

Getting PUMPed

Lodi couple tackles sports injuries by preventing them
By Marc Lutz News-Sentinel Staff Writer

The idea seems simple enough: Prevent injuries before they happen. However, as Monty and Lauri Merrill have discovered over the years, that's not always as simple as it sounds.

That's why the Merrills have labored to open the PUMP Institute, a preventative sports education and fitness center. The business will open June 2 and will begin offering classes immediately.

PUMP stands for Pursue Ultimate Motor Performance, which is exactly what Monty and Lauri Merrill intend to do.

"We want people to be educated in their fitness," Monty Merrill said. "We also want to educate them in weight control."

The couple bought Lodi Physical Therapy from James Chard in 1992 (which Chard opened in 1963). Their goal was to help people through their sports injuries and get them back on track.

"A lot of physical therapists got interested in the field when they themselves got injured ... that was the case for me," Lauri Merrill said.

The idea for the PUMP Institute began when the Merrills began core training with their children, who are all athletic, about five years ago. They would teach their daughter, who swims, and son, who runs, how to properly use their muscles for maximum performance and to minimize any chance at injury.

Though their children are grown and out of the house, they still start the day with mom, dad and core training when they come home for a visit. The Merrills have also seen an increase in adult runners who participate in the morning core training.

They started looking for a space to open the PUMP Institute about two months ago, because the space that occupies Lodi Physical Therapy was much too small for both businesses. That's when they found the space at 220 S. Church Street, behind DeVinci's restaurant.

Most of the PUMP Institute will be class-based, teaching clients how to use their muscles properly. They will also focus on weight loss, as many problems can begin with excess weight.

There will be many different stations within the space that clients will use in their full-body educations, from ball balancing to treadmills.

Although it's their goal to get complete sports teams in for customized training, the Merrills will help anyone in taking better care of their bodies. They believe everyone, no matter if they're a stay-at-home mom, a gardener or in any other profession, is an athlete, and proper body education helps to keep people fit. They'll be offering classes to both children and adults.

"We'll custom tailor a program for anyone. If you want something specific, just call and we'll add it," Monty Merrill said.

For more information on classes at the PUMP Institute, call 368-7433.

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