



# Family Physical Therapy Services, Inc.

## Our Family Cares

Cathy J Leer, PT, MBA Owner/Director

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June/July 2016 Newsletter

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### From The Desk of Our Clinical Staff Manager

By Tom Fontana, MSPT



### Golfer's/Tennis Elbow, "-itis" Or "-opathy?"

An annoying affliction that can happen at this time of year, particularly as we start to engage in more outdoor recreational activities, is the dreaded elbow pain. The classic injuries are Golfer's elbow (pain on the inside of the elbow) and Tennis elbow (pain on the outside of the elbow). There are several misconceptions about these conditions though.

First, even though the pain is experienced at the elbow, the problem is usually due to motions or positions of the wrist (the elbow is where the muscles of the wrist begin). Secondly, and ironically, these rarely occur because of golf or tennis! If it does, it usually occurs in less accomplished players whose technique is poorer than more accomplished players who play frequently or for prolonged periods. More often, it is because of everyday activities (see

the article "Ergonomic Fixes for Tennis Elbow" in this issue). Symptoms can range from mild, focal achiness or pain to severe where symptoms are constant and intense and may make it difficult to lift light items such as a magazine! Unfortunately, if symptoms are allowed to get severe, they are very difficult to get rid of, largely because it is difficult to refrain from using our hands in order to let the muscles rest.

One challenge we face as physical therapists is determining the cause of the problem. In young people (those under 30), the overwork most often results in irritation and inflammation (tendon "-itis") and we may use ice, ultrasound or other modalities to calm the inflammatory reaction. In older people (those over 40), studies often find no evidence of inflammation but actually evidence of cell death (tendon "-opathy")! The ability for older bodies to heal in this particular area is impaired. In these instances, we actually may try to irritate the area to stimulate the inflammatory/healing response and rebuild the tissue. So, the treatment may be the exact opposite in one instance versus the other. And, what to do for someone in the gray area between 30 and 40 years old? Confusing, right? Welcome to our world. This is why it is so important for us to factor in a variety of factors in determining what is right for you.



**Ross A. Lurgio**  
Info Corner

Congratulations to all of the participants in Lurgio's Spring Athletic Teams! **Boys' Baseball, Girls' Softball, Co-ed Track and Field, Co-ed**

**Golf, and Co-ed Tennis Club.**

Summer break is here, and it's a perfect time to prepare for fall athletics. If your child has been injured, or if you want to protect your child from injury, please give us a call for a **FREE pre-season injury prevention screening.**

Here's the line-up for **FALL teams: Co-ed Cross Country, Girls' Field Hockey, Girls' Soccer, Girls' Volleyball, Co-ed Tennis Club, Boys' Soccer.**

**CALL FOR YOUR FREE PRE-SEASON INJURY PREVENTION SCREENING**  
**644.8334**

### Community Activities

On April 19th, Tom presented "**Balance and Injury Prevention**" to GZA Geoenvironmental Inc. The presentation was on balance activities to avoid falls and injuries or enhance athletic performance, and the importance of strong pelvic and shoulder girdles to prevent upper and lower body injuries.

If you are interested in learning more about programs we can offer your organization, please call us at **644.8334.**



## Therapeutic Work Solutions Info Corner

By Steve Lisowe, MSPT

### Ergonomic Fixes For Tennis Elbow

Tennis elbow (pain on the outside of the elbow) is a common occurrence with computer use. Since the condition is related to overworked muscles, reducing the daily strain on the muscles that attach to the elbow can help decrease pain and dysfunction. Here are some expert tips to help prevent or minimize those symptoms while working on a computer.

First, make sure your elbow is bent to about 90 degrees with the elbow by your side. This is a more advantageous position to use your biceps muscle in, which means less stress on the muscles involved with tennis elbow.



Second, ensure that you're keeping your wrists relatively straight when typing or using the mouse. This position also keeps those muscles in a more neutral position so they can function properly. Think about it this way: how would you feel if you hiked your shoulder up to your ear and held it there for hours? You'd probably feel cramping and tightening in the overworked muscle. The same thing happens to your forearm muscles if you type with your wrists extended – prolonged contraction in a shortened or cramped position leads to overwork.

