

Strength training programme the perfect Tonic for seniors

RAFFAELLA NATHAN CHARLES

Slipping on water and hurting her hips left 97-year-old Lau Soon Siang physically weak and in pain last year.

After 12 weeks of strength training, however, the housewife has regained her muscle strength and balance. She can now resume her daily walks and go to the coffee shop to chat with friends.

More people can benefit from Gym Tonic – strength training for seniors aged 55 or older that helped Madam Lau – when the programme is extended to the public at eight locations by next year, Lien Foundation announced yesterday.

The programme has been available only to residents in nursing homes and eldercare centres.

The public can go to ActiveSG Gym@Our Tampines Hub, Care Corner Senior Activity Centre (Block 62B, Toa Payoh), Methodist Welfare Services Senior Activity Centre (Fernvale) and St Hilda's Community Services, which will open this year, and Touch Community Wellness Hub and Bishan Community Club next year.

Two other locations that have already set up Gym Tonic will also be open to the public – Man Fut Tong-Hoe Yuen Hoe Senior Care Centre next year and Peacehaven Commu-

nity Hub this year.

Lien Foundation will also select 300 seniors aged 65 and above for free Gym Tonic trials.

Joining fees vary from centre to centre and range from less than \$10 to \$50 a month. Fees for assessment of physical conditions range from \$30 to \$80. The programme consists of 12 weeks of strength training for seniors using air-powered equipment from Finland that is gentler on the joints.

There are also nutrition talks and health assessments that track their progress. The data is stored in a card, which the seniors can use to tap on the exercise equipment, which will automatically adjust to accommodate their individual fitness levels.

The 30-minute sessions, conducted twice a week, aim to increase the seniors' muscle mass and make them less frail or prone to frailty.

A study in April this year of 396 seniors who went through Gym Tonic showed that close to half reversed their frailty or pre-frailty.

About 2,000 seniors have been actively using the equipment in 21 nursing homes and eldercare centres since Gym Tonic started in 2015.

rnathan@sph.com.sg

**FOR MORE, READ THE
STRAITS TIMES TODAY**