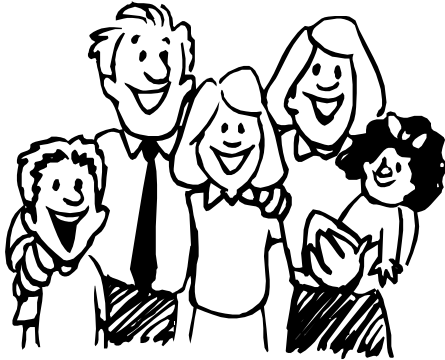


Helping Families Thrive Newsletter

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As your employer we want to help support your well-being and that of your family. To achieve this goal we will be providing wellness information with the **“Helping Families Thrive Newsletter”**, a monthly publication edited by The Center for Health & Athletic Performance, Inc. (CHAP), located in Stoneham, MA.

“Being healthy means just not being sick but I think people really want to be optimally healthy so our goal is to provide information and resources where families can achieve that optimal health and fitness,” says CHAP’s owner, Larry “Doc” Warnock, LMT, a clinical massage and trigger point therapist who has practiced in the area for more than 20 years.

Each issue will contain important information on various aspects of wellness such as nutrition, fitness, weight management, injury-prevention, complimentary therapies and many other topics that should be of interest to you and your family.

When you are optimally healthy, your work life and family life will benefit.

We believe that the information in this and future newsletters will go a long way in helping you plan a healthy lifestyle for you and your family.

We would like to hear from you about topics you would like to read about in future issues. Send us your comments and suggestions. We hope you enjoy this newsletter.

What is a Repetitive Stress Injury?

A repetitive stress injury is a soft-tissue injury where muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments and connective tissue become irritated and inflamed as a result of cumulative trauma and/or overuse.

The causes of repetitive stress injuries include repetitive tasks with many small movements, excessive and forceful movements such as lifting or many sports actions or working in awkward positions.

When your body’s soft tissue is required to perform the same movements over and over again, muscles and other soft tissue become stressed. Coupled with decreased circulation, tiny tears and trigger points begin to form creating contraction in muscles and other soft tissue. This inhibits movement and involves other body parts to compensate for this loss of range of motion and flexibility.

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Do You Have An Athlete In The House?

Being the parent of a high school or college athlete is no small feat. There is so much parents can do to help keep their athlete safe, injury-free and performing well. Here’s a checklist to help:

Arrange a prehabilitation assessment—This will determine weaknesses that need attention, assure good posture, and help determine the appropriate conditioning program for improvement. This assessment should be done prior to joining any fitness club or gym. The athlete needs to know what weaknesses to improve.

Make sure the athlete eats breakfast and two other meals plus three snacks during the day comprised of 60% carbohydrate; 15% protein; and 25% fats. Snacks should be provided for recovery and energy needs and remind him/her to hydrate regularly.

Arrange regular sportsmassage sessions to assure proper alignment, the elimination of trigger points, reduce soreness and help the athlete relax and focus.

Make sure your athlete gets enough sleep,

Who suffers from RSI?

Almost any one can suffer an RSI. Workers include assembly line workers, cashiers, computer operators, hairdressers, secretaries, postal workers, nurses, most athletes including golfers, runners, pitchers, hockey players and construction workers, homemakers, children and seniors..



Some people think that Carpel Tunnel Syndrome is the only RSI. This is far from the truth. There are many injuries that fall within the classification of repetitive stress including: Achilles Tendinitis, back and neck injuries such as

whiplash, sciatica, piriformis syndrome and arthritis, elbow injuries including tennis and golfer's elbow; Plantar Fasciitis, shoulder injuries including frozen shoulder, tendonitis, and rotator cuff injuries; knee injuries like meniscus and ligament pain, Iliotibial Band Syndrome, and Runner's Knee.

At the same time, typical therapies such as medication, physical therapy, chiropractic treatment, electrical stimulation, rest, exercise and surgery often fail to effectively help most people suffering from repetitive stress injuries. Surgery creates issues with scar tissue and is not always successful. Most traditional treatments focus on the site of the pain and not the cause, which could be elsewhere in the body. Splints and braces can actually decrease circulation and increase stress in other parts of the body.

