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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

January 2025

Lee Edition - Monthly

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**KEEP THE
MOMENTUM**

SCULPT AND
STRENGTHEN
WITH MEDICAL
WEIGHT LOSS

**YOUR BEST
SLEEP FOR
IMPROVED
MENTAL
HEALTH**

**ACHIEVING
YOUR NEW
YEAR'S HEALTH
RESOLUTIONS**

**NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTIONS**

TRANSFORMING JOINT
PAIN MANAGEMENT WITH
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KEEP THE MOMENTUM: SCULPT AND STRENGTHEN WITH MEDICAL WEIGHT LOSS

By Ivan R. Bracic, D.C.

When embarking on a medical weight loss journey, many people focus solely on the numbers on the scale, overlooking the hidden impact of rapid weight loss on their muscles and overall health. While shedding pounds is a vital step toward better health, rapid weight loss often comes at a cost: muscle loss. This can affect strength, metabolism, and even physical appearance. But with the right tools and approach, you can achieve a balanced transformation—one that preserves muscle while reducing fat and restoring vitality.

The Downsides of Rapid Weight Loss

Rapid weight loss often leads to a loss of lean muscle mass, which can account for up to 50% of the total weight lost. This phenomenon is concerning because muscle plays a crucial role in maintaining metabolic health, physical strength, and appearance. Muscle loss can result in sagging skin, reduced strength, and even impaired mobility and balance. Common areas like the face may show signs of sagging, giving way to a prematurely aged look.

Additionally, reduced skeletal muscle can lead to poor glucose control, a lower metabolic rate, and a higher likelihood of weight regain. Physically, this manifests as diminished performance, an increased risk of falls, and the dreaded “pancake” face—a hollowed, sagging look that emphasizes the toll rapid weight loss can take.

The Solution: Sculpting and Strengthening with Advanced Technology

To counter these effects, I’ve integrated cutting-edge muscle-building treatments such as Emsculpt Neo, Emface, and Emsella into my practice. These technologies are game-changers, helping patients preserve and build muscle tissue, restore facial tone, and maintain pelvic strength while losing weight.

- **Emsculpt Neo** combines radiofrequency and electromagnetic energy to build and tone muscles while burning fat. This treatment not only enhances muscle mass but also revs up metabolism, making it easier to maintain a healthy weight.

- **Emface** focuses on facial rejuvenation, improving tone and elasticity without the need for needles. It’s an effective solution for lifting and toning facial muscles while reducing signs of aging like sagging skin or a double chin.



- **Emsella** strengthens the pelvic muscles, improving core stability and enhancing overall physical performance.

These treatments, paired with a balanced diet rich in nutrient-dense proteins—especially 30 grams of protein within 30 minutes of exercise—create a synergistic approach that transforms not just the body but also your confidence.

Why a Comprehensive Approach Matters

Medical weight loss should never be one-dimensional. My approach involves educating patients on the potential side effects of rapid weight loss and providing strategies to mitigate these risks. Through advanced muscle-building technology, customized nutrition guidance, and collaborative care with your existing weight-loss plan, we can ensure that your transformation is both healthy and sustainable.

This comprehensive plan not only delivers a toned, youthful appearance but also helps you stay strong and agile—essential for long-term health. Don’t let the aftermath of weight loss undo your hard work. With Emsculpt Neo, Emface, and Emsella, you can sculpt, strengthen, and maintain your success.

Ready to take your results to the next level? Call us at **239-579-4444** and begin your journey toward a stronger, healthier you! Because you deserve more than just weight loss—you deserve total wellness.

Dr. Ivan Bracic: Southwest Florida’s Premier Provider
With over 30 years of experience, Dr. Ivan Bracic is renowned for his expertise in spine, joint and musculoskeletal health. He combines cutting-edge technology with personalized care to achieve exceptional outcomes.

Now is the time to invest in your functional wellness. Call 239-579-4444 for your complimentary consultation with Dr. Bracic and discover how this revolutionary technology can transform your life. Located in Summerlin Crossings Shopping Center, in Fort Myers, and in Lehigh Towne Center in Lehigh, Acre. Dr. Ivan is ready to help you feel stronger, move better, and live fully.

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- Difficulty with Balance
- Muscle Cramps or Spasms
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Peripheral neuropathy is a neurological disorder characterized by damage to the peripheral nervous system, which connects the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body. This condition can result in a range of symptoms, including numbness, tingling, burning sensations, and weakness, typically affecting the hands and feet. Common causes include diabetes, chemotherapy, autoimmune diseases, and certain medications. The chronic pain associated with peripheral neuropathy can significantly impact a patient's quality of life, often proving challenging to treat effectively with conventional methods.

In recent years, innovative technologies have emerged to address the limitations of traditional treatments for neuropathic pain. One such advancement is the neoGEN-series system, a cutting-edge approach to managing peripheral neuropathy symptoms. This technology utilizes a form of electrical stimulation that goes beyond conventional transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) or electrical muscle stimulation (EMS) methods.

Initial clinical studies and patient reports suggest that the neoGEN-series system may offer significant pain relief and improved sensation for many individuals suffering from peripheral neuropathy. Some users have reported reduced reliance on pain medications and enhanced overall function in daily activities. However, as with any medical treatment, results can vary among individuals, and the effectiveness of the neoGEN-series system may depend on factors such as the underlying cause and severity of the neuropathy.

While promising, it's important to note that more extensive research is needed to fully establish the long-term efficacy and safety profile of the neoGEN-series system. Patients considering this treatment option should consult with their healthcare providers to determine if it's appropriate for their specific condition and to develop a comprehensive management plan.

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New Year's Resolutions: Transforming Joint Pain Management with Biologic Treatments

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

As the new year approaches, many individuals find themselves confronting a persistent challenge that threatens their resolution to become more active and healthy: chronic joint pain. Traditional approaches often involve temporary relief methods like steroid injections, but emerging biologic treatments offer a more comprehensive and long-term solution to managing joint discomfort and improving overall mobility.

The Limitations of Conventional Pain Management

For years, patients have relied on conventional pain management techniques that primarily mask symptoms rather than address underlying causes. Steroid injections, while providing temporary relief, are a short-term solution that can potentially mask progressive joint damage. These treatments offer quick but fleeting comfort, often leading patients into a cycle of repeated interventions without addressing the root of their joint issues.

The Hidden Costs of Temporary Solutions

Repeated steroid injections come with significant drawbacks:

- Potential cartilage deterioration
- Increased risk of joint infection
- Temporary pain relief that doesn't resolve underlying inflammation
- Potential weakening of surrounding tissues
- Masking of progressive joint damage

Biologic Treatments: A Revolutionary Approach

Biologic treatments represent a paradigm shift in joint pain management. Unlike traditional methods that simply cover up pain, these innovative therapies target the underlying mechanisms of joint inflammation and degradation. By focusing on the body's immune response and cellular processes, biologic treatments offer a more holistic and sustainable approach to joint health.

Key Advantages of Biologic Treatments

1. Targeted Inflammation Reduction: Biologics work at the cellular level to interrupt inflammatory processes, providing more precise and effective relief compared to broad-spectrum treatments.

2. Regenerative Potential: Many biologic treatments stimulate the body's natural healing mechanisms, potentially helping to repair damaged joint tissues rather than simply numbing pain.



3. Personalized Treatment: Advanced biologics can be tailored to an individual's specific genetic markers and inflammatory profiles, ensuring more effective and personalized interventions.

Implementing a Comprehensive Joint Health Strategy

For those making new year's resolutions focused on improved mobility and reduced pain, a multi-faceted approach is crucial:

Medical Interventions

- Consult with rheumatologists and orthopedic specialists
- Explore cutting-edge biologic treatment options
- Consider comprehensive diagnostic imaging to understand joint health
- Discuss personalized treatment plans

Lifestyle Modifications

- Incorporate low-impact exercises like swimming and cycling
- Maintain a healthy weight to reduce joint stress
- Practice regular stretching and mobility exercises
- Consume anti-inflammatory diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids

Emerging Treatment Options

- Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy
- Stem cell treatments
- Peptides
- Exosomes
- Advanced monoclonal antibody therapies
- Genetic and molecular targeted interventions
- Focused Shockwave therapy

The Psychological Impact of Effective Pain Management

Beyond physical relief, effective joint pain management can dramatically improve mental health. By providing hope and tangible improvements, biologic treatments help individuals reclaim their quality of life, enabling them to pursue new year's resolutions with genuine enthusiasm and confidence.

