

Family Physical Therapy Services, Inc.

“Our Family Cares”



Cathy J Leer, PT, MBA, Owner/Director

603.644.8334

June/July 2015 Newsletter

Inside This Issue

Celebrate Independence Day!

Success Story of the Month

Keep Exercising Independently

Freedom From Backyard Injuries

Pre & Postnatal News: Declare Your Independence with a Baby Carrier

Special Offer: Free Functional Independence Screening

Therapeutic Work Solutions Info Corner: see insert

Will You Stay Independent? Screening for Future Disability

Self Screening Tests for Home

Like Us on Facebook



Independence Day... our view

By Cathy J Leer, PT, MBA

Commonly known as the Fourth of July or July Fourth, Independence Day is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the **Declaration of Independence** on July 4,

1776, declaring independence from Great Britain. Even though over the years this true meaning of the celebration has evolved into picnics, parties, cookouts, outdoor activities, fun and games, and of course fireworks, it is especially important during this very tumultuous time in history that we give thanks to those men and women in the armed forces who continue to fight for our independence and freedom, both here and abroad.

Regardless of what it is that you are celebrating, or how things have changed over the years, one thing that remains constant is celebrating with friends, family and loved ones of all ages and all walks of life.

While July 4th is certainly an important day to celebrate independence, it is our independence as a nation, not as an individual person. All of us at FPTS agree that there is another, more personal time for you and us to celebrate independence. It is when YOU have achieved YOUR independence. From our perspective, independence is a measure of the level of a patient's disability. It indicates how much assistance is required for the individual to carry out activities of daily living, or one's overall independence during specific functional tasks such as mobility, walking, self-care, or a specific exercise program to address ongoing rehabilitation needs, or to improve overall health and wellness.

This issue is dedicated to **your** INDEPENDENCE, and I'm hoping it will result in a safe and fun-filled celebration of life with your family, friends and loved ones this 4th of July....and beyond.

HELPING HANDS PROGRAM

Don't miss out on a chance to win a lunch on us, and help a friend at the same time!

Refer a friend, family member, or acquaintance to FPTS and you'll be entered into our monthly drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to a local restaurant. The more you refer, the more chances to win!

DON'T DELAY, REFER TODAY!

Success Story of the Month—Regaining Independence!

By Carol Barry

*I tore my 2 menisci and 2 ligaments in my right knee. After having knee surgery, my orthopedic doctor recommended P.T. My friend from work recommended that I come to FPTS. **Best decision I ever made.***

Steve has been wonderful, caring, and very informative in teaching me how to regain the use of my leg and knee. Before I came here I had such a hard time walking and bending and couldn't do my normal exercises. I am happy to say that I am now able to do almost all of my workout's pain free!





Keep Exercising Independently

By Tom Fontana, MSPT

Most of you reading this article are former patients so you know the value of an independent home exercise program, or at least you should know the value of an independent home exercise program. Chances are, if you are someone who did really well with us (i.e., your condition greatly improved and may have done so on the quicker side), then you were diligent about performing those exercises. Now, by a show of hands, how many of you are still doing the exercises that were prescribed as part of your “maintenance program” at discharge? Come on, get those hands higher! You think I can’t see you, but I can...

Regular exercise was not only a key contributor to your improvement but is key to your staying clear of PT (and hopefully other healthcare practitioners), or at least limiting your likelihood of needing our services in the future.

I’ve often said if I had a nickel for every patient that returns to PT for a recurring condition and answers “No” to the question, “Are you still doing your home exercises?” I would be retired on an island somewhere.

Changes in aerobic performance have been noted in highly-conditioned athletes within 2-4 weeks of training cessation. Changes in strength output take a little bit longer to notice but if it only takes that long to **notice** the change (and this occurs to the most highly-conditioned people out there, think what happens to the rest of us), then minor changes likely begin happening very quickly. For our bodies to function properly, regular exercise must be a part of your daily (or at least weekly) life.

Most of the time, we find that it is not that people don’t see the value of exercising but that other things in their lives get in the way – it’s not the **physical** performance of the exercises that’s the barrier, it’s other things. Here are suggested ways to keep your compliance high. There is no one-size-fits-all, use what approach works for you!