The most effective treatment for repetitive stress injuries and chronic pain conditions is trigger point therapy that includes massage and stretching. This is also the most cost-effective treatment available. Relieve can come quickly, even after the first visit.

Trigger points account for approximately 75% of soft tissue injuries. Once identified, trigger points can be eliminated, thus relieving the condition, often in only one or two sessions.

A trigger point evaluation can lead to positive treatment comprised of massage therapy and therapeutic stretching. If you have pain, you owe it to yourself to investigate this opportunity.

Managing Your Stress

Acknowledging that you are stressed is the first step to letting go of that stress. Stress is brought on by "trash talk" where you are thinking about too many things. These thoughts just keep coming and coming. Letting go of those thoughts will help you focus and relax.

Following is a series of easy relaxation techniques that you can do almost any where and any time. They do not take very long to do. Do not force yourself to relax. Just let it happen.

BREATHING:

2-Step breath - Fill the bottom of your lungs first, then bring it to the top as you breathe through your nose. Breath out slowly. Feel the tension flowing out.

TENSE-RELAX MUSCLES:

Tighten the muscle that you want to relax. Focus on and feel the tension where you have tightened. Now let the muscle become loose and limp. Feel the relaxation flow into the muscle.

MIND QUIETING:

To quiet your mind first, focus on your breathing. As you breathe in say slowly to yourself "I am" and as you breathe out, say slowly to yourself "calm." When your mind feels calm you may focus only on your breathing, with no thoughts at all.



BREATHING OUT (EXHALING) WITH THE DIAPHRAGM



BREATHING IN (INHALING) WITH THE DIAPHRAGM

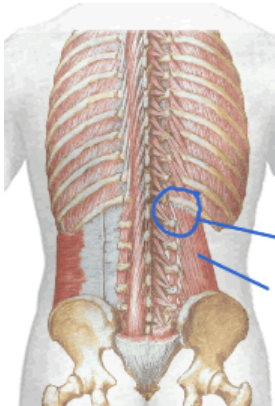
An Answer To Your Pain

If you have muscle pain — if you have a hip pain or a back pain or a neck pain that has never been diagnosed or treated properly then trigger points are probably the cause of your pain and the information here may well be the answer to your pain.

What exactly are trigger points or “muscle knots”?

When you say that you have “muscle knots,” you are actually talking about myofascial trigger points.

A trigger point is a small patch of tightly contracted muscle — an isolated spasm affecting just a small patch of muscle tissue, as opposed to a whole-muscle spasm like a “charlie horse” in the quadriceps, or a calf cramp. That small patch of knotted muscle is stagnant, literally clenching off its own blood supply, a vicious cycle called “metabolic crisis.”



A “muscle knot” is a trigger point: a small patch of muscle tissue in spasm.

A collection of too many nasty trigger points is called *myofascial pain syndrome* (MPS)

A lot of *trigger points* in a muscle group really cramp its style — literally — potentially causing a fairly spectacular amount of discomfort, not to mention many other surprising side effects.

Muscle knots cause most of the world’s pain ... anonymously

Aches and pains are an extremely common medical problem and trigger points and myofascial pain syndrome are *the most common cause* of undiagnosed and misdiagnosed aches and pains, especially stubborn or recurrent headaches, neck pain and back pain. What makes *trigger points* clinically important — and fascinating — is their unholy triple threat, their ability to:

1. *cause* pain problems,
2. *complicate* pain problems, and
3. *mimic* other pain problems.

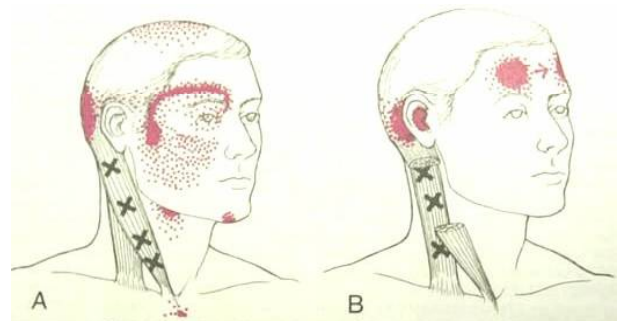
Trigger points can cause pain directly. Although a variety of stresses might predispose you to getting more trigger points, trigger points are quite capable of existing independently of any obvious underlying problem. In a sense, they are a natural and inevitable part of muscle tissue. Just as almost everyone gets some pimples, sooner or later almost everyone gets muscle knots.