Conclusion

As medical science continues to advance, the approach to joint pain is evolving from mere symptom management to comprehensive healing. This new year presents an opportunity to embrace innovative treatments that offer real solutions, transforming joint health from a source of limitation to a pathway of renewed mobility and well-being.

Consulting with healthcare professionals remains the most critical step in developing a personalized joint health strategy that aligns with individual needs and goals.

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WHY PRIORITIZING A HEARING SCREENING IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR WELL-BEING

By John Nobile - HAS (Hearing Aid Specialist), BC-HIS, ACA

As the calendar turns anew, embracing the opportunities of a fresh year often involves setting resolutions focused on health and wellness. Among the crucial yet overlooked aspects of well-being, the importance of a hearing screening stands out significantly.

In a world that constantly bombards us with sounds, our hearing health can easily be taken for granted. Yet, the significance of ensuring optimal hearing capability cannot be overstated. It's not merely about the ability to detect sounds but encompasses our overall mental, emotional, and social well-being.

Starting the new year with a hearing screening can be a proactive step towards preserving and improving our auditory abilities. Many are unaware that hearing loss often occurs gradually, and its signs might not be immediately noticeable. This makes regular screenings essential, especially for individuals above 50, as age-related hearing loss is common. However, even younger individuals can be affected by various factors like exposure to loud noises, genetic predispositions, or underlying health conditions.

The impact of untreated hearing loss extends far beyond difficulty in hearing. It can lead to social isolation, affecting relationships, job performance, and mental health. Research suggests a strong correlation between untreated hearing loss and cognitive decline, including conditions like dementia. By addressing hearing issues early through screenings, one can mitigate these potential risks and maintain a higher quality of life.

Moreover, the technological advancements in hearing aids and assistive devices have revolutionized the way individuals manage hearing loss. Early detection through screenings enables timely interventions, facilitating access to these cutting-edge solutions. Modern hearing devices are discreet, equipped with innovative features that enhance sound quality, and can be tailored to individual needs, providing a renewed sense of confidence and connection to the world.



However, the societal stigma surrounding hearing loss often deters individuals from seeking screenings or utilizing assistive technologies. Embracing a culture of proactive hearing care can break down these barriers, encouraging people to prioritize their auditory health just as they do their vision or dental care. Normalizing routine hearing screenings as part of an annual health check-up can significantly contribute to this cultural shift.

Furthermore, businesses and workplaces play a pivotal role in fostering a hearing-friendly environment. Encouraging and facilitating employee screenings can enhance productivity and foster inclusivity, creating a more supportive workplace for individuals with hearing impairments.

This new year, amidst setting fitness goals and career aspirations, let's not overlook the significance of our auditory health. Making a resolution

to prioritize a hearing screening can be the gateway to a world of improved communication, enhanced cognitive abilities, and enriched relationships.

In conclusion, a hearing screening isn't just a check-up; it's a gateway to a world of improved communication, enhanced cognitive abilities, and enriched relationships. As the new year dawns, let's prioritize our auditory health and embrace the possibilities that come with hearing the world more clearly.

John Nobile, HAS, BC-HIS, ACA is a licensed hearing aid specialist and an ACA-certified audioprosthetologist who is also board-certified in hearing instrument sciences. With over 55 years of experience, he has transformed thousands of lives in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, FL, by providing his patients with the gift of sound. He is also a former veteran committed to providing all veterans with free services.



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6 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR YOUR FEET

By Dr. Lori DeBlasi, DPM, FACFAS

#1: Wear proper shoes/footwear

Make sure your shoes are properly fitted and have a high and wide toe box to accommodate the front of your foot and toes. Periodically, measure the size and width of your foot when shopping for new shoes. Use the size and width as your starting point. Every shoe brand is not the same and consistent in soled and widths. A size 8 and one brand may be a quite different fit than a size 8 in another brand. Always shop for shoes later in the day as your feet will swell as the day goes on. If you purchase them too early in the day, they may be too tight later in the day when you are trying to wear them.

#2: Wear appropriate socks

Wearing nonslip socks can help avoid painful blisters. Also, socks made from bamboo and wool blend socks are more absorbent and are more efficient at keeping moisture away from the feet. Some socks are more cushioned, and others may provide some extra arch compression. Always wear the same type of sock you plan to wear the shoes in. This also can contribute to the proper fit.

#3: Start new workout and exercise routines GRADUALLY

Always start the time and/or distance of your workouts gradually and increase it as your stamina allows. Too much too soon can lead to overuse injuries such as stress fractures, tendon strains or sprains.

#4: Stretch!

Stretching is beneficial both before and after exercise. Stretching prior to exercise and workouts is a good habit to start. Preworkout stretching improves blood flow and allows preparation for the muscles to know that they are about to work out. Warming up the muscles and tendons also can lead to decrease in overuse injuries. Stretching after a workout, when your muscles are already warmed up, is the best opportunity to improve flexibility.

#5: Set realistic goals

Start out with small and achievable goals. This gives you your best chance of success for maintaining a long-term exercise routine. You should be able to build on your exercise plan as you achieve these goals. Success in achieving these goals will also keep you motivated to continue. You may need to adjust your goals to make them achievable.



#6: Listen to your body

When you are working out, remember harder and faster is not necessarily better. Be very mindful of your limits because you are not used to working out every day. If you feel any pain or discomfort, stop and rest before continuing. Pushing through the pain is not recommended, as this can lead to injuries. High impact exercises can sometimes lead to injuries. If your foot hurts, find a low-impact alternative, such as swimming, cycling, or aqua jogging.

Disclaimer: This content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

Lori DeBlasi, DPM, FACFAS

Dr. Lori DeBlasi is certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery®. Dr. DeBlasi works at Family Foot & Leg Center at the Estero office. She is accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call 239-430-3668 or visit www.NaplesPodiatrist.com.



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MEMORY MATTERS

By Neuropsychiatric Research Center of SW Florida

"Why is my wife so mean to me?" "My grandfather got downright ornery, wouldn't do anything we asked, and he yells all the time." "My mother is always so nervous and fidgety. When I tell her to relax, she says unkind things to me."

Are any of these situations familiar? For individuals living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, sometimes it may seem like your loved one is being difficult. As a caregiver, this can be very frustrating. One of the best phrases to remember goes like this: *a person with dementia is not giving you a hard time they are having a hard time*. What does that mean exactly?

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disease that impacts everything the brain controls. Memory, speech, logical thinking, reasoning, executive functioning, and expressions, are just some of the things that can be impacted. And while it may seem that someone is behaving in a hateful, ornery, or unkind manner, it can be helpful to realize that what is being seen and experienced is likely a result of the impact of the disease on the person. Some of the behavioral expressions may be a result of an underlying unmet need.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, the individual with the disease is experiencing a biologically profound loss of their ability to negotiate new information and stimulus. This is due to disease, versus their personality. This can be difficult to understand for those who do not have the cognitive impact of this disease. To make things more challenging, sometimes the behavior observed is different from day to day, even hour to hour.

It is estimated that between 30 to 50% of individuals with Alzheimer's disease experience agitation and irritability at some time during the course of their illness. What we may see is restlessness, nervousness, short temperedness, expressions of frustration and lack of cooperation. Some individuals may pace, some may perform repetitive motions, others may be quicker to argue and raise their voice and may appear to be in total denial of the facts we present to them.

What looks like denial in someone with the disease may be related to the changes in the brain which impact cognition and awareness. As a result, approaches to address our observations and concerns may not be effective or achieve the response desired. Having a factual, logic based response many times is not effective.

What approaches and techniques can work? Unfortunately, it is true that responses that can be effective with one person may not work with another. As many caregivers know, the same approach used with the same individual may have a different response on a day to day and even on an hour to hour basis. Having some general considerations can be helpful. Here's an acronym to help: **CARE**

C: Consistently Calm: That may seem impossible some days, and that is to be expected. Doing your best to respond to what you are seeing in a calm, nonjudgmental and caring manner can help.

A: Appropriate Activities: Many times, when individuals are bored or don't have structure, some challenging behavioral expressions may present themselves. Many things can be considered an activity and it's important that the chosen activity is appropriate for the individual and tailored to their interests as much as possible.