1. Set up a plan – Rather than assuming you will “get to” your exercises at some point during the day, make an appointment with yourself for a specific time to do them. If your schedule allows, make it a priority by scheduling it earlier than other activities or meetings. Morning time is also nice because you tend to have higher energy and, once it is over with, you have the rest of your day to look forward to!
2. Find someone to exercise with – Exercise, like most things in life, is more enjoyable when performed with a partner. Even if you don’t perform the same exercises as someone else, if you exercise in the same space you can make it somewhat social. This will also help you in setting up an appointment time to exercise, and you may encourage each other on days when the other just wants to sit on the couch. (cont. on page 3)

Freedom from Backyard Injuries

By Dan Baram, PTA, CSCS

Has this ever happened to you? You wake up in the morning with a sore body part but are unsure why. As you think back on the previous day, you remember that you spent 2 hours tossing a bean bag 25 feet at a hole in a plank of wood. Although it seems ridiculous that this mundane game could cause harm, you are hunting for the ibuprofen to deal with your issue.



During summer, we spend a lot more time outdoors and the opportunity to participate in seemingly harmless backyard games presents itself regularly. Whether you are at a birthday party, barbeque, or just hanging out at home with friends, without fail someone will present the idea to play a little volleyball, touch football, or the aforementioned bean bag toss. What could go wrong? The reality is that as the competition heats up the intensity will rise and before you know it you have been performing a repetitive motion for hours on end, or you may be tempted to “go for it” more than you should. Maybe the soreness goes away after a few days or maybe you’re left with a more serious issue, which could eventually require medical attention.

Now, I’m not here to tell you that you should abstain from all the backyard fun but it would be a good idea to take some precautions.

1. **Warm up a little before the competition begins** – Taking a little time to get the body ready can go a long way. Don’t just jump right from your lawn chair into a competitive situation. Take a little time to perform the movements in the game you are about to play at a low intensity. A light sweat is a good indicator that your body is sufficiently warm.
2. **Take breaks** – Remember that rarely do you spend multiple hours performing the same motion over and over again. Therefore, it’s a good idea to avoid doing so during leisure activities. So take a round or two off to let your body rest.
3. **Take your current fitness level into account** – If you have done little to no physical activity all winter, don’t expect your body to tolerate a lot. So play it safe and rest before you are exhausted instead of pushing the envelope.
4. **Hydrate well** – It is common for backyard fun to be accompanied by alcoholic beverages. Remember that alcohol plus heat and activity will dehydrate you. So, take a water break or two. Keeping your tissues properly hydrated will help speed up your recovery.
5. **Use some recovery tools** – If you are sore the next day, break out your foam roller and do some self-massage to help work out the kinks.

Keep Exercising Independently—Continued from page 2

3. Split up the program – If the idea of setting aside a large block of time is daunting or you don't want to exercise for a large block of time, then break it up into smaller chunks. You will benefit as much by doing some exercises in the morning and some in the afternoon (or doing some throughout the day). You also might decide to do half the exercises one day and then the other half the next (and there's something to be said for variety).
4. Track your workout – If you are the sort of person that is motivated by data or benefits from concrete reminders of progress, keep a chart or log of which exercises you performed, how many, with what resistance, etc. so you can see how you are progressing over time.
5. Set exercise goals – Unless you know what you are trying to achieve, you won't know when you've achieved it. Even if you have a long-term goal (for example, "lift up my 25-pound grandson") you might set a more easily achievable but related shorter-term goal ("lift a 20-pound weight from the floor to the waist by August 1st").
6. Reward yourself – make a deal (an actual contract) with yourself that if you perform the exercises for a specified amount of time (e.g., a week?, a month?) without any missed episodes that you will treat yourself to something outside of your usual (a night out, an ice cream cone, a splurge purchase).
7. "Punish" yourself – make a deal (an actual contract) with yourself that for each day you fail to perform the exercises you will go without something you typically enjoy (e.g., no morning coffee takeout the next day, no dessert that night) or you might have to do something you ordinarily wouldn't (e.g., you have to perform someone else's chores, you have to make a contribution to your favorite charity).