Although mild and moderate muscle knots are easily treated, myofascial pain syndrome is basically unknown to many medical professionals, and *unfamiliar* to nearly all of them. Registered massage therapists often recognize and treat this condition because of extensive hands-on experience — it is most easily diagnosed by feel. The handful of other health care professionals that recognize the clinical importance of trigger points often don’t actually know how to relieve them.

Physiotherapists and chiropractors are preoccupied with the body’s structures, exercise therapy, and joint function — to the point where they often miss the obvious, concocting elaborate treatment plans to correct subtle and trivial postural problems when all along just a little pressure on a key muscle knot might have provided relief.

If you have problems with headaches, neck stiffness, carpal tunnel like symptoms, tennis elbow, bursitis, frozen shoulder, back pain, low back stiffness, sciatica, and even shin splints or that nagging sports injury, then you owe it to yourself to find a licensed and qualified clinical massage therapist who specializes in trigger point therapy. Not all massage therapists have the experience to deal with trigger points. It will probably take less than ten minutes to assess your pain for trigger points. Once identified, the therapist will eliminate the trigger, thus taking away the pain cause by the trigger.

Below is a diagram showing trigger points in one of the major neck muscles. The “X” indicates the trigger and the shaded area indicates the site of the pain.



Foods For Top Performance

If you head for the gym regularly or just want to eat better foods, add the following foods to your diet.

1. Broccoli

Vitamins A, C and E, along with selenium, phytochemicals and phenols, establish broccoli's Super Food status. The latter two nutrients function as antioxidants, which help prevent muscle damage and promote muscle recovery by combating free radical destruction.



2. Sweet potatoes

Besides being a complex carbohydrate, sweet potatoes contain generous amounts of two well-known antioxidants, vitamins A and C, which fight inflammation and muscle damage caused by heavy training.

3. Walnuts

This nut has higher antioxidant content than any other. Walnuts also contain arginine, an amino acid the body uses to produce nitric oxide, which is necessary for keeping blood vessels flexible. Walnuts, like salmon, are an excellent source of omega-3s.

4. Soy

Available in a variety of foods, ranging from milk to veggie burgers, soy is unique because it's the only plant-based protein that contains all essential amino acids. Soy also contains isoflavones, which are powerful antioxidants that fight oxidative stress during exercise.

5. Oatmeal

A longtime favorite for bodybuilders, oats have benefits anyone can reap. They are loaded with complex carbs, ideal fuel for high intensity training, because they can be used during anaerobic activity.

6. Salmon

Known for high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, this fish is a great source of protein. The healthy fats prevent and treat inflammatory diseases.

7. Blueberries

A refreshing pick-me-up, blueberries are packed with powerful antioxidants called polyphenols, which lessen inflammation and prevent cellular damage. They also serve as a source of fiber, manganese and vitamin K.

Antioxidants...What do They Do?

When you hear the word "antioxidant," you might think healthy. Too many unfamiliar terms related to antioxidants—and nutrition in general—are thrown around on labels and educational materials, and in the media. Here's a breakdown of antioxidant-related terms you hear or read about, but might be unsure of what they really do.

Antioxidants protect cells from damage caused by free radicals, which our bodies create when they produce energy. Antioxidants interact with and stabilize free radicals to help prevent some damage.

Vitamin A has three main forms: vitamin A1, A2 and A3. Foods rich in vitamin A include liver, sweet potatoes, carrots, milk, egg yolks and mozzarella cheese.

Beta-carotene is found in many orange foods, including sweet potatoes, carrots, cantaloupe, squash, apricots, pumpkin and mangos. Some green leafy vegetables, like collard greens, spinach, and kale, are also beta-carotene-rich.

Lutein is mostly associated with healthy eyes. Leafy green vegetables like the aforementioned are lutein-rich.

Lycopene is a potent antioxidant found in tomatoes, watermelon, guava, papaya, apricots, pink grapefruit and blood oranges, among other foods. An

estimated 85 percent of Americans' lycopene intake comes from tomatoes and tomato-based products.