Another important consideration is time of day, length of activity and inviting someone to participate versus insisting on participation. A saying that can reflect interacting with someone with Alzheimer's disease is "the more you insist, the more they will resist." None of us like to be told what to do and being invited or asked to do something, versus being told may be more successful.

R: Regular Routine: Keeping a consistent routine, based on your loved one's habits can help decrease anxiety and preserve independence. The Alzheimer's Association suggests considering the person's likes, dislikes, strengths, and abilities when developing the routine. Knowing the times of day that the person functions best and allowing ample time for activities is essential. While a consistent schedule is helpful, building in flexibility and going with the flow is also an important consideration.



E: Engagement and Empathy: Include the person in everyday activities and let them help, even if they don't do things exactly the way you hope they would. Include them in things they enjoy. Participating in your faith community, helping in the garden, running errands, having a meal are all ways to engage. Being empathetic and understanding are also tools that can be valuable. It can be challenging to be a caregiver, and recognizing that it must also be difficult for the person with the disease as well provides perspective.

Have you noticed subtle changes in your loved one's memory? It's not uncommon for memory lapses to occur as we age, but when they start impacting daily life, it's essential to take action.

Connect with the experienced team at the Neuropsychiatric Research Center at 239-939-7777, where we have a proven track record of helping individuals and families navigate memory related challenges. Remember, you're not alone on this journey. #MemoriesMatter

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<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/anxiety-agitation>

Agitation and Dementia: Prevention and Treatment Strategies in Acute and Chronic Conditions - PMC (nih.gov)



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Acts and The Terraces at Bonita Springs Announce Affiliation

Acts Retirement-Life Communities, one of the nation's largest not-for-profit senior living organizations, and The Terraces at Bonita Springs, a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) in Bonita Springs, Florida, have announced an agreement to affiliate. Pending regulatory approvals, The Terraces at Bonita Springs will join the Acts family of CCRCs as an affiliate member. The affiliation is expected to be finalized on November 1, 2024.

The Terraces at Bonita Springs, which opened in 2013, is home to approximately 245 residents. The six-story community is currently managed by SanteFe Senior Living and offers a full continuum of living including independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing residences, along with other specialty services.

As part of its strategic growth plans, Acts will be expanding its presence in Florida, where it operates five other senior living CCRCs including Mease

Life in Dunedin, Azalea Trace in Pensacola, Indian River Estates in Vero Beach, and Edgewater at Boca Pointe and St. Andrews Estates in Boca Raton.

Upon completion of this affiliation, the Acts organization will be comprised of 28 senior living CCRCs located in nine states, further solidifying its position as the third largest not-for-profit senior living organization in the United States. The Acts communities are located in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida.

"We are excited to welcome The Terraces at Bonita Springs into the Acts family," said Gerald T. Grant, CEO of Acts. "This affiliation is an incredible opportunity to expand our presence in Florida and a significant step in our ongoing mission to serve more older adults with exceptional hospitality, services, and care that are the hallmark of Acts."

Ron Jennette, President and Chief Operating Officer of SanteFe Senior Living, echoed the enthusiasm: "This is a great time for The Terraces at Bonita

Springs to be joining forces with Acts, one of the nation's premier senior living organizations. We believe this is a perfect opportunity to strengthen the community, provide new opportunities for growth and innovation, and benefit both residents and team members well into the future."

**Are you interested in learning more about
Acts and The Terraces at Bonita Springs?**

Schedule a community tour today by calling
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Advanced Prostate Treatments: AquaBlation and HIFU Offer Minimally Invasive Solutions for BPH and Prostate Cancer

At Urology Experts, patients seeking treatment for prostate conditions now have access to two cutting-edge, minimally invasive procedures: AquaBlation and High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU). These innovative treatments represent significant advancements in urological care, offering precision, reduced recovery times, and fewer side effects compared to traditional surgical approaches.

AquaBlation: Precision Water Therapy for BPH

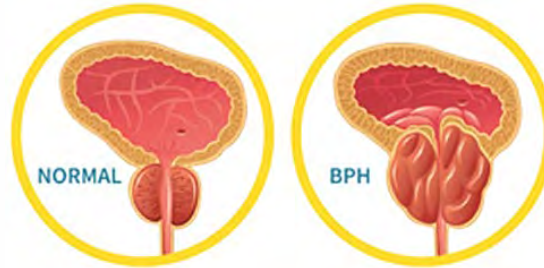
AquaBlation therapy stands at the forefront of treating Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), a common condition where the prostate enlarges and causes urinary symptoms in aging men. This revolutionary procedure utilizes the power of robotically-controlled waterjet technology to remove excess prostate tissue with remarkable precision. The treatment has shown exceptional success rates in addressing BPH symptoms while minimizing the risk of complications.

During AquaBlation, urologists at Urology Experts employ advanced imaging technology to create a customized treatment map of the prostate. The procedure combines real-time ultrasound imaging with high-velocity water jets to precisely remove obstructive prostate tissue while preserving vital structures. This level of accuracy helps maintain sexual function and urinary continence, addressing key concerns that patients often have about prostate procedures.

The procedure typically takes less than an hour to complete, with most patients returning home within 24 hours. Recovery times are notably shorter than traditional surgical methods, with many men experiencing significant symptom improvement within weeks. Clinical studies have shown that AquaBlation delivers consistent results regardless of prostate size, making it an excellent option for men with prostates of varying dimensions. The procedure's effectiveness has been documented in numerous clinical trials, demonstrating sustained improvement in urinary symptoms and quality of life.

HIFU: Targeted Treatment for Prostate Cancer

High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) represents another breakthrough treatment available



at Urology Experts, specifically designed for treating localized prostate cancer. This non-surgical, radiation-free procedure uses focused sound waves to heat and precisely destroy targeted prostate cancer cells while leaving surrounding healthy tissue unharmed. The technology behind HIFU has evolved significantly over the years, making it an increasingly popular option for men seeking alternatives to traditional cancer treatments.

HIFU's precision targeting capability allows urologists to treat specific areas of the prostate where cancer has been detected. The procedure is performed under advanced imaging guidance, ensuring accurate delivery of the ultrasound energy to the intended treatment areas. This focal therapy approach minimizes the risk of side effects commonly associated with whole-gland treatments such as radical prostatectomy or radiation therapy. The ability to preserve healthy tissue while effectively treating cancerous areas represents a significant advancement in prostate cancer care.

Patients undergoing HIFU at Urology Experts particularly appreciate that the procedure is performed on an outpatient basis, typically requiring only a few hours at the facility. Most men can return to their normal activities within days, experiencing minimal discomfort during recovery. The preservation of quality of life is a significant advantage, with lower rates of urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction compared to traditional treatments.

Choosing the Right Treatment

The specialists at Urology Experts work closely with each patient to determine the most appropriate treatment option. Factors considered include the specific condition (BPH or prostate cancer), prostate size, symptom severity, and individual patient preferences. Both AquaBlation and HIFU offer the advantages of minimally invasive approaches, but each serves different clinical needs.

Regular monitoring and follow-up care are integral parts of the treatment protocol at Urology Experts. The medical team provides comprehensive support throughout the treatment journey, from initial consultation through post-procedure recovery and beyond. This includes detailed pre-procedure preparation guidance, ongoing monitoring during recovery, and long-term follow-up to ensure optimal outcomes.

For men seeking advanced solutions for prostate conditions, Urology Experts' offering of both AquaBlation and HIFU demonstrates their commitment to providing state-of-the-art treatment options. These innovative procedures represent the future of urological care, combining technological advancement with improved patient outcomes and quality of life. The availability of these cutting-edge treatments underscores Urology Experts' position as a leader in modern urological care, offering patients access to the latest and most effective treatment options available.



**Alejandro Miranda-Sousa, MD
& Michael Binner, MD**

For more information, please visit our website www.UrologyExperts.com or call Urology Experts today at (239) 226-2727 or email info@UrologyExperts.com to schedule your consultation!



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SHEDDING LIGHT ON NATIONAL GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma, often referred to as the "silent thief of sight," silently robs millions of individuals of their vision worldwide. January marks National Glaucoma Awareness Month, a crucial time to educate and raise awareness about this prevalent eye condition that affects over 70 million individuals worldwide.

Glaucoma is not just one eye disease but a group of conditions that damage the optic nerve, often caused by increased pressure within the eye. The danger lies in its asymptomatic nature during the early stages, gradually stealing peripheral vision and, if left undiagnosed and untreated, progressing to blindness.

