

HARTZ Physical Therapy Employees Swim Around Key West!

On Saturday, June 6th, Brian Hartz and Wendy Enck of HARTZ Physical Therapy embarked on a journey to swim the 12.6 miles around Key West. They participated in the annual "Swim around Key West" race as a 3-person relay team. Their third member was Lauren Heller, a former HARTZ PT employee who is currently a practicing physical therapist in San Diego, CA.

The day started out a little shaky, with 10 foot swells in the ocean at the race start. Brian jumped off the boat and swam to shore for the start of the race. Due to a cruise ship docking, the start of the race was delayed by a half an hour to 8:00am. Wendy, Lauren and a few nervous family members were waiting in a fishing boat when the swimmers started. We were charged with the mission of finding and staying with our swimmers for the entire journey. With the massive ocean swells, it was difficult to determine which swimmer was Brian.

After about an hour of sprinting, Brian made it around the southwest corner of Key West to calmer waters. The rest of the 4.2 mile swim was a breeze as Brian rode with the current to the first exchange point. He finished his leg in 1 hour, 35 minutes.



Lauren Heller jumped in the water for the second leg of the race. The water for this leg was shallow and calm. It was a smooth ride for Lauren, but finding the most direct path was a challenge since our fishing boat could not go into the shallow waters. We watched Lauren from afar for most of her swim. A highlight for Lauren was spotting a sand shark lying still in the sand below her as she quickened her pace to pass it.

When the time came, Lauren finished up and Wendy jumped into the 82 degree water for the final leg of the race. Somehow, Wendy got the short end of the stick because the race directors all described the final leg as the toughest. Wendy swam through heavy choppy waters throughout her entire 4.2 mile quest. She was close to giving up, but persevered through the worst of it. As she was swimming the third mile, she found her inspiration to finish the race...she glanced at the shoreline through heavy chop and saw the Southernmost Point in the United States. A memorable occasion for any Key West visitor, but to see it from the water as you're finishing up such a grueling swim around the island, was certainly a highlight of the trip.



Finishing the 12.4 mile swim in about five hours was an unbelievable accomplishment and something all three swimmers (and the cheer-leaders on the boat) will remember for a long time.