

# Physical Therapy Services at USU Now Available to the Cache Valley Community



USU physical therapist Megan Bressel works with a patient in the Hydroworx pool.

The Sorenson Legacy Foundation Center for Clinical Excellence, a community-facing clinical services facility located on USU's Logan campus within the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, has recently added a clinic that provides physical therapy services. The clinic serves residents of northern Utah, and anyone seeking physical therapy (PT) is encouraged to take advantage of the new service line.

Gretchen Peacock, director of the Sorenson Center said, "We are pleased to add a physical therapist, Megan Bressel, to our Sorenson Center staff. Over the years, a number of people have asked us about the availability of PT services at our center and we are excited to now be able to offer this service line."

PT services provided in the new clinic include manual therapy, therapeutic exercise, and aquatic therapy. Manual therapy services incorporate the McKenzie method of mechanical diagnosis and treatment as well as muscle energy techniques, soft tissue and joint mobilizations, and muscle energy techniques. Patients can also receive training to improve balance, strength, and patient education.

A unique feature of the Sorenson Center's newest clinic is the Hydroworx pool, which is used to provide aquatic physical therapy services. Until the new clinic opened to the public in April, the pool has been used exclusively for research. Now, with the addition of PT clinical services

in the Sorenson Center, the pool can benefit many more people.

"A highlight of the pool," says Bressel, "is that someone who can barely hold themselves up—such as patients who have had recent fractures—can just be lowered in the water. It's also great for people who struggle with balance. If they fall over, the water is a lot safer, so the fear component is gone."

In addition to a floor that can be raised to allow weak or balance-challenged patients to enter the water safely, the pool has jets for resistance training and a variable-speed underwater treadmill.

Bressel, a physical therapist with 30 years of experience, explains that the pool enables physical therapists to use buoyancy, hydrostatic pressure, and drag forces to improve, speed up, or enhance the healing process.

For example, buoyancy can offset the amount of weight placed on the body. The deeper the water, the less the body weighs in comparison to on land. Putting a person in the pool up to the level of the collar bone offsets the loading of the body by roughly ninety percent. "If I put someone in the water up to their clavicles—let's say it's a 100-pound patient—they're going to weigh the equivalent of 10 pounds in the water," she explains.

The aquatic treadmill allows for progressive implementation of weight bearing and loading, which is helpful for many patients with orthopedic and spine injuries. Exercise in water produces less spinal and lower extremity loading than the identical exercise performed on land.

Patients in the pool also benefit from drag forces. "If you move your arms through the water you're going to get some consistent resistance," explains Bressel, "but if you double the speed, it quadruples the force. So it all depends on how fast you want to move. Let's say someone has a shoulder problem. In the early stages of rehab, they can move their arm really slowly and use the benefit of buoyancy to move with less resistance. Once they are progressing in their rehab, then you can start increasing rate of movement in the water to increase the resistance. In the pool at the Sorenson Center, we can apply increased drag forces by using water jets."

"You can really do a lot with this pool," says Bressel, "The new facility is great as it allows for treatment on land and in the pool during the same physical therapy visit."

To schedule a physical therapy appointment at the Sorenson Center, visit this [webpage](#). The Sorenson Center accepts most insurances for its physical therapy service line. To learn more about the other services offered at the Sorenson Center, visit its [website](#). Other service lines in the Sorenson Center are provided on a modest sliding-scale fee or insurance may be billed, depending on the service line.