



# 2024

Happy New Year!

## NEW ENGLAND FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

### The Gym Rag

## REMEMBER YOUR SMART GOALS

AS YOU START MAPPING OUT YOUR INTENTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR, REMEMBER TO USE THE SMART GOALS MODEL TO HELP MAXIMIZE YOUR SUCCESS. BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES THAT MIGHT HELP YOU FORM A CLEAR IDEA FOR WHAT YOU WANT.

<b>S</b> PECIFIC	✗	"I WANT TO DO PULL UPS"
	✓	"I WANT TO BE ABLE TO DO 10 PULL UPS"
<b>M</b> EASURABLE	✗	"I WANT MY CLOTHES TO FIT BETTER"
	✓	"I WANT TO GO DOWN THREE PANT SIZES"
<b>A</b> TTAINABLE	✗	"I WANT TO RUN A MARATHON IN A MONTH"
	✓	"I WANT TO WORK UP TO RUNNING A 5K"
<b>R</b> ELEVANT	✗	"I'M GOING TO DO MORE CARDIO TO GET STRONGER"
	✓	"I'M GOING TO LIFT WEIGHTS TO GET STRONGER"
<b>T</b> IME-BASED	✗	"I WANT TO LOSE 10 POUNDS OF BODY FAT"
	✓	"I'M GOING TO LOSE 10 POUNDS OF BODY FAT IN 3 MONTHS"

## NEW YEAR NEW FACES



**SABRIA MERRIFIELD**  
**SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE**  
 Sabria is a senior in the applied exercise science program at Springfield College, she wants to pursue a master's in rehabilitation science. Right now, her goal is to become a health and fitness specialist for all populations. In her free time she enjoys reading books and spending as much time as possible outside when it's warmer.



**MIA GREGORY**  
**SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE**  
 Mia is a senior in the applied exercise science program at Springfield College. From Danbury, CT, she has played competitive sports for the entirety of her childhood. She loves understanding how physical activity impacts health and is passionate about applying her knowledge in real world settings. She is excited to take this passion to New England Functional Fitness and continue to learn.

# Brighter days ahead

## Local physical therapist builds practice based on patient education and empowerment

As a physical therapist, Dr. Michelle Broughton is doing her best to improve awareness of pelvic floor therapy at her practice, Brighter Days Physical Therapy and Wellness in Longmeadow, MA.

Working prior in orthopedics, Broughton branched off and started her own practice that would focus on helping patients with pelvic floor issues after having issues herself that she had difficulty resolving.

“For me, pelvic floor P.T. is the missing puzzle piece that I totally didn’t have,” Broughton said. “I can’t believe I treated [patients] without it for so many years.”

After four pregnancies, Broughton said she had deep hip pain, foot pain, and urine incontinence. She said her hip pain got so bad it was starting to hurt with every step. For two years, she was being treated by all of her physical therapy coworkers and got X-rays and MRIs, but nothing was getting better.

“With my last half marathon, I basically walked across the finish line because my hip hurt so bad,” Broughton said. “I had leaked on my run - I just felt awful.”

Midwives and other providers told her that some urine leakage is normal, but after having worsening symptoms after each pregnancy and hitting dead ends with treatment, she Googled her symptoms and found that pelvic floor therapy could be the answer.

Broughton ended up taking a pelvic floor therapy course with Herman and Wallace Pelvic Rehabilitation Institute during the pandemic, where her instructor finally pinpointed the pain in her hip, the obturator internus muscle, in addition to being diagnosed with bladder prolapse. After two years, Broughton finally had an answer for her hip pain.

“She was literally able to put her finger on the muscle,” Broughton said. “I was like ‘That’s it, that’s my pain.’” After finishing the course, Broughton realized that pelvic floor therapy could have helped a number of her patients. “I can remember specific patient cases where I totally missed it,” she said. “I wasn’t improving their pain.”

Unfortunately, it doesn’t bode well for her field that of all the providers she visited, not one of them mentioned pelvic floor therapy. Broughton attended a pelvic floor convention with providers from all over the world and said it’s standard practice in Europe. She said the OB/GYNs she talked to in the U.S. have to seek pelvic floor therapy education on their own as it is not part of their schooling or training.

Broughton’s practice is very individual-based and moves at the pace a client is comfortable with since it can be a little invasive and a little more complicated than just kegels. Often, Broughton will start with teaching proper breathing techniques since the pelvic floor expands and contracts with the diaphragm.

“If someone can’t find their pelvic floor muscles, that’s usually where I start,” Broughton said.

Additionally, Broughton has found that many patients don’t need strengthening exercises like kegels to fix their problems. In fact, many of them end up being too tight and the muscles first need to be loosened and relaxed. She assesses each patient individually to see how they fare with muscle tone, strength, endurance, and coordination. From there she is able to discern the best path of treatment.

“This area of the body holds a lot of tension,” Broughton said. “It’s one of our areas where we hold stress.”

While some of the awareness around pelvic floor therapy can be based on women’s health, therapy can be just as beneficial for men who, as we should all be aware, also have a pelvis. Broughton treats clients of all ages as well, noting that she treats Division I college athletes including males who saw TikTok videos about pelvic floor therapy.

Unfortunately, Broughton’s practice is considered out-of-network for health insurance, but she said most of her patients are able to get reimbursed. Her angle is more towards education and empowerment, so she prefers to see clients once a week and give them something to work on in between.

“I really want to empower my patients and teach them what’s going on and how to manage it,” Broughton said. “I don’t want you to just feel good when you’re here, I want you to learn about your body like I did.”

She is also planning a seminar at NEFF to educate the public about the pelvic floor with details to be determined. For more information or to set up a consultation with Broughton, visit [www.brighterdayptw.com](http://www.brighterdayptw.com).



BROUGHTON

### COMMON PELVIC FLOOR SYMPTOMS

- URINE INCONTINENCE
- HIP, BACK, OR FOOT PAIN
- PROLAPSE
- RECTAL PAIN
- CONSTIPATION
- PAINFUL EJACULATION
- ANY PAIN IN PELVIC REGION

**THIS LIST OF SYMPTOMS IS NOT A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL. IT IS TO SHOW PELVIC FLOOR SYMPTOMS THAT ARE OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR OTHER ISSUES.**