This observance month aims to highlight the importance of regular eye check-ups, as early detection is fundamental in managing and preventing irreversible vision loss. Vision screenings and comprehensive eye exams can catch glaucoma before noticeable symptoms develop, allowing for timely intervention and treatment to preserve sight.

Understanding the risk factors is crucial. Age, family history, certain medical conditions like diabetes, and even race (African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are at higher risk) can contribute to an increased likelihood of developing glaucoma. However, anyone can be affected, making awareness and proactive eye care vital for everyone.

The two primary forms, open-angle and closed-angle glaucoma, present distinct mechanisms affecting the drainage of aqueous humor within the eye. Open-angle glaucoma involves resistance in the trabecular meshwork, leading to increased intraocular pressure. Conversely, closed-angle glaucoma results from blockages in both the uveoscleral drains and the trabecular meshwork, often due to an impaired iris.

Recognizing symptoms is crucial. While early-stage glaucoma may not manifest noticeable signs, eventual symptoms can include reduced vision, peripheral vision loss, and eye redness, particularly acute in closed-angle glaucoma cases. However, the absence of symptoms doesn't confirm the absence of the condition, emphasizing the necessity of regular eye exams.

Diagnosing glaucoma involves a comprehensive eye examination, including visual field tests, tonometry to measure intraocular pressure, and a dilated eye exam. Advanced techniques like optical coherence tomography aid in objectively assessing optic nerve fiber loss.

Treatment primarily aims at reducing intraocular pressure. Hypotensive eye drops, particularly prostaglandin analogs, serve as the frontline treatment, improving fluid drainage. Second-line drugs and procedures like selective laser trabeculoplasty or trabeculectomy are also employed to manage pressure and facilitate better drainage.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for glaucoma, underscoring the importance of early detection and consistent management. Lifetime monitoring remains crucial, but advancements in treatments, including laser procedures and surgeries, offer hope in mitigating its impact on vision loss.

Prevention is anchored in regular eye check-ups. Early detection drastically improves prognosis, making annual eye exams, especially for those over 40, an integral part of glaucoma prevention.

While lifestyle adjustments may offer some protection, they aren't foolproof against glaucoma. However, adopting a healthy lifestyle in conjunction with regular eye screenings serves as a proactive approach in managing this sight-threatening condition.

In conclusion, understanding the differences between open-angle and closed-angle glaucoma, recognizing their symptoms, and engaging in routine eye exams are fundamental in managing this condition and preserving vision health. As advancements continue, early diagnosis and vigilant management remain the best defense against the progression of glaucoma-induced vision impairment.

Remember, sight is a precious gift, and preserving it starts with awareness and regular eye examinations. Let's shine a light on glaucoma this January and beyond, ensuring that sight-saving knowledge reaches everyone, everywhere.



Albert Smolyar M.D.
LASIK, Cataract & Lens
Replacement Surgeon

Dr. Smolyar is a board-certified cataract and refractive surgeon with over 25 years of experience.

He received his medical degree from Kursk State Medical University in the former Soviet Union. He completed an ophthalmology residency at the University of Louisville and a fellowship in Neuro-Ophthalmology at Michigan State University. He completed another ophthalmology residency at Ben Gurion University in Israel prior to coming to the United States.

Dr. Smolyar specializes in premium cataract and lens replacement surgery, as well as laser vision correction with LASIK, photorefractive keratectomy (PRK) and phototherapeutic keratectomy (PTK). He also has significant expertise in cosmetic and reconstructive eyelid surgery. Dr. Smolyar is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology. He was in private practice in Louisville, Kentucky for many years where he also served as a clinical Associate Professor at University of Louisville Department of Ophthalmology.

He has been living in Fort Myers since 2018 with his wife and dogs; they have raised three children together. In his spare time, Dr. Smolyar enjoys swimming, scuba diving, kayaking and fishing. He has dedicated time to providing free surgical eye care in underserved countries and considers that to be one of his passions.



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ALIGNMENT MATTERS:

A Journey Toward Inner and Outer Strength with Pilates

By Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

Self-love is more than just a buzzword—it's vital to living a balanced and fulfilling life. Self-love is about honoring and appreciating your body, mind, and emotions. In the hustle and bustle of modern life, self-love can often take a back seat. We may prioritize work, family, and social obligations but neglect to care for our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. One powerful way to practice self-love is through the mindful movement of Pilates. By fostering a deeper connection between the mind and body, Pilates offers physical benefits and the emotional and mental space to cultivate a more profound sense of self-love.

Foundations of Self-Love

Self-love is an ongoing practice involving actions that support one's mental, emotional, and physical health. It consists of setting boundaries, engaging in enjoyable activities, and recognizing one's strengths without judgment.

At its core, Pilates embodies many of these principles. Rooted in mindful movement, Pilates encourages practitioners to be present with their bodies, listen to their needs, and treat themselves with kindness and patience. It's more than just a workout; it's an opportunity to connect deeply with oneself, cultivate body awareness, and build strength from the inside out.

Pilates as a Path to Self-Awareness

Self-awareness, a cornerstone of self-love, helps us tune into our thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Losing touch with ourselves in the rush of daily life is easy, but Pilates helps close that gap. It reconnects you with your body by requiring focused attention on every movement, breath, and muscle engagement.

Each Pilates exercise is performed with precision and control, sharpening your awareness of how your body moves and reacts. This mindfulness doesn't stop in class—it carries into your daily life. You start noticing how your body feels throughout the day, how stress affects your posture, or where you hold tension. With this awareness, you can make intentional choices to support your well-being, like adjusting your posture, taking a deep breath, or permitting yourself to rest.

Embracing Where You Are

Acceptance is at the heart of self-love—embracing where you are in the moment without judgment. Pilates encourages this mindset by teaching us to approach our bodies with compassion.



A beautiful thing about Pilates is that it meets you where you are. From a seasoned athlete or just beginning your fitness journey, Pilates can be adapted to your individual needs. Rather than focusing on what your body can't do, Pilates encourages you to appreciate what your body can do. This mindset shift can foster greater self-compassion as you learn to celebrate your progress—no matter how small—rather than comparing yourself to others or striving for unrealistic perfection.

Strengthening the Body and the Mind

Pilates is well-known for strengthening the core, improving posture, and enhancing flexibility, but its benefits go beyond fitness. The deliberate, controlled movements promote mindfulness, helping reduce stress and anxiety by focusing on the present moment.

As you progress, you build both physical and mental resilience. Pilates teaches you to overcome challenges, whether mastering a new exercise or holding a difficult pose. These small victories boost confidence and reinforce the strength and capability of both mind and body.

A Balanced Approach to Wellness

Pilates is a holistic practice that emphasizes balance—balance between strength and flexibility, effort and ease, and mind and body. This balanced approach mirrors the principles of self-love, which is all about finding harmony within ourselves.

For many people, self-love also means learning to balance the demands of life—work, family, and personal time. Pilates offers a structured yet flexible practice that fits even the busiest schedules. Whether you dedicate 10 minutes or an hour to your Pilates practice, every session is an opportunity to reconnect with yourself and realign your priorities. Over time, this commitment to self-care through movement can spill over into other areas of life, making it easier to maintain balance in relationships, work, and self-care routines.

Pilates as a Tool for Healing

Pilates is a powerful tool for healing, especially for those recovering from injury, illness, or emotional trauma. Its low-impact movements make it accessible to all fitness levels, helping to restore mobility, build strength, and release tension.

For individuals feeling disconnected from their bodies due to pain or trauma, Pilates offers a way to regain control and rebuild trust in their physical abilities. This process fosters self-love as practitioners learn to care for their bodies with compassion and kindness.

Cultivating Gratitude for Your Body

Gratitude is one of the purest forms of self-love. Pilates helps you appreciate your body's unique abilities through intentional movement. Instead of focusing on flaws, you learn to honor your body's strength, flexibility, and resilience.

Through consistent practice, Pilates helps you build a profound connection rooted in love, respect, and gratitude. As you move through each exercise, you begin to appreciate the strength, flexibility, and resilience your body provides. This gratitude extends beyond the Pilates studio, helping you approach life with a more compassionate and loving mindset toward yourself.

A Practice of Self-Love

Pilates is more than a fitness routine—it's a practice of self-love. It nurtures the mind, body, and emotional resilience by fostering mindfulness, body awareness, and soul. Through consistent practice, Pilates strengthens your core and relationship with yourself, helping you honor your progress and cultivate love and compassion on and off the mat.

Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

Shannon is a trained movement specialist holding prestigious certifications in STOTT Pilates, a fellowship in Applied Functional Science (FAFS), and a Functional Golf Specialist. She has been studying various movement methods with an emphasis on healing for decades to keep her own body healthy. While Shannon has always been strong and flexible, her body was still fighting aches and pains. After her first Pilates class, she felt a profound sense of well-being, and her aches and pains began to disappear. Trading her pantyhose and high heels for leggings and grip socks Shannon has had the privilege of bringing "Pilates for Everybody" to her community and creating an academy where she mentors aspiring Pilates instructors. Furthermore, Shannon is a master trainer for Club Pilates, Barre Above, and Relief Through Rolling, which focuses on self-myofascial release. She is also certified in other movement modalities including TRX, the MELT Method, BOSU, Gyrotonic, and more.

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DRY JANUARY:

REFRESH YOUR BODY & MIND WITH THE POWER OF EXFOLIATION

As we transition into a new season, it's the ideal time to delve into the art of exfoliation—a transformative skincare ritual that symbolizes renewal, rejuvenation, and a fresh start. Exfoliation transcends beyond achieving a radiant complexion; it's a holistic experience that physically, mentally, and emotionally promotes personal growth and self-care. Dry January is the perfect time to start afresh - and start your year aglow!

1. The Physical Gratification:

By gently removing dead skin cells, unclogging pores, and promoting circulation, exfoliation reveals a fresh, vibrant complexion beneath. Incorporating exfoliating products into your skincare routine enhances the skin's natural renewal process, helping to prevent breakouts and improving the absorption of other skincare products. Beyond its physical benefits, the act of exfoliating provides a refreshing boost to confidence and self-esteem, as glowing skin is truly a source of pride.

To maximize the benefits of a body apply it liberally in the shower or bath on wet skin using gentle, circular motions. Pay special attention to dry areas like feet, legs, arms, and hands, where exfoliation can be particularly effective. After scrubbing, rinse thoroughly with water and pat your skin dry with a soft towel. For more intense hydration, allow the scrub's moisturizing ingredients to soak in for 1-2 minutes before rinsing.

Moreover, the rhythmic motion of scrubbing the skin can be a therapeutic experience. This mindful practice encourages relaxation and serves as a moment to reconnect with oneself amidst a busy day. By intentionally caring for your skin, you not only improve its health but also nurture your overall well-being, making exfoliation a cherished self-care ritual that revitalizes both body and mind.



2. An Emotional Transformation:

The art of exfoliation transcends mere skin care; it emerges as a therapeutic practice that fosters mindfulness and promotes self-connection. By dedicating time to this ritual, you can release not only physical impurities but also emotional burdens. Opt for products crafted with care, as their soothing scents and natural ingredients come together to create a serene pause in your hectic day, uplifting your mood and enhancing your overall sense of well-being.

Naples Soap Company's Vitamin C Orange Blossom & Vanilla Sugar Scrub offers a refreshingly light scent of orange blossoms, oranges and sweet vanilla. The fresh aroma of orange blossoms and oranges provides uplifting citrus aromatherapy, reducing stress and anxiety while boosting energy and motivation. Meanwhile, the sweet, warm scent of vanilla evokes comfort and tranquility, creating a calming atmosphere that fosters well-being.

3. The Mental Reset:

The act of exfoliation brings with it a mental reset. In a world filled with chaos and constant change, incorporating this simple yet effective practice can serve as a grounding routine. As individuals scrub away the old layers of skin, they can metaphorically release negative thoughts, stressors, and worries that weigh them down.

A-scented face scrub, such as Naples Soap Company's Coffee Face Scrub, is a fantastic addition to your morning routine, providing a refreshing start and serving as a mental reset. The invigorating aroma stimulates the senses, awakening your mind and boosting your energy for the day ahead. Gently massaging our Coffee Face Scrub polishes the skin and enhances circulation, giving your complexion a radiant glow. Formulated with finely ground coffee beans, cocoa butter, and fractionated coconut oil, it cleanses away dullness and rehydrates for a fresh look.



We invite you to explore the therapeutic benefits of exfoliation can facilitate this holistic journey of self-renewal. By integrating these practices into daily routines, individuals can refresh not only their skincare regimen but also their overall mindset and emotional well-being.



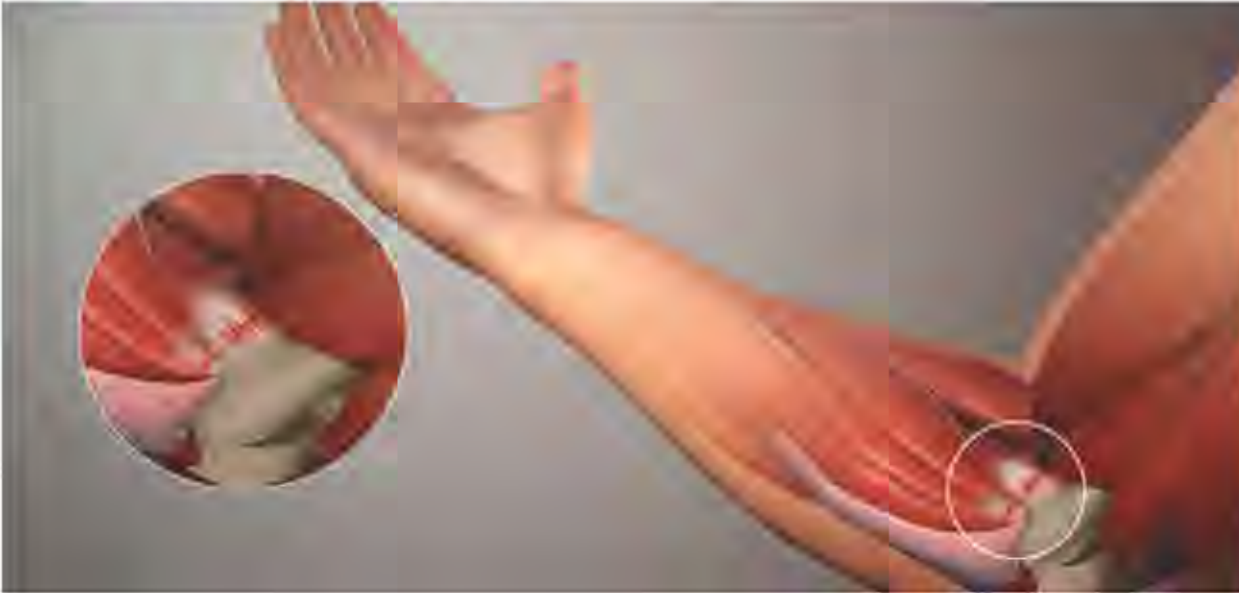
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WHAT IS GOLFER'S ELBOW AND HOW TO TREAT?

By Dr. Scott Bradley PT, DPT, ECS



If you have pain on the inside of your elbow with certain movements then you might have Golfer's elbow or what we call in the business Medial Epicondylitis. Golfer's elbow can happen to almost anyone and can cause pain and weakness with normal activities like doing a biceps curl, opening a jar, carrying objects or putting things on a shelf. Golfer's elbow is also common in a wide variety of sports including swimming, baseball, golf, softball and even tennis.

Golfer's elbow is typically located at the common flexor tendon origin at the inside of the elbow closest to the body, which is where most of the forearm muscles that flex the wrist are located. The two muscles most commonly affected with this injury are the Pronator Teres and Flexor Carpi Radialis.

Golfer's elbow is caused by repetitive microtrauma to the common flexor tendon at the medial epicondyle of the elbow, hence why it is called medial epicondylitis in the medical community. Golfer's elbow can be an acute or chronic issue. Acutely, an average person will play 9 holes or do some housework with power tools and have some nagging pain on the inside of the elbow, which usually resolves within an hour after activity. The nagging pain is caused because the load applied on the muscles exceeds the body's ability to handle, resulting in microtrauma to the area which in turn results in pain. This is the most common case and if not properly addressed it can become a chronic issue which will require more intensive therapy.

My Doctor Recommended an Injection, Is it a Good Idea?

