



Family Physical Therapy Services, Inc.

Our Family Cares

Cathy J Leer, PT, MBA Owner/Director

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Nov /Dec 2015 Newsletter

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Clear and “Present” Danger– Steve Saves Christmas

By Steve Lisowe, MSPT, Director of Industrial Rehabilitation

Something happened last Christmas that you might not have heard about. There was a problem at the North Pole factories and Christmas almost didn’t happen. Santa and his workers were having trouble physically keeping up with orders. There were barely enough elf hours available to get all the work done. Then, last Christmas Eve, Santa hurt his back and almost couldn’t deliver all his packages. Would the same thing happen again this year? Santa couldn’t take the chance, so he called in an expert.



Santa called Steve Lisowe, MSPT, the ergonomics and job analysis expert at FPTS. Steve immediately recognized the problem—workers were getting hurt on the job. There simply weren’t enough healthy elves to get the work done.

Here’s what Steve did. First, he gave Santa a number of stretches and

stability exercises to get rid of his back pain. Then, he assessed the jobs for ergonomic problems: For the elves—repetitive work; slippery walkways; heavy lifting of presents; and high productivity standards; and for Santa—awkward spaces to work in (chimneys) and an inefficient present delivery system. Finally, he assessed the reasons why workers were staying out of work too long.

The solutions were to 1) remedy the ergonomic stressors, 2) teach the workers to be more efficient in their work, and 3) develop a plan to get workers back to work as quickly as possible. All workers were outfitted with proper footwear, walkways were sanded properly, and step platforms were provided for shorter elves (is there any other kind?) to get them to the proper working height. Mrs. Claus sewed two straps onto Santa’s sack to distribute the load over the back symmetrically. Santa was encouraged to use the front door to which he commented, “I never thought of that. We’ve just always used the chimney before.” Repetitive motion tasks were alternated with heavy lifting tasks every two hours. Training on body mechanics, simple stretches, and teamwork was provided to reindeer, elves, and to Santa himself. And when an injury did occur, doctors (cont. on pg 2)

You can now find us on Instagram and Twitter

Thanks to our newest staff member Amanda, you can now find FPTS on Instagram and Twitter. Please take a moment to check us out and keep up with the latest news at FPTS.



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<https://www.instagram.com/familypts/>

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(cont. from p 1) were provided with the results of Job Function Tests™ to show when the elves could safely return to parts of their jobs instead of being out of work entirely.

This November 27th, North Pole Operations reported they were ahead of schedule, there were no work injuries, elves reported more job satisfaction than ever, workers compensation costs were down 75%, and Santa never felt better. A parade was held down Main Street in Christmastown in Steve's honor, he was presented with a key to the city and given honorary elf status. If Steve can save Christmas, think what he can do for your business!

Heat Miser vs. Snow Miser – When to Use Heat vs. Ice

By Tom Fontana, MSPT



I recently treated a patient who had just slipped and fallen on ice, bruising his elbow (see Steve's article "Clear and 'Present' Danger—Steve Saves Christmas"). I can't tell you his name due to HIPAA, but let's call him "Jingle."



So Jingle asked me if he should ice it or heat it, which is a question I get all the time.

While both could make Jingle's pain feel better—ice by deadening nerve endings and making it feel numb, heat by generally producing a pleasant effect, this wouldn't compel him to use one over the other. To understand which one to use when, you need to understand what each does. Ice narrows the superficial blood vessels in your body, reducing blood flow. Heat widens those blood vessels, thereby enhancing blood flow.

Jingle had acute pain (i.e., right after an injury) so his body was in inflammatory mode for 48-72 hours. During this stage, his body underwent vascular and immune system changes to deal with the injury. Unfortunately, the body does such a good a job of this that we often get unwanted swelling. Since Jingle's body was already opening up the vasculature to bring red and white blood cells to the area, heating in this instance would have made the swelling WORSE! Jingle needed to use ice for his acute injury (remember **ice** for **I**nflammatory **C**alming **E**ffect).

After 72 hours or so, as long as Jingle didn't reinjure the area, the acute phase was over. At this point, he would want to bring more blood to the area to transport the waste products and metabolites away from the injury, so heat after that.

Jingle had no other medical issues so when icing, he simply had to make sure he had a layer of toweling (or pillow case between the ice and his skin); when heating, he made sure he had several layers of toweling between the hot pack/heating pad and his skin and monitored it for redness to make sure he didn't burn himself.



Can't "Weight" For Christmas

By Dan Baram, PTA, CSCS

As the song goes, "it's the most wonderful time of the year." Unfortunately, when it comes to Americans' health, actually it isn't. If you are not careful, your midsection may resemble one that belongs in a red suit with white trim by New Year's Day. Unlike the man in red, you won't be riding a sleigh, sliding down chimneys and bringing joy to all the children in the land.

