



LEDESMA SPORTS MEDICINE

Ernest Ledesma, owner of Ledesma Sports Medicine. | Steve Bisson/BIS

name

Ernest Ledesma

age

41

job

Physical therapist and co-owner of Ledesma Sports Medicine, a 6-month-old business.

years doing physical therapy

19

married

To physical therapist and co-owner of the business, Kristina Bartiromo. She's the unpaid book keeper, and she handles account payables. She also works as a physical therapist assistant at South University.

education

Attended University of Georgia but transferred to Georgia State University to earn a degree in physical therapy.

favorite sport

"I do triathalons. I have a love for Ironman Triathalons," which means "swimming 2.4 miles, biking 112 miles and running 26.2 miles" in a day. He's participated in six triathalons so far, four in Lake Placid, N.Y., and two in Panama City Beach, Fla.

to keep in shape

"I run four to 13 miles three days a week, and I cycle two times a week. I ride on a stationary trainer for 45 minutes to an hour and a half. My speed (on the treadmill) is 6.5 to 8 miles an hour."

employees

Seven. One physical therapist, four physical therapy aides, a receptionist and an office manager. Ledesma does physical therapy, too.

what we do

"I treat clients that have certain muscle, skeletal and neurological problems. If someone has an injury to a knee or shoulder from running, football, basketball, tennis, swimming, I treat them.

"I treat clients to resolve their pain. I increase strength and mobility to help them return to their sport. About 25 percent of my clients are athletes, most injured."

But some of his 33 clients a day are uninjured athletes who come to his office to increase their strength.

other work

"I treat clients with work injuries — (problems with) lifting, muscle sprains, carpal tunnel, hurt necks or backs. We've treated people who had a stroke.

"The treadmills are remarkable in helping people walk again. And we help people with balance disorders."

more on clients

"We had a guy who was an avid fly fisherman. He was coming back from major shoulder surgery. All he wanted was to go fly fishing again. We analyzed his casting motion on a machine called the Dartfish, which uses a video camera to capture the client's form in his sport and computer software to analyze his movement."

Ledesma also used the Dartfish with a

female runner.

"She was not able to effectively train or race due to hip and leg problems. By using the Dartfish, we were able to break down her running mechanics, and we created specific running drills.

"Now she has been able to run with normal form."

how to treat balance disorders

"We've had clients with diabetes who can't feel the sensation of their feet. We do balance training by putting them on a stable and unstable surface on the Biodex BalanceS/D."

other special equipment

The Biodex Isokinetic System allows a physical therapist to test a patient's strength in certain joints, the knee, shoulder, foot, ankle, elbow and wrist.

The Alter G treadmill lifts the client up as he walks or runs on the treadmill.

why we're successful

"Because of our customer service. Our policy is to treat every client as if they were the only client. I want to get them to a healthier lifestyle."

marketing

Much of his business is "word of mouth. I personally have been involved in the running community, the triathlon community, the cycling community for over 15 years.

"Also, I've developed relationships with area physicians. Over 50 of them. Meeting them. Marketing to them."

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and when he sees their patients

"I send them letters about every patient, evaluation reports, progress reports. I inform the doctor how their patient is doing in physical therapy."

personal achievement

"To have done the Ironman Triathalons. They are so hard to train for, and it's hard to complete the race."

professional achievement

"Opening this practice. It's a miracle, a dream come true. When I was going to school at UGA, I knew a physical therapist with a small practice. I knew I would become a physical therapist and have my own practice."

future plans

"We hope to grow at this location. We'd like to have three physical therapists. Also a goal is to have a satellite clinic in metropolitan Chatham County, probably in 2012."

tips for other businesses

"It's really important that he or she develop a thorough business plan. I did it by myself. It's also important

that you find a good attorney and a great accountant and also find a mentor to get helpful advice. A classmate of mine opened up a physical therapy practice. She gave me some great tips."

plus

"You want to be working well with insurance companies, and you want to have a hard-working office manager, responsible for all insurance and verification of benefits. Our manager, Eric Brantley, is terrific."

things to avoid

"Avoid trying to treat outside your skill level. For instance, if a family called with an infant with cerebral palsy and they said 'Can you help us?' I'm not well-versed in pediatric rehabilitation."

"Also don't go out and spend a lot of money to buy expensive equipment. We've done that, but we still want to have specialized pieces of equipment that create a special niche in the market."

why Savannah works for us

"Relationships with people in Savannah have allowed me to market ... to get direct and indirect referrals, word-of-mouth referrals."

motto

"Live life well."

contact

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Compiled Lanie Lippincott Peterson

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