It takes time to develop a habit – in a 2009 study in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, researchers found that it took between 18 and 254(!) days (average 66) for participants to turn a novel task into a habit which they performed automatically. So, stick with it—it may take a while. Also, don't beat yourself up over a missed day—the researchers also found that "missing one opportunity to perform the behavior did not materially affect the habit formation process."

If you don't develop a habit, and I see you again, you'll owe me a nickel.

Therapeutic Work Solutions Info Corner

By Steve Lisowe, MSPT

Please see our insert for this month's article



A special shout out to **Pamela Smart**...our "Triple H" award winner for June! You are our official **Helping Hands Honoree** of the month!



Pre & Postnatal Info Corner

Declare Your Independence with a Baby Carrier

By Effie Koustas, MPT



With summer in full swing, everyone is getting outdoors for fresh air and time in the sun. As a parent of a baby, infant or toddler, it's not always easy to enjoy yourself while attending to the needs of your bundle of joy. Instead of hauling around a car seat, stroller or pack 'n' play, baby carriers are a great option for keeping your young one close while freeing up your hands and allowing you to move about so you can enjoy yourself.



There are several choices: slings, front pack, backpacks, cloth wraps--which one is best? The answer is a personal one--you must try each one on with your child. Each carrier has limitations based on the weight of the child and must fit correctly so that it doesn't overstress your body. You may also want to take into account how often and for how many years you will use it and if that will be comfortable for both you and your growing child.

In addition to keeping you moving freely in the community, baby wearing has other benefits:

- It promotes physical development for the baby
- Babies are happier
- It's healthier for you
- Toddlers appreciate the security of the carrier
- Communication between baby and parent is enhanced
- It works as a bonding tool for caregivers
- They are economical
- They are fun!



Family Physical Therapy Services, Inc.

Bedford, NH 03110 Chichester, NH 03258
644.8334 961.0039
www.familyptservices.com



Presorted Standard
US Postage
PAID
Permit # 632
Manchester, NH 03103

See Inside for
Self Screening
Tests

Specializing In:

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...

Are You At Risk For Falls?

Would you like to predict your risk of injuries or falls, future disability, and even mortality?

Maintain Your Independence!

Call **644.8334** and schedule your

FREE FUNCTIONAL INDEPENDENCE SCREENING



Will You Stay Independent? Screening for Future Disability

By Steve Lisowe, MSPT

Physical therapists at Family PT Services conduct screenings for a variety of purposes. We can determine if clients are physically ready to do a new job, return to work after an injury, or undertake a new fitness program. Now we've started using screens for new purposes – to predict the risk of injuries or falls, future disability, and even mortality risk.

After meeting with a local employer to determine the needs of their aging population, we used available research to select these screens for a health and wellness fair they were hosting. The following are a sample of the screens that we use and what information we can obtain from them (see next page on how to perform two of these at home!):



The Star Excursion Balance Test: This is a measure of your dynamic stability (or how balanced you are during movement). It can be used to predict the incidence of lower extremity injuries and falls. You stand on one leg and reach the other leg out as far as you can in various directions. How far you can reach, relative to the length of your leg, is calculated and then can be compared to norms for your gender. Those who score below average are more at risk for ankle, knee, and hip problems and those who score dramatically below average may be at increased risk for falls.

The Grip Test: Your maximal grip strength (compared to the average for your age and gender) is an assessment of overall vitality and health and is associated with predicting length of stay/overall survival rate after hospitalization. Those who score well below average are at the greatest risk of longer-than-expected hospitalization and greater-than-expected mortality. There is also a correlation between grip weakness and a loss of functional ability. We use a hand-held dynamometer to measure your strength--visit the clinic and we'll see what your grip strength is and how you stack up.



The Sitting-Rising Test: This test assesses your ability to get down to, and up off of, the floor. Being able to get both up and down without using your arms/hands or knees/shins to stabilize you, and doing it with good control, earns you a perfect 10 points (out of 10). In a study of 51-80 year-olds, those who scored in the lowest group (0-3 points) exhibited a 5-6 times higher risk of death (by any cause) after 6 years than those scoring in the highest group (8-10 points). Each drop in scoring groups is associated with a 21% increase in all-cause mortality. Roughly 75% of people 51-60 years of age should be able to get up and down scoring an 8 or higher, whereas less than 20% of those over 70 would score this high.