Instant relief of pain will always sound good, but will it accelerate the healing process? The answer is probably not. The cortisone injection will assist in relieving the nagging pain but little else, it will not fix the underlying issue associated with Golfer's elbow. Once the pain is gone many people will continue doing the activity that caused the pain. Without the proper exercises and stretches, which will help accelerate the healing process you will have pain again once the injection wears off. The best advice I give my patients is that if the pain is unbearable a cortisone injection may assist in relieving the initial pain but physical therapy will help fix the underlying problem. This also supported by the research.

This research article found that those who had a corticosteroid injection had reduced pain at 6 weeks following the injection but had no difference in symptoms compared to the control group at 3 and 12 months.¹

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231215824_Evaluation_and_Management_of_Elbow_Tendinopathy

How Do I Fix It?

Exercise - Duh! Below are some simple beginner exercises you can do to help accelerate the healing process and reduce pain.

Wrist Flexion Isometrics

- Bend the wrist of your injured hand slightly.
- Place the opposite hand on the palm of your hand.
- Press into hand for 6 seconds and repeat 20 times.

Forearm Pronation Isometrics

- Place arm on table with thumb up and then angled with the palm side slightly down.
- Place opposite hand on the top aspect of the inside of the forearm.
- Then press forearm into hand for 6 seconds and repeat 20 times.

Elbow Flexion Isometrics

- Place your affected elbow bent to about 90 degrees with your palm facing upward on a table.
- Place your opposite hand on your affected wrist.
- Press wrist into hand for 6 seconds and repeat 20 times.

Wrist flexion Stretch Arm Straight

- Hold the arm to be stretched straight out in front of you with your palm facing toward the ceiling. Grasp your hand with the other hand, and slowly bend the wrist downward so that the fingers point toward the floor.
- Hold this stretch for 30 seconds, repeat 3 times.

Wrist flexion Stretch Arm Bent

- Bend the affected elbow so that it is at a 90 degree angle.
- Place the other hand on the affected arm's fingers.
- Gently pull back on your fingers until a stretch is felt.
- Hold this stretch for 30 seconds, repeat 3 times.

There is no one size fits all recovery program for Golfer's elbow. The earlier you address the symptoms the faster your recovery and the less restriction in your daily activity. A combination of conservative treatments to start with consisting of: isometrics, eccentrics and gentle stretches are great starting points. If you are still having trouble tackling the nagging pain on the inside of your elbow seek out a qualified physical therapist to help you in your recovery process. Most Golfer's elbows resolve within a year with no surgery. So stay consistent with your exercises and hopefully you will be back to playing 18 holes in no time.

Reference:

1. Taylor SA, Hannafin JA (2012) Evaluation and management of elbow tendinopathy. *Sports Health* 4: 384-393.



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Integrative Medicine: What Kind of Hippie Dippie Stuff is That?

Integrative medicine is a partnership between a health care professional and a person seeking optimal health and wellness. The two parties work together to achieve optimal health for body, mind and spirit. There is active discourse aimed at achieving the goals decided upon. The patient is very active in the process, and ultimately achieves much more than the absence of disease. He or she achieves optimal health.

As health care costs rise, and insurance covers less, we must maintain our health as much as possible. We must decrease our need to enter the medical system. One way to do that is by achieving optimal health and reducing dependence on prescription medication. Dr. Doreen DeStefano, DNP, NHD can help you do just that. Check out her approach in the vignette below.

Interviewer: So I guess we'll start with the basics: What's your name?

Doreen: Oh good, an easy question! My name is Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

Interviewer: That's a lot of letters after your name. What do they all mean?

Doreen: Haha, yes I know. They mean that I am a Nurse Practitioner with a Doctorate in natural health. I also have a Master's in Public Business Administration, Doctorate of Nursing, and of course, a Masters in Nursing.

Interviewer: So what does that mean, exactly?

Doreen: I am a fully licensed medical practitioner. I can order diagnostic studies, make a diagnosis and prescribe treatment, including medication. However, I believe in partnering with my clients and asking them to participate to a large degree in their health. I don't like to go straight to pharmaceutical support if we can use patient behavior, and naturally occurring things to accomplish the desired goal.

I like to use natural means to repair the body whenever possible. For example, if a patient has high cholesterol we are going to really work with nutrition, exercise, and nutrient supplementation

before we use pharmaceuticals to reduce cholesterol. Of course, it's patient specific. We always do what is in the best interest of the patient.

Interviewer: OK, so say I had high cholesterol I'm already taking medication for it. What would you do?

Doreen: First we would get a full health history, we would do a full physical exam, and I would look at your labs. I would do some of my own testing, like a Cleveland Heart Lab. We know that 50% of heart attacks occur in people with "normal" cholesterol levels. Research shows us that the inflammation of the blood vessel wall is a very important factor that we must measure, and if it's high, we need to lower it. Also, there are different types of cholesterol, some "good" and some "bad". Even within the good and bad cholesterol, there are subtypes that are "good" and "bad". Standard cholesterol testing doesn't tell us all that.

Interviewer: What do you do with all that information?

Doreen: Well, it's different for everyone. But in brief, we can teach our patients how to eat to lower inflammation and decrease "bad" cholesterol and increase "good" cholesterol. We find ways for the patient to move regularly. We find something that they like and can be consistent with. Even gardening is good exercise. We figure it out. We provide lifestyle modification options to create a healthier lifestyle, like maybe eating less red meat, or smoking cessation. We also have natural supplements that the patient can take at home to help decrease inflammation, lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol. We have in office treatments like hyperbaric oxygen and intravenous vitamins and minerals that help to optimize patient health. If the patient ultimately needs a prescription medication, then we use them. But we find that motivated people can usually decrease their cholesterol and inflammation to healthy levels. Then they can reduce or eliminate the need for medication.

Interviewer: It sounds difficult. Is it?



Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NHD, ARNP, DNP

Doreen: Well honestly, integrative medicine isn't for everyone. It's a partnership in health. The patient actually does more work than the practitioner. Diet and lifestyle change isn't easy. Some people don't want to do it. But some people really enjoy it. There are challenges, but the spectacular way that you feel when you optimize your health is beyond comparison.

Interviewer: So essentially, you help people get healthier without drugs as much as possible.

Doreen: Yes. I find I am very much a teacher and a coach. It's a holistic approach. We don't look at anything all by itself. We look at people as part of several environments, their own internal and external environments, and the environment in which they live. Each of those things effects the other. We strive to integrate all those pieces into optimal health.

Interviewer: What is optimal health?

Doreen: That is the state in which you look your best and feel your best physically, emotionally, and spiritually. You are simply your best you.

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Breathing Easier in the New Year:

YOUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO ALLERGY TESTING AND TREATMENT

As we welcome the new year, many individuals are looking to take proactive steps toward better health, and managing allergies is an excellent place to start. Allergy testing and modern treatment options like immunotherapy and sublingual therapy can significantly improve quality of life for those struggling with persistent allergic reactions.

Understanding Allergy Testing: Your First Step to Relief

Allergy testing is a crucial diagnostic tool that helps identify specific substances triggering your immune system's overreaction. There are several methods of allergy testing, each offering unique insights into your body's sensitivities:

1. Skin Prick Test: This is the most common and least invasive method. A healthcare professional will place small amounts of potential allergens on your skin and then lightly prick the skin to allow the substance to enter. After 15-20 minutes, the test site is examined for signs of allergic reactions, such as swelling or redness.

2. Blood Tests: These tests measure your immune system's response to specific allergens by checking the amount of allergy-causing antibodies in your bloodstream. They're particularly useful for individuals who cannot undergo skin tests due to skin conditions or medication interactions.

3. Patch Tests: Typically used to diagnose contact dermatitis, these tests involve applying patches with potential allergens to your skin for 48 hours to detect delayed allergic reactions.

Immunotherapy: A Long-Term Solution to Allergy Management

Once allergies are identified, immunotherapy emerges as a powerful, long-term treatment strategy. This approach gradually desensitizes your immune system to specific allergens, reducing the severity of allergic reactions over time.

Traditional Immunotherapy

Traditionally, immunotherapy involves a series of allergy shots administered in a clinical setting. Patients receive incrementally increasing doses of the allergen, helping the body develop tolerance. While effective, this method requires frequent medical visits and can be time-consuming.

