



Family Physical Therapy Services, Inc.

Our Family Cares

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February 2016 Newsletter

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What a pain! Whether it's pain in your back, the pain of not living up to your expectations, generalized pain, or heartache this issue's got it all!

Resolution Resuscitation

By Dan Baram, PTA, CSCS



As a Fitness and Nutrition Coach, I know two things about the holiday season. First, it is very difficult to stay on track with your fitness goals. Even I had a few more holiday treats and missed a few more workouts than normal. Second, after the holiday season it is common for people to make New Year's resolutions to get on track with their nutrition and fitness. Unfortunately, as February rolls in the gym crowds thin out and many New Year's resolutions are gone as quickly as they were made.

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So, if your motivation has slowed, follow these tips to get back on track:

1. **Set goals (both short-term and long-term).** Figure out what you want to accomplish and write it down such as a weight-loss goal, body-fat goal, or fitness achievement like run a 5k or add 25 lbs. to your squat. There is something about having a goal written down that makes you more accountable to it. Then split that goal into four intermediate steps. Those are your short-term goals. Finally, share your goals with others. Once you tell people what you want to accomplish, you'll feel compelled to achieve your goal.
2. **Schedule your workouts like you would any other appointment.** If you schedule your workouts like a doctor's appointment you are less likely to get caught up in other things. You wouldn't blow off a doctor's appointment to go out for drinks with friends and your workouts should be considered equally as important.
3. **Don't go at it alone.** Train with a friend who's at about your level of ability and has similar goals and interests. You'll be far less likely to skip your workout when you know someone is depending on you. It's also more motivating when you push each other, and you'll be far less likely to cut your sessions short.

If you have the best of intentions but simply don't know how to improve your nutrition or exercise appropriately, take advantage of our Therapeutic Health and Fitness Solutions program. Whether it's looking better, feeling better, having more energy or performing better at your favorite activities, getting healthier and more fit can help! Through the end of March, get your [customized program](#) for only \$249. See our website for details or use the coupon on the back page. And don't forget to share this great opportunity with your friends and family.

Patient of the Month Wendy Katsekas

"What is your goal for physical therapy?" Tom asked me. "I want a fully functioning shoulder so that I can sit ski again." was my reply. So began my PT journey.

For a sit skier, arms and upper body do all the work of getting down the mountain. A sit skier sits in a bucket shaped seat attached to a pair of skis. Speed and direction are controlled with outriggers attached to your arms. If you fall the wrong way you can really tear up your shoulders. Last April, I fell the wrong way and injured my left shoulder. I was referred to Family Physical Therapy Services and began my rehab journey.

Over the course of several weeks Tom and Dan put my shoulder through a series of exercises designed to increase the strength and stability of my shoulder. They were constant cheerleaders and confidence boosters who kept me motivated and moving forward in the process. They sought out specific (cont. on page 2)



Ross A. Lurgio
Info Corner

Coed Volleyball tryouts begin on Feb. 10th at 3:30.

FREE Functional Movement Screenings available to help prevent injuries and optimize performance!

Call 644.8334 and schedule an on-site screening for your child today.



(cont. from page 1) exercises, even inventing a few that would simulate the stresses of skiing. Their explanations of what each exercise would do to enhance my recovery were clear and easy to understand. Of course I did my part by following through with the exercises between sessions.

As I grew stronger I began to believe that my shoulder would be up to the task. I wouldn't really be certain until I had the chance to ski again. On January 6th I hesitantly began my first lesson of the season. I was thrilled to discover that my "bad" shoulder held up to the challenge better than my "good" one!

I know that I would not be skiing this winter if I hadn't had the opportunity to experience the caring expertise of Tom and Dan. **Thanks, guys!**

Congratulations Wendy on a job well done! Happy Skiing!!!



Therapeutic Work Solutions Info Corner

By Steve Lisowe, MSPT

Pain—Is It All In Your Head?

“Get rid of my pain!” That’s the most common patient goal in physical therapy. Knowing how pain works plays a role in decreasing pain.

When a body tissue is injured, local pain nerve endings are activated, sending a pain signal to the brain via the nerves. The brain then calculates “how much pain” is present. So, the experience of pain is not a tissue phenomenon but a brain phenomenon. (To further illustrate this, consider phantom limb pain in an amputee. The brain believes it has pain in a limb that the person no longer has.)

However, just because there’s a pain signal to the brain, it doesn’t mean you’ll experience pain. There’s a threshold in the brain, like an alarm system. When the signal is above a certain point, pain is experienced (like a fire alarm that doesn’t sound from a match but will if the couch is aflame). The threshold level is modified by several factors including stress, diet, medications, and overall physical activity.

How much you attend to the pain also affects the threshold. Imagine your leg hurts and you are walking across the street. All of a sudden, a speeding bus appears as you’re stepping into the lane. You’ll almost certainly be less aware of your leg pain at that second. Your brain diverts resources away from your pain so you can get out of the way.

The longer you have pain the more sensitized your brain becomes, making it easier to trigger the pain threshold. If the pain lasts so long and the body gets so sensitized, small triggers that were never painful before can now produce pain, even after the body has healed. Sometimes, the system gets so sensitized it registers pain even at rest—chronic pain. In these situations, pain does not equate to harm to the body.

Understanding pain guides how we approach acute pain—we encourage people to get prompt treatment instead of letting pain linger, we not only address the local tissue injury but also encourage people to stay busy so they don’t concentrate on pain, we use relaxation techniques to decrease stress, and we advise getting proper rest (individuals who sleep well reduce stress and therefore have about a third less pain than those that don’t). It also allows us to offer hope to those dealing with chronic pain.