So now the question is – what is your score? The answer may surprise you.

Self Screening Tests for Home

The Star Excursion Balance Test: [Note: this is a stripped-down version of the test, involving only one of 8 possible directions in the interest of time and clarity] You will need some masking tape and a tape measure to perform the test.

First, lay down tape on the floor that makes an upside down “Y” (each “arm” of the “Y” being about 4 feet in length).

Then, stand with one foot in the center of the upside down “Y.” Stretch the other foot out along the branch of the “Y” as far as you can and lightly tap it on the tape for a partner to record (for example, if you are standing on your left leg, stretch out your right leg along the branch of the “Y” that is behind you and to the left) and return it alongside the other foot without losing your balance.

Measure from the middle of the Y to where you lightly tapped to get the length you stretched out.

Next, to determine how good that amount is you need to know how long your leg is (for those who have met all of us, it is a lot more impressive if Dan or Tom, or especially Cathy!, could reach out 30” than if Steve could). Take a tape measure and measure from the front of your pelvis (the prominent bone right near where the start of your front pocket is) down to the bone on the inside of your ankle. Take the length you stretched out with your leg while balancing and divide it by the length of your leg to get your score (the percent of limb length you were able to reach). You can now compare it to the averages to find where you stack up for your gender.

Length you stretched out your leg _____ ÷ Length of your leg _____ = Percent of limb length you were able to reach _____%

Compare that number to these values: Posterolateral (diagonal in back across your body)

Male	Female
90.4 ± 13.5	85.5 ± 13.2

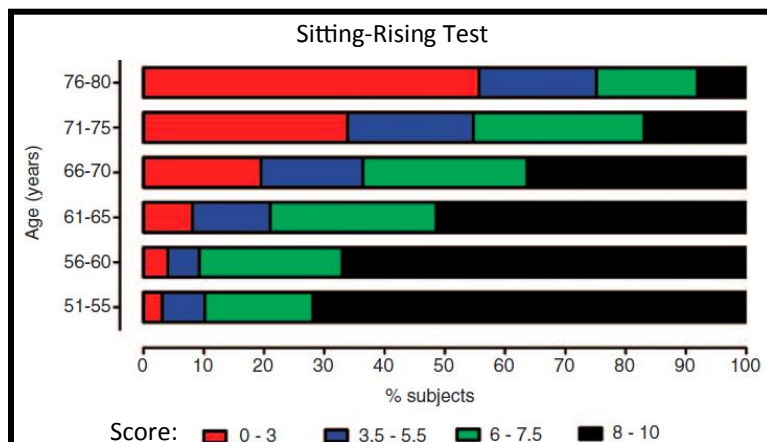
The Sitting-Rising Test:

Stand comfortably on a non-slippery surface in an area away from tables, chairs, or other objects.

Attempt to sit on the floor in a crossed-leg position (“Indian style”) without using your hands, forearms, knees, or shins to help you get down (you would basically go straight down into the crossed-leg position). For those of you (most of you!) who rolled your eyes and said, “Yeah, right!” don’t give up on the test.

Merely go from standing to the crossed-legged position (or the nearest approximation to it) with the

least assistance from your hands, forearms, shins, and knees. The important thing is to do it safely without getting hurt and to genuinely see how easy/hard it is for you to do.



Distribution of Sitting-Rising Test scores according to age ranges

Then repeat the process on the way up, again ideally without using anything but the sides of your ankles and feet to power you up. You start with a perfect score of 5 in each direction and for each hand/forearm or knee/shin that contacts the floor enabling you to get down or get up you lose a point, while losing an additional half-point if the movement in either direction is poorly controlled (i.e., wobbly or unsteady).

Score on way down = _____ + Score on way up = _____ = Total Score _____

Mortality rates: RED =5-6 times higher risk of all cause mortality; BLUE, GREEN, BLACK= 21% decrease in mortality for each drop in scoring.