Aging & Balance, 2021**

Stretching and Mental Health

Stretching eases the mind as well as the body:

- **Releases muscle tension tied to stress**
- **Enhances mood through movement**
- **Deep breathing increases calm**
- **Even 5 minutes a day helps mental wellness.**
- **Ref: APA Mind-Body Report, 2020**



Tips for Consistency



Stretch at the same time daily (e.g., morning or post-workout)



Use reminders, apps, or routines



Add music or stretching with a partner



Attend stretch sessions monthly with a trained professional



Ref: CDC Healthy Aging Toolkit, 2020

Complementary Practices That Boost Flexibility

Stretching is even more effective when paired with other wellness practices:

- **Physical Therapy:** Customized programs to address specific limitations or injuries
- **Massage Therapy:** Relieves tight muscles and increases tissue pliability
- **Yoga:** Combines flexibility, balance, breathing, and mindfulness
- **Pilates:** Builds core strength, spinal alignment, and controlled flexibility
- **Tai Chi:** Enhances gentle movement and body awareness
- **Assisted Stretching:** Great for chronic tightness, recovery, and flexibility gains.
- **Aquatic Therapy:** Warm water promotes movement with less joint stress

These methods support longevity, reduce pain, and increase the effectiveness of stretching.

- **Ref:** NIH Integrative Health Approaches, 2022

The Stretch360 Program

Aquacare & Fitness Forum PT

Cash-based flexibility service at
Aquacare & Fitness Forum:

- One-on-one stretching
- Led by physical therapist and physical therapist assistants
- Focused on increasing range of motion
- 30min sessions @ \$60/session
- Packages of 5 and 10 available for discounted rates.

STRETCH360
STRETCH360
STRETCH360

What to Expect from Stretch360

- Assessment of range of motion and limitations
- Targeted assisted and passive stretching
- Breathing and relaxation integration
- Programs customized per your needs and goals.



Stretching Apps You Can Use

Technology to keep you flexible:

- **PT Apps**
 - Home Exercise Program & Remote Therapeutic Monitoring (**RTM**)
 - Monitored by PTs for compliance and outcomes
 - Supports consistency and personalization
- **StretchIt:** Guided flexibility programs
- **Daily Yoga:** Good for beginners
- **ROMWOD:** Great for mobility
- **Ref:** App store descriptions & user reviews, 2024



Limber App: RTM

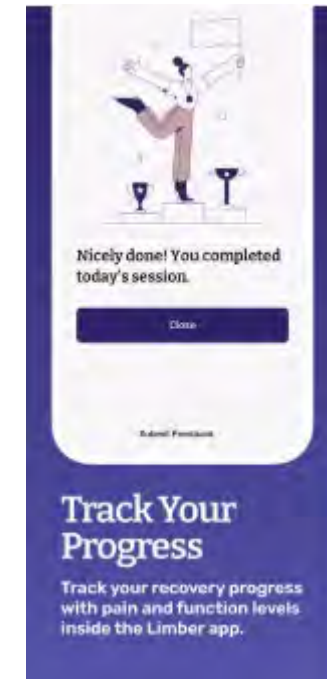
Aquacare & Fitness Forum PT

Home Exercise Program

- Includes guided stretching videos tailored to your plan
- Personalized routines based on your therapy goals
- Easy to use on smartphone or tablet

Weekly Care Navigator Support

- Stay on track between in-clinic visits
- Discuss your progress and needs with a therapist
 - Phone or video chat
- Stay motivated with encouraging check-ins
- Adjust your routine based on how you're feeling



Limber App: RTM

Aquacare & Fitness Forum PT

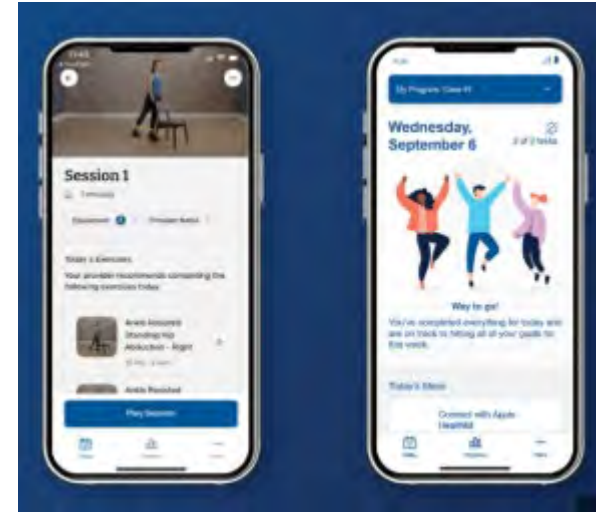
Real-Time Tracking In the App

- Monitors your participation and progress
- Tracks outcomes like mobility and pain levels
- Your therapist stays in the loop and adjusts care as needed

Connected Care

- Seamless communication between the CN and with your therapist
- Integrated into your care plan
- App Installation: Available at no extra cost