Sublingual Immunotherapy:

A Convenient Alternative

Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT) offers a more convenient and patient-friendly approach. Instead of injections, patients receive small, daily doses of allergen extracts in the form of tablets or drops placed under the tongue. This method has several advantages:

- Eliminates the need for frequent clinic visits
- Reduces the risk of severe allergic reactions
- Can be self-administered at home
- Particularly effective for environmental allergies like pollen, dust mites, and grass

Preparing for Your Allergy Treatment Journey

Before starting any allergy treatment, consider these important steps:

- Consult with an allergist or immunologist
- Provide a comprehensive medical history
- Discuss potential side effects and treatment expectations
- Develop a personalized treatment plan
- Schedule regular follow-up appointments to monitor progress

The Potential Benefits of Comprehensive Allergy Management

Successful allergy testing and treatment can lead to:

- Reduced allergic symptoms
- Improved respiratory function
- Enhanced quality of life
- Decreased reliance on symptomatic medications
- Better overall health and well-being

Conclusion

The new year presents an excellent opportunity to take control of your allergies. By investing in comprehensive allergy testing and exploring modern treatment options like immunotherapy and sublingual therapy, you can breathe easier and enjoy life to its fullest.

Consult with Dr. Price Sonkarley to determine the most appropriate approach for your specific allergic conditions and start your journey toward better health today.

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Dr. Price Sonkarley is a Board Certified Otolaryngologist Head and Neck Surgeon and will be continuing Dr. Montgomery's practice providing excellent care to all patients. He will be performing both medical and surgical aspects of the specialty and is accepting new patients.

Dr. Sonkarley grew up in the Midwest and received his Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine. He completed his Otolaryngology Residency at the University of Oklahoma. He served in the US Marine Corps for 5 years and was awarded the Joint Services Achievement Medal after his tour in Iraq.



Kathleen Rocuant, Au.D FAAA received her Doctorate from the Arizona School of Health Sciences and is Board Certified by the American Board of Audiology. She specializes in Hearing Evaluations, Hearing Aids and Hearing Solutions. She is a Fellow American Academy of Audiology and a member of the American Academy of Audiology and the Florida Academy of Audiology.



Carly Treibits, PA-C is a graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University and is a Board Certified Physician Assistant. She is a member of the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants and the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

Do you suffer with a chronic cough? Throat irritation? Hearing loss? Nasal congestion? Ear fullness? Allergy sufferers, ask us about our alternative solution to allergy shots.

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FGCU's Transformative Impact on Community Health

The university's Marieb College prepares resilient professionals and resourceful caregivers for the well-being of Southwest Florida

Rehabilitation science is a multidisciplinary field that studies human function and disability and aims to help people achieve optimal health. It is a field evolving constantly and rapidly, resulting in therapeutic advances that professionals can apply in hospitals, clinics, fitness centers and other healthcare settings.

With that in mind, Florida Gulf Coast University prepares and inspires resilient professionals and resourceful caregivers capable of transforming community health and well-being through the latest best practices and technology in rehabilitation science.

FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services offers highly successful degree programs in exercise science, occupational therapy and physical therapy that instill the kind of solutions-oriented curiosity that makes our students lifelong learners. Intensive fieldwork, community involvement and inter-professional learning guarantee students in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences have everything they need to deliver forward-thinking care — no matter what changes in the industry.

This approach enables our graduates to achieve licensure pass rates well above the statewide average — 100% in most cases — as well as 100% employment rates. Healthcare leaders consider our graduates Florida's best-prepared therapists, trainers and educators.

Occupational therapy: A record of success

Occupational therapists assess, plan and organize rehabilitative programs that help build or restore vocational and daily living skills and general independence to people with disabilities or developmental delays. The first occupational therapy students at FGCU enrolled in 1999, pursuing a bachelor's program that later transitioned to a master of science degree.

After they complete their studies and 24 weeks of fieldwork, graduates participate in a licensure exam hosted by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. For 10 consecutive years,



Marieb OT graduates have upheld a 100% pass rate for this high-stakes exam. In fact, FGCU was the only state school to achieve that milestone for the most recent exam.

The program's outcomes, paired with FGCU's affordability and student support mechanisms, are truly second to none. The occupational therapy department is well-supported with eight full-time faculty members boasting over 200 years of practice experience combined. They have built a fully-accredited, cohesive curriculum, improved student learning outcomes and built collaborative relationships with practicing therapists in the community.

Physical therapy: Practitioners teaching practitioners

As with occupational therapy, graduates of Marieb College's physical therapy program maintain a 100% pass rate on the National Physical Therapy Examination. All states require physical therapists to be licensed, and a doctor of physical therapy degree like FGCU's is a standard requirement to practice in the field.

Many aspects set Marieb's doctorate apart from other schools. Smaller class sizes mean a better student-to-faculty ratio and more personalized learning. Problem-based learning promotes lifelong active learning skills. Classes are taught by

faculty, rather than teaching assistants or graduate students. And the majority of faculty members are still practicing clinicians, so they bring experience from the field directly into the classroom.

What's more, the college's state-of-the-art labs provide hands-on experience with current technology. Students perfect various therapeutic and diagnostic assessment techniques in cutting-edge sports medicine, human performance, musculoskeletal, neuromuscular and aquatics rehabilitation labs.

As a result, Marieb graduates are exceptionally prepared to help injured or ill people improve movement and manage pain in settings that include hospitals, clinics, private practices, patients' homes and nursing homes.

Exercise science: Promoting lifelong wellness

Exercise science embraces the study of the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of movement. At FGCU, students in this bachelor's degree program learn how the body responds to activity and exercise over the course of one's life and how individuals can attain a higher level of all-around wellness.

Interdisciplinary but strongly based in science, Marieb College's exercise science program emphasizes applied and critical thinking that prepares students for graduate studies in health-related fields or to start careers helping people improve their health and physical capabilities. In the college's human performance laboratory, students learn to use resistance training equipment, body composition analyzers, cardiac stress systems, anti-gravity and underwater treadmills and other state-of-the-art technology.

Graduates sit for national certification exams through the National Strength and Conditioning Association and the American College of Sports Medicine.

For more information about Marieb College's Department of Rehabilitation Sciences or other programs, go to fgcu.edu/mariebcollege.



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Start the New Year with an Essential Resolution: ESTATE PLANNING

By Carl Zacharia

As a new year begins, many of us reflect on the past and set goals for the future. Whether it's improving our health, advancing in our careers, or spending more time with loved ones, New Year's resolutions are a time-honored tradition. Unfortunately, studies show that most resolutions are abandoned within weeks or months. The start of a new year is not just an opportunity to consider personal growth but also a chance to address essential tasks that often get overlooked. Among the most critical of these is ensuring that your estate plan is in order.

For this new year, a top priority for individuals and families should be to create or review their estate plan. This includes crucial documents such as a Will, Trust, Durable Financial and Medical Powers of Attorney, and a Living Will or Health Care Directive. These documents provide the framework for ensuring your wishes are honored, and your loved ones are protected in case of illness, incapacity, or death.

Why an Estate Plan Should Top Your Resolution List

Many people shy away from estate planning, often because they believe it's a complex or daunting process. Some mistakenly think they don't need one because they aren't wealthy or don't own significant assets. Others simply procrastinate, assuming that they'll have plenty of time to address it later.

However, estate planning is not just for the wealthy—it's for anyone who wants to ensure that their personal, medical, and financial wishes are respected. Without an estate plan, critical decisions may end up in the hands of a court or individuals you would not have chosen. For example:

- **Healthcare Decisions:** In the absence of a Living Will or Medical Power of Attorney, your medical care may be determined by someone unfamiliar with your values or preferences.
- **Financial Management:** Without a Durable Financial Power of Attorney, your assets could be tied up in lengthy legal proceedings, leaving your family unable to access funds or pay bills.
- **Inheritance Distribution:** If you pass away without a Will, state laws (rather than your wishes) will dictate how your estate is divided, which could lead to unintended outcomes.



These documents ensure that you remain in control, even when you're unable to voice your decisions. By taking the time to plan, you give yourself and your loved ones the gift of clarity and peace of mind during difficult times.

The Estate Planning Process: Easier Than You Think

One common misconception about estate planning is that it's an arduous or expensive process. However, with the right guidance, creating an estate plan can be straightforward and manageable. Working with an experienced estate planning attorney is key to simplifying the process and ensuring that your documents are legally sound and tailored to your unique circumstances.

At Zacharia Brown, we specialize in helping individuals and families navigate this important process with ease. During your time with us, we aim to make every step as productive and stress-free as possible. Whether you need to update an existing plan or start from scratch, we take the time to understand your needs and craft a plan that protects your interests and reflects your values.

