Exercise for the older generation, led by students
Wintec has started a twice-weekly Biokinetic Clinic for elderly people with chronic conditions. It uses personalised exercise plans for better health.

Age and chronic conditions are no barrier at Wintec's biokinetic clinic. Pictured are participants Brian Elsmore, in maroon vest, and partner Margo Ellesmere, wearing the heart shirt, with classmates, Wintec students and staff.

The rowing machine is a favourite for Hamilton's Brian Elsmore.

"I'm no spring chicken, I'm 79," he said.

"I have trouble with my knees. That's one of the reasons why I'm doing this (session), to try and build the strength up again.

Extra flexibility in day-to-day life and more stamina during the workouts were benefits Elsmore had noticed.

"It's a jolly good idea. I reckon, rather than sit at home and do absolutely nothing," he said.
His partner Margo Ellesmere decided to attend too and was a fan of the tai chi finishing exercise and the personalized help.

Each participant has an exercise programme and a Wintec graduate or postgraduate student to work through it with them.

Masters student Tanya Allen said the area of clinical exercise physiology had captured her interest.

"It's working with people with chronic illness and trying to improve their life... using mostly exercise," she said.

Issues for those going to the Wintec clinic included mobility, diabetes, or the need to lose weight and Allen was relishing working with them.

"I would never get the opportunity to work with such a diverse range of people if I didn't have this clinic here," she said.

Wintec's Stephen Burden, who co-ordinates the clinic, said many participants had multiple health issues and the aim was getting them bodies back into motion.

For instance, one attendee had undergone multiple surgeries to treat cancer, and knee or hip replacements were also common.

Exercises were designed to make daily activities easier - such as sitting down or getting up and increasing grip strength.

"They require that for opening tins and bottles and doors," Burden said.

Clinical exercise physiology was an emerging industry in New Zealand and Burden hoped to see it grow after official recognition.

"Going by the numbers in Australia, New Zealand would need 700 to 800 professionals," he said.

The biokinetic clinic is run by Wintec's Centre for Sport Science and Human Performance.