Covered by: Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Workers' Comp, and Motor Vehicle Insurances

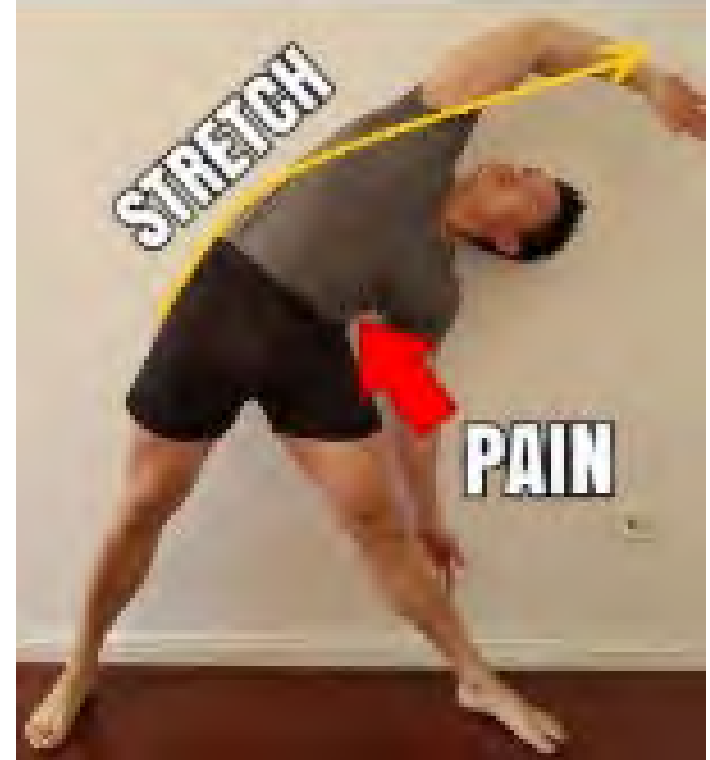


 *80% of physical therapy outcomes depend on what you do outside the clinic*

 *94% of physical therapy patients with between-visit support stick to their plan*

When to Seek Professional Help

- Pain during or after stretching
- Reduced flexibility impacting daily life
- History of injuries or balance issues
- Schedule a free screen with Aquacare PT.
- **Ref:** APTA Consumer Guide, 2023





Aquacare PT & Aquacare PT PLUS

New Services Offered In The
Sussex County Community!

What is Aquacare & Fitness Forum PT?

- Private Outpatient Physical Therapy Company
- Female and Locally Owned
 - Cara Konlian MSPT/CEO
 - Jennifer O'Neil MPT/COO
- 12 locations in MD & DE
- Operating for 26 years
- Website: <https://aquacarephysicaltherapy.com/>



Aquacare & Fitness Forum Physical Therapy Locations

Delaware Locations

Aquacare Physical Therapy – Lewes King St. Row
34434 King Street Row #1, Lewes, DE 19958
O: (302) 200-9920
F: (302) 703-6652

Aquacare Physical Therapy – Lewes 24
20684 John J. Williams Hwy STE 2, Lewes, DE 19958
O: (302) 945-0200
F: (302) 945-6959

Aquacare Physical Therapy – Milford
21 West Clark Ave STE 1500, Milford, DE 19963
O: (302) 491-6974
F: (302) 503-7160

Aquacare Physical Therapy – Millsboro
26744 John J. Williams Hwy STE 6, Millsboro, DE 19966
O: (302) 945-4250
F: (302) 945-3190

Aquacare Physical Therapy – Millville
38069 Town Center Drive Unit 15, Millville, DE 19967
O: (302) 539-3110
F: (302) 539-7237

Aquacare Physical Therapy – Seaford
15 Fallon Ave, Seaford, DE 19973
O: (302) 536-1774
F: (302) 536-7096

Maryland Locations

Aquacare – Berlin
9954 Main St., Unit 3, Berlin
Phone: 443-513-3910
Fax: 443-513-3979

Aquacare Salisbury – Milford Street
106 Milford St. STE 601 Salisbury, MD 21804
Phone: 410-548-7600
Fax: 410-548-2651