Selenium—a mineral, not an antioxidant nutrient—is a component of antioxidant enzymes. Plant foods such as rice and wheat are the major dietary sources of selenium in most countries. In the U.S., however, animals that eat grains or plants grown in selenium-rich soil have higher levels of selenium in their muscles.

Vitamin E, also known as alpha-tocopherol, is found in almonds and many oils, including wheat germ, safflower, corn and soybean oils. Mangos, nuts and broccoli are other good sources.

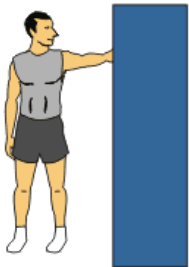


Easy Stretches

Sitting at a desk, driving a truck, waiting on customers, flying to the next business meeting or almost any other activity can cause your muscles to tighten . Tight muscles can create postural imbalances and all kinds of aches and pains.

The easy stretches outlined here can help you stay limber and relaxed. You'll be more alert and focused as well.

Every couple of hours, perform these stretches. Your body will thank you.



Place an outstretched arm against a wall or doorway and lean forward with that shoulder. You should feel a stretch in your chest when you lean forward. Hold for t10-15 seconds. Repeat with the other arm.



Stand and place your hands together like you are going to pray without interlacing your fingers. Keeping the palms together drop your hands towards the floor until you feel a stretch in your forearms.

Sit on a bench with right leg across the opposite knee.] Push down on the right knee and lean forward at the hips until a stretch is felt in your hip. Hold for 10-15 seconds and then repeat with the other leg.



Tuck your chin down towards your chest and allow the back of your neck to stretch. Hold for 10-15 seconds.



Reach out and place your hands onto a wall. Now bend forward so that your shoulders are below your hands. Shift your hips backwards yet keep your hands on the wall. Hold this position to stretch your back and shoulders.



Keeping your chin and head level rotate your head to the right and hold for 10-15 seconds. Allow your neck to stretch and then repeat with the other side.



Place one arm above your head and bend your elbow. Now place your other hand above your head and grab the opposite elbow. Pull on the elbow across behind your head until you feel a good stretch in your triceps. Hold for10-15 econds. Repeat with the other arm.



Thinking About Joining a Gym or Fitness Center?

Choosing a gym or fitness center for you and your family is not as easy as it sounds. Fitness centers are cropping up on every street corner. How do you choose the right one? Here's a checklist to follow:

The Facility

The most important consideration regarding the building itself is whether it is adequately ventilated and air-conditioned. It is unhealthy to workout in a hot, often dusty building so make sure there is good ventilation and working air-conditioning, that there is no dust on counters, equipment, and floors and that, if the facility uses turf-type flooring that management can demonstrate how often it is cleaned. Germs can accumulate on the floors and mats. Open windows and doors let in all kinds of pollen...not good for someone with allergies. Check your Board of Health for information on inspections of the facility.

Does the facility provide water. Many fitness centers will sell you bottled water, but there should be filtered water fountains as well. If you or a family member forgets to bring your own, you should not have to buy water. After all, you paid a good fee to join. Shouldn't water be included?

Does the facility offer showers, storage lockers, clean towels and other equipment for you to use as you end your program. Or is it ok with you that you just leave all sweaty and smelly? Yuck!

The Staff

Many fitness centers advertise that trainers are all certified. This may be true, but often larger gyms and fitness centers hire college students and others to actually work with groups. These staff may not be adequately certified or have first aid training. Typical certifications include CSCS, ACT, and others. Check the certificate.

The Program

If you or a family member are using the gym to enhance a specific sport like hockey or baseball, will the training received be sport-specific? If not, the athlete may not achieve his or her goals. Some centers only offer a generic program, not specific to any sport.

In addition, a prehabilitation assessment should be part of any fitness facility's initial program. Unless you know your weaknesses, your workout will not progress as you hope.

Most gyms and fitness centers conduct on a few assessments like a high jump or short run. This type of assessment does not address the functional movements the body needs to accomplish a task.

The Equipment

Like the facility itself, all equipment needs to be cleaned regularly...not every few days...but every time anyone uses the equipment. What is the facility's policy on keeping equipment clean? Is there hand sanitizer at every station? Are there antiseptic cloths available to wipe down equipment?

We would like to hear from you with your suggestions for articles, comments, and ideas. Please feel free to contact the editor at

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