Third, make sure you're using your mouse properly. You should avoid squeezing the mouse. Instead, use the lightest grip possible. Your arm should be free to move in order to move the mouse so that you're not restricted to using only your wrist. You might consider choosing a mouse that fits your whole hand well (your fingers shouldn't be flexed to fit the buttons) or try other options like using your other hand to mouse or one of the many alternatives to the standard mouse.

Finally, take regular breaks and frequent stretch pauses while you're typing.



## Pre & Postnatal Info Corner

By Effie Koustas, MPT

### Finally...You Get To Use The Car Seat

Finally!!! Your bundle of joy has arrived!!! After a couple of days, it's time to leave the hospital, but only after the nurse checks to see that you have a car seat to safely transport your baby. The car seat is in your vehicle, and has been checked by the fire department for proper installation. Everything is ready and waiting for baby to come home. But did anyone tell you the best way to hold and carry the car seat after you unlock it from the base?

What's great about the infant car seat is that it snaps into the base in your car, the stroller and even some swings. You pick up the seat by the handle and put it where you want it. Simple, right? Now, let's say you are going to run a quick errand, don't need the stroller and decide you will carry the car seat. No problem. Unfortunately, this poses a big problem, not for the baby, but for YOUR elbow. Will you carry it with your arm straight? If so, in which direction is your palm facing? And will you bend your elbow? Or will you rest the handle on your forearm?

I have found that putting the car seat on my forearm is the most comfortable and convenient way to carry the baby, IF I don't plan on using my stroller. The stroller allows you to move freely while still keeping the baby with you. However, it isn't always feasible or timely to bring the stroller; sometimes, it can be more of a hassle. With the car seat resting on your upper forearm, the weight is closer to your body, with a smaller lever arm. Therefore, less strain through your arm.

If this doesn't work for you, there is always baby-wearing, which is both comfortable for parent and baby. Once you find a carrier that works for you both, you may find this to be the easiest way to move around, and leave the car seat behind.



### Patient of the Month Jason Cote

When I first came to Steve at Family Physical Therapy, I was having problems with my elbow. It was constantly in pain, and it made daily tasks like driving and picking up my children difficult. I would find that by the end of the day, sometimes it hurt so much that it would keep me up at night, or if I happened to roll over it wrong, it would hurt so much that it would wake me up!

Steve did a lot of diagnostic type things, poking at it, and asking questions, to help come up with a great plan...it turns out that part of the problem was a general weakness on my right side, including my shoulder...it's funny how things are all connected! Steve designed a great strengthening regimen, and added in some massage and ultrasound care, and slowly but surely things started to get better!

After a few short months, I can use my elbow with little pain. **Driving is fun and comfortable again, I am able to sleep, and now I can pick up my kids again! I am even able to bowl again.** I want to thank Steve and the rest of the Family Physical Therapy staff for helping to make me well again!





## Health And Fitness

By Steve Lisowe, MSPT, CAFS

### Foam Roller Techniques For Elbow & Forearm

Foam rollers have grown in popularity over the past 5 years. If you've been to a gym lately, you've probably seen them used to work on a variety of muscles. Most commonly, they are used to relieve tension in your calf, hamstrings, and thighs. But you can use them for other muscles including your mid back, shoulder, and your forearm.

General concepts for foam rolling:

With no extenuating circumstances, keep the pressure mild and start with 2-3 minute sessions, 1 or 2 times per day. The muscles should start to release during the session. It should feel as if the pressure has decreased (without changing the actual pressure) if the session was successful. Adding a stretch to the muscle at the same time may be a helpful progression or modification.

#### Technique #1: For Tennis Elbow (outside elbow pain)

Position the foam roller horizontally along the wall just above waist level. Place your forearm (vertically) against the roller with your palm facing you. Bend your knees and lean forward into the foam roll, then extend your knees back to the starting position, allowing the roll to move up and down your forearm. Be sure to keep your back straight.