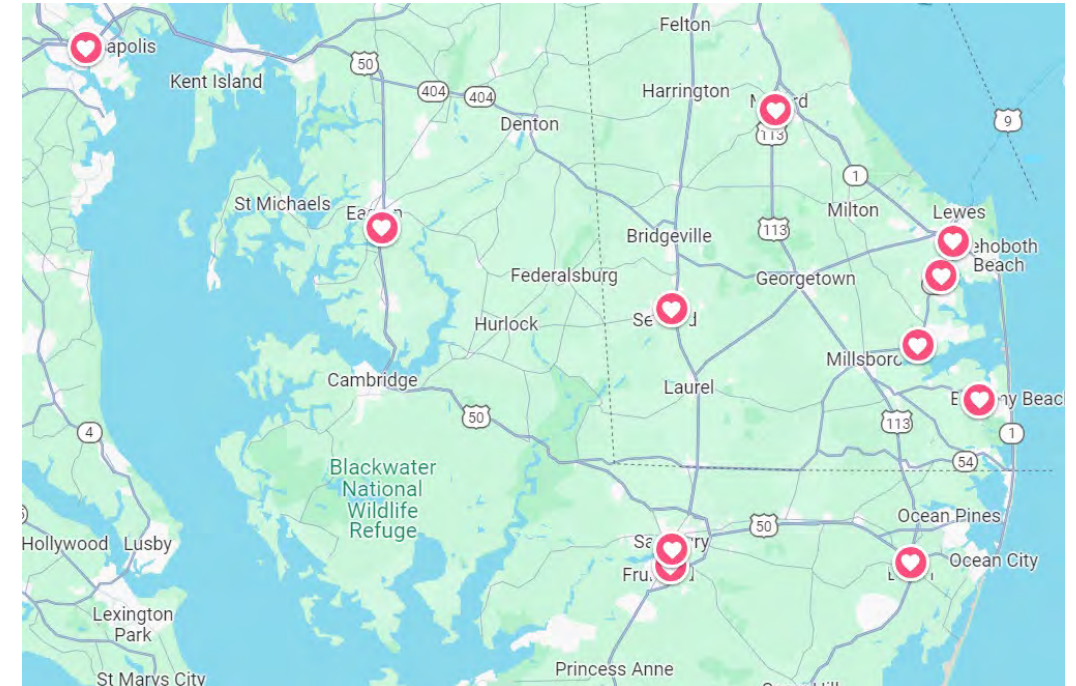
Aquacare Salisbury – S Curve
659 S Salisbury Blvd #1B, Salisbury, MD 21801
O: (410) 677-0700
F: (410) 677-0883

Aquacare – Easton
598 Cynwood Dr. STE 101
Phone: 410-770-9720
Fax: 410-770-9725

Fitness Forum Locations

Fitness Forum – Annapolis
2448 Holly Avenue, Suite 200
Phone: 410-295-4941
Fax: 410-295-5207

Fitness Forum – Kent Island
1915 Main Street
Chester, Maryland 21619
Phone: 443-909-5882
Fax: 443-909-5910



Aquacare PT – Specialty Services

Programs

- **Aquatics**
- Orthopedics
- Sports – Golf, Runners, Dancers
- Lymphedema
- Pelvic Health
- Pediatrics
- Vestibular
- LSVT – Parkinson's
- Bariatrics – Fit For Life
- Occupational Therapy
- Fall Prevention Therapy
- Neuro therapy for CVA, Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Cord Injury
- Aquacare PT PLUS (Mobile PT)

Modalities

- Dry Needling
- Cupping
- Kinesiotaping



Aquacare PT PLUS – What is it?

- **Mobile Rehab - Heather Leiggi DPT, Sharon Baxley PTA**
- **Outpatient PT delivered to where patients live, work, and play.**
 - Home
 - Community – fitness center/gym/pool
 - Work
 - Recreation area - golf course, pickleball court
- **Covered by Medicare B and all commercial insurances**
- **Copays and Coinsurances same as being seen in Outpatient PT**
- **Receive private, one-on-one treatments in the comfort of patient's chosen environment**

www.aquacarephysicaltherapy.com | www.fitnessforummd.com





Who should use Aquacare PT PLUS?

- Anyone who is active and prefers to receive physical therapy at home or nearby
- Those with transportation challenges
- Work-from-home patients
- Individuals wanting therapy at the golf course, pickleball court, fitness center, or community pool
- Those who have a fear of driving after surgery because of pain medications

What Services Do Aquacare PT PLUS Offer

- **Orthopedic Injuries**
- **Sports Injuries**
- **Post-Surgical Therapy Pre-Hab Before Surgery**
- **Fall Risk Prevention/Management**
- **Home safety assessment/recommendations**
- **Lymphedema Management**
- **Pelvic Floor Therapy For Incontinence (bowel/urinary)**
- **Aquatic Therapy**
- **Balance Rehabilitation**
- **Neuro Rehabilitation (Stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's)**
- **Spine Rehabilitation**
- **Chronic Pain Management**



What People are saying about PT PLUS!

“The AquaCare PT Plus program is outstanding. Having Heather and Sharon come to my home and having them figure out how to best do my required exercises is fantastic. I am able to exercise and strengthen my muscles without having pain in my lower back. I look forward to working with them because I think I am making excellent progress already. “

“Sharon was very professional and thorough. I would absolutely use her services again. “

Key Takeaways..

- Stretching supports health at any age
- Consistency, safety, and personalization matter
- Stretching improves flexibility, reduces stiffness
- Choose the right type for the time and activity
- Safe technique is critical
- Consistency = progress



Thank you!

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- **Invite Us to Speak:** If you're part of a club or a community organization, we would love to come speak on a PT topic.