With all the holiday parties and family dinners during the holidays it's very easy to get sidetracked from your health and fitness goals. The average American gains about 7 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's. This year, while you're wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and happy new year keep your focus on your health and fitness so that you are not "rocking around the Christmas tree" with extra weight around your middle.

I advise my clients to mark their calendar with their holiday events. We can see in black and white how often they will be indulging and can skip other random temptations. Also, stay away from the constant flow of treats at the office (while I write this I'm staring at a bag of Halloween candy). These little treats add up quickly.

Next we discuss exercise. At this time of year schedules are busy and time is short, but make exercise a priority. This will help in two ways. First, there is the calorie burn that comes with exercise. Second, and possibly more importantly, I find it much easier to stay away from bad foods when I exercise. I feel like if I eat poorly after exercising then I wasted my time at the gym.

So this year "deck the halls" and "roast some chestnuts on an open fire" but don't "jingle all the way" to a new waist size.



Pre & Postnatal Info Corner

By Effie Koustas, MPT

Walking Safely in a Winter Wonderland



“Sleigh bells ring, are you listening? In the lane, snow is glistening, A beautiful sight, we’re happy to-night, Walking in a winter wonderland.” It’s that time of year again—the snow will be falling and you will be looking forward to strolling around outside enjoying the beauty of winter. While walking is excellent exercise and we encourage everyone to enjoy the winter wonderland, we want to ensure you avoid falls on the ice and snow.

To keep everyone safe and on schedule this holiday season, I have compiled some tips to prevent falling this winter:

Avoid snow-covered sidewalks and streets: Walk only in areas that have been cleared and treated appropriately. Even so, be aware that black ice may be in some spots and can cause you to fall. Make sure the walkways are well lit so you can see where you are going.

Wear sensible footwear: AVOID cowboy boots, sneakers, leather shoes and plastic-soled shoes. While they may be more convenient, they will NOT give you any traction to prevent falling. Invest in a pair of snow boots and plan ahead if you need to change shoes for going to work or an indoor event.

Plan ahead: The best way to avoid falls in bad weather is to avoid it altogether. There will undoubtedly be storms between now and the holidays—so plan for them by checking on the weather and allowing time to stay in when necessary. When you need to go out, make sure you follow the steps above.

Take your time: As this is the busiest season of the year, we all have lots to do and seemingly little time to do it. Make a list (and check it twice!) of where you need to go and what you need to do so you’re efficient with your trips. Your chances of falling are greater when you rush, especially if you are running late. So allow plenty of time to get places, slow down, don’t cut corners or take risks, and make sure you arrive in one piece.

Ask for help: If you are walking with someone, ask that they give you a hand. Otherwise, walk like a penguin and take short, shuffling steps, walking as flat footed as possible.

We wish you a happy, healthy holiday season with your loving friends and family.

Notes From Our Extended Family: “As a boomer with degenerative osteoarthritis my long term goal was / is simple: I will function **normally** and **confidently** for the rest of my life. Maintaining my balance for the long term (especially in context of 2 hip replacements; and, a spine declared a “train wreck” by the orthopedic docs) was and is prerequisite to making my goal happen.

The results speak for themselves: despite “listing” 1.5 inches to the left while standing (thanks to the train wreck spine) I now enjoy walking, hiking, snowshoeing, and vigorously exercising --- **all with absolute confidence**. All the PT, balancing, stretching, innumerable different exercises we’ve worked on over the years has put me and my family in a wonderful position / place. You and your team have enabled me to recapture a sense of independence. **On balance, Cathy Leer, you and your team have done an exemplary job!!!** ~ Eugene Mehr (For more details on Gene’s remarkable recovery go to: <https://www.familyptservices.com/about/testi/>)



Helping Hands Honoree: a very special thanks goes out to this month’s Triple H winner: **Christine Hall**. Without the unending support of our patients and their generosity in referring their friends and family to FPTS, we wouldn’t have the honor and privilege of serving so many people in need .

At Family Physical Therapy Services, our mission is to provide the highest possible quality of care that physical therapy has to offer in an environment that promotes trust, confidence and mutual respect by maintaining a high level of family values and moral and ethical behavior. Our goal is to provide each and every patient with a level of caring and compassion combined with unparalleled training and expertise in order to **serve the individual needs of each and every patient** and to provide them with a new found freedom and ability to participate in activities that bring them joy, peace and harmony and allow them to live a life of their choosing and to a level of their liking.

Through the Helping Hands Program, our past and present patients, friends, and colleagues, have an opportunity to win a gift certificate to a business simply by referring new patients to our facility. Why not help a friend in need and help me fulfill my promise to serve our community with the best possible physical therapy care available?

THANK YOU CHRISTINE! It’s the greatest compliment you could give us!



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Give yourself or a loved one the GIFT OF SAFETY this holiday season!

- ARE YOU **UNSTEADY ON YOUR FEET** LATELY?
- ARE YOU **WORRIED ABOUT A LOVED ONE FALLING** AND POSSIBLY GETTING HURT?

