



Akron Children's Sports Rehab and Flytz Gymnastics team up

By Jessica Ciborek, Physical Therapist

Physical therapy is a broad-spectrum term encompassing a variety of specialties including cardiovascular and pulmonary, clinical electrophysiology, geriatrics, neurology, oncology, orthopedics, pediatrics, women's health, wound management and sports. Our patient base here at Sports Rehab consists of pediatric orthopedic/sports-related injuries. We are one of the only rehab facilities in Ohio to offer such a unique setting. With the setting comes the territory of ensuring exceptional knowledge of each sport, so we can best return our athletes to their craft.

Gymnastics is a rigorous, competitive sport that is very exciting to watch. But it comes with its fair share of injuries. We have had at least 10 gymnasts from Flytz in the past 3 months. Add on the 5-10 who do acro as part of dance or competitive cheer – which we would train in a similar manner – and that's approximately 20 gymnasts in that time frame. Their injuries vary but, by far, the most common we see are ankle sprains and stress fractures of the tibia and spine.

In mid-October, 4 of our physical therapists (PTs) from the Boston Heights Health Center visited Flytz Gymnastics, a prominent gym in Northeast Ohio. The PTs were met by a couple of current patients and staff who showed them various skills, equipment and landing surfaces. The athletes discussed their concerns regarding return to sport, and the PTs heard the coach's perspective as well. As a result of that visit, Sports Rehab purchased some equipment to serve our gymnasts better. These purchases include a tumble track, low beam, parallettes and a floor bar. There is a plan in place to install a pull-up bar as well. All of this equipment can be used with a large cross-section of patients, sports and diagnoses.

Lori Ross, one of our physical therapists who has established this collaborative relationship with Flytz, shared specific parameters we have planned moving forward. "I think the biggest thing is that we plan to obtain a parent release at initial evaluation that will allow us to communicate directly to the coaching staff," she said. "This way, there is nothing lost in translation. We can better articulate what we want the athlete to work on or avoid. I think it will set a precedent that hopefully we can pattern for all other patients."