#### Technique #2: For Golfers Elbow (inside elbow pain)

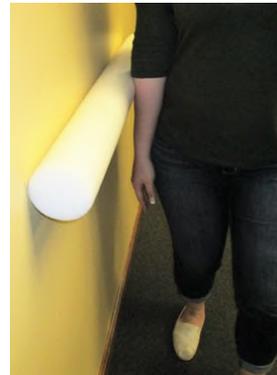
Lay out the foam roller on a table in front of you. Place your forearm across the foam roll (perpendicular to it) with your palm down. Roll the tissue by reaching or leaning forward and backward to release the forearm tissue. Using your other hand, you can add downward pressure to the arm if you're trying to increase pressure.

### Elbow Stretches and Foam Roller Mobilizations

Conditions: Golfer's Elbow, Tennis Elbow



**Foam Roll Technique for Golfer's Elbow:** Lay out the foam roller on a table in front of you. Place your forearm across the foam roll (perpendicular to it) with your palm down. Reach or lean forward and backward to release the forearm tissue. Using your other hand, you can add downward pressure to the arm you're treating to increase pressure.



**Foam Roll Technique for Tennis Elbow:** Position the foam roller horizontally along the wall just above waist level. Place your forearm (vertically) against the roller with your palm facing you. Bend your knees and lean forward into the foam roll, then extend your knees back to the starting position. Be sure to keep your back straight.



**Forearm Stretch #1:** With elbow straight, use other hand to bend your wrist (palm down toward you). Hold light pressure 30 seconds, 3 times.



**Forearm Stretch #2:** With elbow straight, use other hand to extend your wrist (palm facing away from you). Be careful NOT to pull at the tips of the fingers. Hold light pressure 30 seconds, 3 times.

### Notes From Our Extended Family



Another  
5 star  
review!

"Steve was patient, thorough, and most professional. I came to PT immediately when there was a problem, did my exercises and had great results in a short period of time". ~Nancy D.

### Helping Hands Honoree



This month we are honoring **Sandra S.** as our Triple H winner. Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your loved one!

### Save a tree!

**OPT OUT OF PAPER** and go electronic for your Newsletter delivery! Simply email us at: [info@familyptservices.com](mailto:info@familyptservices.com) and write **OPT OUT** in the subject line.

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Industrial Rehab and work-related injuries, pre & postnatal services, lower back pain, stenosis, sciatica and herniated discs, neck pain & headaches, tendonitis & bursitis, pre & post surgical, arthritis, plantar fasciitis, sports injuries, exercise prescription, and more...

## A Few Key Elbow Stretches And Words Of Wisdom For The Golf Enthusiast



The golf swing involves an extremely complex set of movements stressing all areas of the body. It is very important to stay fit and routinely perform golf specific stretches and strengthening exercises to avoid injury. At times these aches and pain are unavoidable and can become serious enough that they require intervention, such as physical therapy.



### Here are a few common injuries which all golfers need to recognize.

1. Back pain: 2. **Elbow tendonitis**: 3. Shoulder pain: 4. Knee and hip pain:

### Avoiding Injury

Proper warm-up routines are crucial to avoid injury in all sports including golf. From the professional to the amateur levels, all golfers need to develop a warm-up routine, which will fully prepare them to make their best swing from the opening tee shot. Most amateurs, however, get warmed up by running from their cars to the first tee and expect to hit a great tee shot on #1 Here are a few tips that may help put together a pre-round routine.

1. **Get to the course early**
2. **Begin by warming up on the putting green**
3. **Spend a few minutes hitting chips maybe using a tee for a target**
4. **Begin your full swing warm-up on the range with golf specific stretches**
5. **Take full swings using short irons or wedges working up to the long irons and woods.**
6. **Time your routine so you can stroll to the first tee with plenty of time for your group's assigned tee time.**

If you do not warm up properly, you are most likely setting yourself up to play poorly and increasing the chance for injury. If you are experiencing any of these aches and pain, please do not ignore them. The longer they go on, the more likely they will take you away from the game of golf.