Pre & Postnatal Info Corner

By Effie Koustas, MPT

Oh, My Aching Back (Or Buttocks, Or Hip, Or Leg)

The sacroiliac joint, or SI joint, can be a source of debilitating pain. The sacrum (tailbone) and ilia (pelvic bones) come together to form right- and left-sided SI joints. When these joints are aggravated, you will hear people describe this either as SI-joint dysfunction, syndrome, strain, or inflammation. Regardless of what it is called, pain can be felt in your low back, into your buttocks or hip/groin and even into your leg. The good news is that regardless of where your pain is it is a common condition, especially in pregnancy, which can be treated.

During pregnancy, because of the increased hormone circulation in the body, the ligaments throughout your body become lax. This is necessary to allow the pelvic joints to move during childbirth. Your SI joints are ordinarily very stable but this extra motion places added stress on the ligaments and allows for the joint surfaces to shear, resulting in increased wear and tear. The ensuing pain can significantly impair day-to-day activities such as walking, standing, or even sitting or lying down.



(Cont. from page 2) As with any condition, it is best to have it evaluated shortly after it begins before it impacts your activity level. Your alignment can be altered, muscles can become imbalanced and guarded, or weakness can develop. Physical therapy can help by adjusting your alignment, and prescribing exercises to increase your range of motion, flexibility and strength to correct those imbalances. Learning how to engage your core abdominal muscles properly will help stabilize the joints and education about proper postures, body mechanics and activity modification will decrease stress on the joints. We will also tell you when to use heat or ice, and may fit you with an SI-support brace. The brace helps stabilize the area while joints are inflamed, allowing you to function throughout the day.

You will then be able to successfully manage your symptoms throughout your pregnancy.

From The Desk of Our Clinical Staff Manager

By Tom Fontana, MSPT

How To Prevent A Broken Heart



In honor of Valentine's Day, here's the secret to avoiding a broken heart: Aerobic exercise!

Not the advice you were looking for? Sorry, I can't help you if you've been dumped or if the object of your affections is uninterested, but by taking better care of your heart maybe you'll outlive him/her. In your face, rejecter!

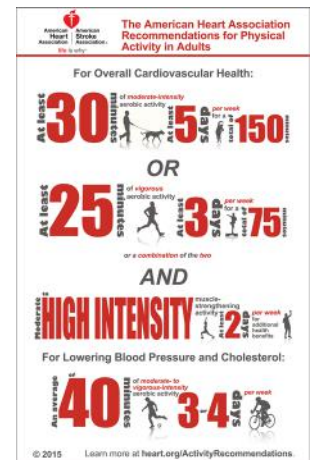
Before seeing how aerobic exercise helps your heart, it's useful to understand how your circulatory system works in the first place. Think of it as FedEx. The muscles in your body require oxygen (packages) to produce the energy they need to work. The red blood cells deliver the oxygen to the muscles (trucks that deliver packages). The red blood cells get to their destination by the small blood vessels—capillaries—leading to each muscle (roads the trucks travel on). The heart is what pushes the blood cells to the capillaries (the engine that moves the trucks).

Exercising benefits your heart both directly and indirectly. Increasing your muscles' oxygen demands stimulates your body to make more red blood cells. It also gets your body to create more capillaries to better distribute the oxygen-rich blood. To deliver more blood with each beat, the heart muscle itself gets bigger and thicker (like other muscles). So, more oxygen gets delivered to the muscles through more packages to more locations with a better engine!

These physiological changes occur to allow you to exercise, but last after you're done. When your oxygen demands are lower (i.e., when you're not exercising) your heart can beat SLOWER because of all the improvements.

Though the "best" amount of exercise is not known, the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association recommend adults perform a minimum of 30 minutes of "moderate-intensity" exercise for 5 or more days per week, or a minimum of 20 minutes of "vigorous-intensity" exercise for 3 or more days per week.

Younger people (under age 40) rarely die during exercise without an inherited or congenital cardiac condition. If you think you might have a condition or you are over 40, you should consult with your doctor before beginning an aerobic exercise program.



In the News at FPTS

On January 28th, Effie Koustas, MSPT, presented at the **Bedford Women's Club** meeting the "Seven Myths of Physical Therapy".

Our expert staff is experienced and available to present programs on the benefits of physical therapy as well as specific topics related to injuries; rehabilitation; the benefits of exercise, nutrition and sleep; and an array of other subject matters related to physical therapy, health and fitness.

If your organization is interested in learning more about our programs and how to arrange a speaker at one of your meetings, please contact us at: info@familyptservices.com or call **644.8334**

Helping Hands Honoree



Once again I am proud to recognize another triple H winner for giving the gift of health to a family member, friend or colleague. Referring them to FPTS gives us the opportunity of assisting them in their recovery and gives those referring

the opportunity to win our monthly raffle. For every referral you make, your name gets entered into the monthly drawing. The more you refer the greater your chances of winning AND you have the satisfaction of knowing that you've helped someone in need. This month's winner is: Elizabeth "Boo" Zotto! Thank you Boo! It's the greatest complement that you could give us.



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ARE YOU DEALING WITH THE POST HOLIDAY BLUES?

- Did your exercise program get derailed?
- Did you eat too much over the holidays and need to lose a few pounds?
- Are you having trouble sleeping?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then our [Three Pillars Program](#) can help.

THE THREE PILLARS OF MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ARE PROPER **EXERCISE, NUTRITION, AND SLEEP**

This comprehensive program consists of an initial 30-minute consultation to review health and fitness baselines as well as individual wants, needs, and goals; a thorough 90-minute assessment of body mass, nutritional intake and sleep habits; a detailed report with recommendations for each of the three pillars of health; and a 45-minute follow-up visit after two weeks to review an individual's progress with initial recommendations.



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