

# Aquatic therapy aids in recovery for mid-life athlete.

A self-described 'late-in-life' athlete, Avon Lake resident Lisa Scheer started running in her 30s. What started as an outlet for her busy schedule got serious as she became competitive and active in racing.

"Running really kind of took over," says Scheer, who pushed her body to its limit, racing distances from 5K to half-marathon. But after a number of overuse injuries her new-found passion came to a screeching halt during the summer of 2011, when at age 46, she started to experience debilitating hip pain.

"I had a big race ahead of me, and it got to the point where I couldn't even run up the street," Scheer says. "I realized I needed to wake up and smell the coffee or I was going to be in some serious trouble."

She made an appointment with Laura Goldberg, MD, a Cleveland Clinic sports health physician at Avon Lake Family Health Center. The final diagnosis: a stress fracture of the femur, along with a sacroiliac joint rotation issue.

Following evaluation and assessment, Todd Lewarchick, PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT, a Cleveland Clinic physical therapist and regional rehab manager, prescribed Scheer manual therapy, land exercises and aquatic therapy at Richard E. Jacobs Health Center in Avon.

Aquatic therapy speeds the healing process by reducing compression on irritable, swollen joints, says Lewarchick, who holds a doctorate in physical therapy. In some cases, this can involve running on a treadmill in a swimming pool.

"I was very excited to get in the water and get on this treadmill – anything that would help me improve my performance and stability," Scheer says.

"We use the buoyancy of the water to 'unweight' someone," says Lewarchick. "Patients typically perform exercises while in a depth of water between their pelvis and chest, reducing their weight between 50 and 75 percent."

With less compression force along the weight bearing joints, they are able to glide and move easier. The water helped reduce swelling and allowed Scheer to exercise as she would on land, which also included core work, squats and lunges, Lewarchick says.

"The premise of being in the water was to keep Lisa moving," Lewarchick adds. "She could do much more volume of exercise in the water than she could do on land, and she could do more using less energy."

Energy that Scheer used to get back to the pavement. Her capacity for running restored, Scheer also incorporated biking and swimming into her active lifestyle, leading her to complete an amazing seven triathlons to date.

**To schedule a consultation with a physical therapist at Richard E. Jacobs Health Center, call 440.695.4000. For more information, visit [clevelandclinic.org/avon](http://clevelandclinic.org/avon).**

**Same-day  
appointments**  
**440.695.4000**  
[clevelandclinic.org/avon](http://clevelandclinic.org/avon)



**Every life deserves world class care.**