REGARDLESS OF WHO MAY BE HAVING THE DIFFICULTY,

- THE **RISKS OF FALLING INCREASE WITH AGE**. IN FACT, **NEARLY 1/3 OF ALL SENIORS FALL EACH YEAR**.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT **WE HAVE WAYS TO HELP**

- **IMPROVE BALANCE AND SAFETY** IN WALKING WHICH WILL **REDUCE THE RISK OF FALLING** AND HELP **PREVENT INJURY** FROM A SLIP AND FALL ACCIDENT.

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Fall Prevention



“One out of three people ages 65 years and older falls each year, but fewer than half of those who fall talk to their healthcare provider about it” (Medscape, Mar 16, 2015). With winter approaching once again, we’re not going to wait for you to talk with us about it. It’s important for you and your family to be aware of fall prevention strategies, as mentioned earlier in this issue.

Also, ask yourself three questions:

1. Do you feel unsteady when standing or walking?
2. Do you worry about falling?
3. Have you fallen in the past year?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you are considered to be at an **increased risk of falling** and further assessment is recommended.

If you answered NO, that’s great! Or, if you are not sure, how do you know how good your balance is? Have you ever tested it? Well, here’s your chance. Complete the three self-screening tests below to see where you stand. 😊

Self Screening Tests for Home:

1. Stand on one leg with eyes open (image 1)

Stand at your kitchen counter, place your hands on the counter and bend one leg up at the knee, putting your weight on the other leg. Once you feel balanced, hover your hands over the counter and balance for as long as you can. Try to avoid swaying your body or moving your arms. If you start losing your balance, put your hands back down on the counter or put your other leg down. The goal is to balance for 30 seconds on EACH leg.

2. Stand on one leg with eyes closed (image 2)

Follow the same instructions as above. Once you are balancing on one leg, close your eyes and hold for as long as you can. The goal is to balance for 30 seconds on EACH leg.

3. Tandem or staggered walking (images 3 & 4)

Stand next to your kitchen counter. Keep one hand on the counter while you position one foot in front of the other, heel lining up with toe. Repeat this with the other foot to see if you can walk heel-to-toe for 10 steps without needing to hold on to the counter.

If you can’t do all of the above, then your balance could use some improvement. See the reverse for how to improve it.

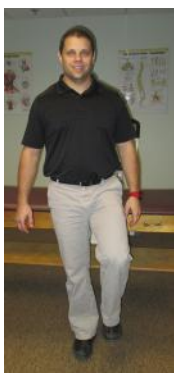


Image 1

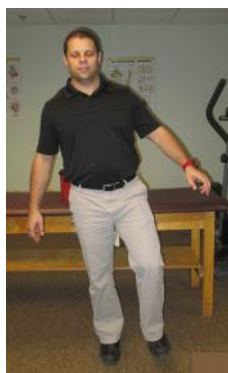


Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

Exercises to Improve Your Balance

Did you find those tests on the reverse harder than you thought? The good news is that there are exercises you can do to improve your balance. Once you have determined which self test is difficult, you can practice it as part of your daily routine.

Three Exercises:



1. **Single leg stance, eyes open** – At the kitchen counter, stand on one leg, eyes open, with arms by your sides and hold for as long as you can up to 30 seconds. If you are unable to perform this exercise without holding on, try a modification. Start by balancing on one leg with both hands supporting your weight. As your balance improves, slowly transition to using one hand, then one finger until you are able to balance without any upper body support. Focusing on one object in front of you will further help you stabilize your stance.



2. **Single leg stance, eyes closed** – Once single leg stance with eyes open becomes easy, follow the same instructions above, but this time with eyes closed. Again, attempt to hold your balance up to 30 seconds



3. **Tandem/staggered walking** – With the kitchen counter to your side and arms by your sides, practice walking heel-to-toe for 20 steps without holding on. If this is challenging, use one hand to balance yourself until you can perform this exercise without holding on.

Why are these balance exercises so good for you? There are a few reasons. 1) When you walk, there is a split second when you are standing on one foot before the other foot hits the ground. In order to stay upright, you need balance on one leg to avoid falling. 2) Though you don't walk around with your eyes closed (at least we hope not!), you can't rely on your vision at night or in low light situations (which we rely on heavily during the day) but must depend on the feedback (or proprioception) from your feet to orient your body in space. As you get older, this feedback decreases, unless you are actively working on it as part of your exercise time. 3) There also may be instances when you have to stand or walk with your legs close together.

IF ANY OF THESE TESTS/EXERCISES WERE CHALLENGING, OR YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR, OR A FAMILY MEMBER'S, RISK OF FALLING YOU MAY WANT TO HAVE YOUR BALANCE FORMALLY ASSESSED.

Call our office at 644.8334 to schedule a FREE 20-minute fall risk screen with one of our physical therapists.