

“I want to help people find their best ways to move and feel great each day”



Online consultations are here to stay, says **CHARLENE HUTSEBAUT** – and that’s coming from someone whose prime focus is teaching movement. An *IHCAN* business development contributor, Charlene is celebrating 30 years in practice and here gives us an update on how things have changed from early days dealing with athletes to a new, Zoom-based clientele that includes people with chronic pain, diabetes and Parkinson’s.

What are the values that guide your practice – and have given you longevity?

My ethos has many layers, I suppose because I have been in our industry so long. These have morphed and changed as the years have passed as my priorities have shifted. My main focus is to help clients find ways of living that support and sustain them each day of their lives.

These words capture it best: Nurture, Challenge, Care, Guide, Empower.

How and why did you get started?

I’ve been teaching movement with people between the ages of 5 and 95 for 30 years, which I can’t quite believe! The early 1990s saw me complete a degree in Physical Education (Sports Science) and another in Education over five years, both of which have given me a solid foundation to lead an enjoyable, fulfilling career in health and fitness. During this time at university, I took part in the Athletic Therapy programme,

which showed me how much I enjoyed helping individuals recover from injuries.

My physical education degree (BPE) gave me the science underpinnings to confidently understand not only biomechanics, physiology and anatomy, but how every human being can be different. Our anatomy lab was a highlight, as we learned on cadavers. Seeing that glimpse beneath our surface was life-changing for how I understood our makeup, how we move and how everything fits together.

The education degree (B Ed) was the place I learned how to teach people well considering their learning preferences, while developing confidence in public speaking.

Working with athletes in the athletic therapy programme gave me insights into how far they will go to push their bodies and win. Learning that lesson early and understanding a periodised approach has been valuable in my later career when working with similarly driven executives who want to be at the top of their game.

Finally, being a certified strength and

conditioning coach (CSCS) through the NSCA (National Strength and Conditioning Association) feeds my love of resistance training and how to bring the best programming to my clients.

I have loved movement since I was put on ice skates in Canada at the age of three. I have tried most sports and fitness trends and still have a love and need to move daily. I started and continue my journey as a practitioner because I want to help people find their best ways to move and feel great each day.

How did you come to specialise in the areas that you do?

Now that I am deeper into my career, I am attracting clients my own age and older. Their needs are somewhat different to a younger age group. These people are looking to improve and maintain their balance, function, strength and posture. These areas interlink and are my favourite elements to teach, using all of my education and experience.

Some of these people are also dealing with



underlying health issues such as chronic pain, diabetes and Parkinson's. I feel honoured they let me into their lives to support and guide them alongside their other health experts.

Those early days learning about biomechanics and helping athletes heal from injuries are the reasons why I love teaching movement and the power of rest and recovery. I had one University professor who passionately and intelligently shared his knowledge on anatomy and healing. His

teachings and guidance have stayed with me all these years.

My own back pain in my 20s and 30s led me to certify with Stott Pilates, giving me many tools to work with those dealing with the same issues. Pilates for me is a wonderful way for people to feel their body's foundations and how these can support them not only in daily life but make improvements in their fitness or sport.

I find my work with people between the ages of 50 and 95 extremely rewarding. I developed a passion for this group when I worked in Canada at a medical fitness facility called the Reh-fit Centre. More recently I added to my knowledge by certifying with the Functional Aging Institute (<https://functionalaginginstitute.com>).

What stands out for you from your years of practice?

One of my greatest achievements was guiding a couple in their 80s through a simple strength training routine over three months while working at the Reh-fit Centre. Their main aim at the start was to help Janice get out of the bathtub on her own. We were all thrilled when she achieved this functional movement all by herself at the end of the programme.

My second greatest achievement was when a client stated, "Then I found myself walking down the pavement with wonderful,



→ straight posture and I didn't even have to think about it!"

Getting out of a bathtub or walking down the street with great posture may seem effortless to most of us, but for these women those achievements were powerful moments.

In 2015 I was the only UK woman chosen to be a Top 10 Global Finalist in the Life Fitness – Personal Trainers to Watch Competition in Barcelona. I was in amazing company with the nine other finalists, and we were all chosen from more than 1000 applicants! It was an honour to learn from what the other finalists were doing in their careers to help their clients.

How have you adapted your work during the pandemic?

Years before the pandemic I was already using Zoom with clients who travelled for work. I knew the platform and quickly shifted my clients to online sessions when our first lockdown started. Most of my clients have stayed with me and we continue online to this day.

I have written about working online in *IHCAN* before and am a big advocate of this approach. I feel it decreases the stress of commutes for practitioner and client, saves both individuals money on venue rental fees and allows the client to be in their own home to get ready quickly after sessions.

I know there are differing opinions on this, as many people feel they need to be in the room with the client to get their vibe and see their movement. These things can be skilfully done online by getting camera angles right and really listening to and observing your clients when they arrive in the sessions. It may not be for everyone, but my clients and I are thriving with the format.

What's your prediction for the future of our practices?

Since we were all forced to learn new ways to deliver our services and expertise in the first months of the pandemic, I truly believe that online offerings for clients and professional health/fitness education are here to stay. I have already shared my thoughts on virtual sessions with clients. In the education arena of health and fitness I feel it is a real opportunity for education providers to get to wider audiences and for practitioners to have access to a much deeper knowledge base.

For practitioners it is an opportunity to broaden their learning and client services while saving money on travelling to conferences around the globe. I was thrilled to be able to complete the Centre



for Integrative Sports Nutrition certification course (CISNCert) online during the pandemic (<https://intsportsnutrition.com>). Even after all these years in the industry I am still excited about learning and look forward to gaining wisdom from worldwide health leaders.

What's next for you?

I want to continue a focus on growing my corporate wellness offerings as there is much work to be done on shifting to healthier corporate cultures. Whether virtually or on a stage presenting in-person I get a real buzz out of inspiring busy people to care for themselves. Thankfully, because of the pandemic, individuals and companies are being forced to re-evaluate how and where people are working and living. My hope is that in this process we can find the freedom and

space to make our lives what we need them to be.

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- ✓ We Are The City – Shortlisted Finalist – 2017, 2018
- ✓ LIFE FITNESS – Top 10 Global Finalist – Personal Trainers to Watch 2015
- ✓ WINNER – Mayor of London – Volunteer Award
- ✓ WINNER – Vitality Health – Britain's Healthiest Workplace Award – 2016



One of Charlene's most popular programs is Positively Slim – Home & Office Movement Calming Plan: <https://charlenehutsebautwellnessacademy.thinkific.com/courses/Home-Movement-Calming-Plan>.



We know our practitioners are quietly getting on with changing people's lives, every day – and we want to celebrate and share the inspiration. In Practice is coordinated by regular contributor Rebecca Smith, who runs a successful practice of her own, established 20 years ago. Contact her direct to be part of the feature: rebecca@newportcomplementaryhealthclinic.co.uk, and follow her on Twitter: @NCHealthClinic.