Benefits of Starting NOW

The start of a new year is an ideal time to tackle estate planning for several reasons:

1. **Fresh Perspective:** With the new year's energy, you're more likely to approach this task with focus and determination.
2. **Proactive Preparation:** Estate planning is not just about preparing for the inevitable; it's about protecting your loved ones and your legacy. Starting now allows you to address potential issues before they arise.

3. **Peace of Mind:** Completing your estate plan removes uncertainty and provides reassurance that your affairs are in order, allowing you to focus on other resolutions without lingering concerns.

How to Get Started

Taking the first step can feel intimidating, but it's essential. Begin by considering your priorities: Who should make decisions on your behalf if you're unable to? How should your assets be distributed? Once you've identified your goals, consult with an experienced estate planning attorney to ensure your wishes are clearly documented and legally binding.

At Zacharia Brown, we're here to help. With decades of experience in estate planning and elder law, our team is committed to providing compassionate, personalized guidance. We take the guesswork out of the process, ensuring your time is well spent and your estate plan is complete.

Make Estate Planning Your Resolution Today

As you look ahead to the year, don't let this essential task slip through the cracks. Protecting your family, your assets, and your future should be a top priority. Contact us at 239.345-4545 or visit our website at ZacBrownLaw.com to schedule an appointment. Make 2025 the year that you keep your most important resolution: securing your peace of mind through a comprehensive estate plan.



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New Year Resolution: Your Best Sleep for Improved Mental Health

By Dr. Ernesto Eusebio

The Connection Between Sleep and Mental Health

As a sleep specialist, I frequently evaluate patients for particular sleep disorders such as sleep apnea or insomnia and find that there are often associated conditions being treated by other providers at the time of presentation, such as depression, ADHD, dementia, generalized anxiety, or PTSD.

These are often problems that have been diagnosed several years prior to their presentation at the sleep clinic. I often ask myself: what role did my patient's sleep problem play in these other diagnoses? Could we have prevented these problems if the sleep disorder had been identified earlier?

There is a strong connection between poor sleep (or sleep disorders) and mental health problems. I propose our readers consider their sleep quality as they choose their new year's resolutions.

We often sacrifice sleep to meet the demands of school, work, family, and social obligations. This age of entertainment and social media also grabs our attention, sometimes robbing us of our best sleep. Is our anxious/depressed society a result of our disregard for a good night's sleep? Let's discuss sleep and mental health.

The Science Behind Sleep and Mental Health

It is thought that all living organisms, even individual cells, engage in a resting or restorative state (repair cycle) at times. It is best to think of sleep as our brain's own resting/restorative state. With such complex functions as memory, consciousness, behaviors/feelings, and computational abilities, these restorative functions become essential for a healthy mind.

Such maintenance and repair functions can only happen properly when our system is temporarily "off" (asleep). Think of it as a "maintenance reset," in the way we think about preventing errors in a computer system. Sleep also allows restorative functions for the rest of the body, such as muscle repair, cell repair and reproduction, restored immune functions, etc.

The Impact of Sleep Deprivation on Mental Health

Insufficient sleep has a negative impact on all aspects of brain function, resulting in deterioration of our brain's healthy state, with a strong impact on mood and cognition.

1. Mood Disorders: Sleep deprivation is closely linked to depression and anxiety. It can exacerbate these



conditions, which also exacerbate sleep problems, resulting in a vicious cycle of poor sleep and worse mental health.

2. Cognitive Impairment: Lack of sleep impairs cognitive functions such as attention, decision-making, and problem-solving. This cognitive decline can increase stress and decrease the ability to cope with daily challenges, further contributing to feelings of frustration and helplessness.

3. Stress Response: Sleep deprivation may activate the body's stress response system, increasing levels of stress hormones like cortisol. Elevated cortisol levels can negatively impact mood and overall mental well-being, leading to a heightened state of anxiety and agitation.

4. Immune Response: Studies have shown that poor sleep may blunt our immune response to vaccines and infections, resulting in less protection from diseases such as the flu and COVID.

Sleep Disorders and Mental Health

Most, if not all, sleep disorders have been linked to different aspects of mental health, and new research continues to add or strengthen connections between them.

Some of the most common sleep disorders:

1. Insomnia: Characterized by difficulty falling or staying asleep, insomnia is often both a symptom and a cause of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, often creating a self-perpetuating cycle of exacerbation for all these conditions.

2. Sleep Apnea: Where breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep, leads to fragmented sleep and poor sleep quality. Sleep apnea is associated with an increased risk of depression and anxiety, and the lack of restful sleep negatively impacts emotional and cognitive function. Furthermore, recent studies have found an association between sleep apnea and cognitive dysfunction, dementia, and Alzheimer's.

3. Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS): This disorder causes uncomfortable sensations in the legs, leading to an urge to move them, which can significantly disrupt sleep. RLS is often seen in individuals with depression and anxiety.

Strategies for Improving Sleep and Mental Health
Improving your sleep quality can have a profound positive impact on mental health. I have some recommendations that we could all follow to improve our sleep.

1. Establish a Consistent Sleep Routine: We are creatures of habit, and we thrive in predictable environments. A consistent schedule is the intervention that will most likely result in improved sleep.

2. Create a Pro-Sleep Environment: Use your bedroom as a sleep sanctuary. We sleep best in a cool room (close to 68°F), a dark room, and a quiet room. Avoid activities in the room other than sleep and sex, and set the stage half an hour to 2 hours before your bedtime. This allows time to unwind and remind your brain that you are in a safe and quiet environment.

3. Limit Exposure to Screens: Simply put, lights tell our brain it is daytime. Screens often provide information that will not necessarily be conducive to sleep (like war, suffering, drama, etc.). Avoid these at bedtime. Patients sometimes tell me these behaviors help them sleep, and my response is: wouldn't you prefer to be able to just close your eyes and fall asleep without the need for a TV or screen?

4. Engage in Relaxation Techniques: Practice calming activities such as reading, meditation, or deep-breathing exercises before bed to prepare your mind and body for sleep. These relaxation techniques can help reduce stress and promote better sleep.

5. Exercise Regularly: Regular physical activity can improve sleep quality and duration. However, it's important to avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime, as it can have a stimulating effect.

6. Limit Caffeine and Alcohol Intake: Both caffeine and alcohol can disrupt sleep. Avoid consuming them in the hours leading up to bedtime to ensure a restful night's sleep.

7. Make Sleep a Priority: Discuss sleep with your Primary Care Provider and listen to your loved ones when they mention your sleep may not look normal to them. Unfortunately, we can't see ourselves sleep, so we will be the last to see the problem. Make your sleep a health priority.

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Membership Program: Affordable Luxury, Convenient Results

We understand that consistent hair removal can be an investment, which is why we've designed a membership program that makes smooth skin accessible and affordable:

Membership Benefits

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 - Includes treatment of one selected area
 - Professional, personalized service
 - Access to our cutting-edge laser technology



• Flexible Add-On Options

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- **Consultation:** A thorough assessment of your skin and hair type
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- **Minimal Discomfort:** Advanced cooling technologies ensure a comfortable experience
- **Gradual, Effective Results:** Noticeable reduction in hair growth after each session

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THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF OXYTOCIN SUPPLEMENTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

By Dr. Melissa (Mel) Irvine, DNP - Clinical Sexologist
Specializes in Sexual Medicine and Beauty

Hugs, music, exercise. What do all three of these things share? They all release the hormone oxytocin, more commonly known as the love hormone.

We're not talking only about romantic love. Oxytocin is released when a parent looks at their child or even when you look at your dog—it's the love of deep relationships and complete comfort. That's not to say that romantic partners don't trigger a release of oxytocin, but it's not solely limited to these relationships. Oxytocin goes deeper than attraction, cementing feelings of pure connection.

When the hypothalamus produces oxytocin and spreads it into the bloodstream, thanks to the pituitary gland, you'll experience a promotion of empathy, trust, and bonding. The impact of oxytocin doesn't stop there, either, with it also improving your cardiac health and increasing your resilience against stress. In short, oxytocin production can significantly improve both your mental and physical health.

The Process of Oxytocin Release

Positive social connections and stressful conditions trigger oxytocin release. The former is a way to further the bond, and the latter (speculatively) motivates those under stress to reach out for help. So, the next time you feel stressed and want to ask for help, know that it's your body telling you that you should.

Oxytocin is produced in the hypothalamus, also known as the brain's control center. Once the hypothalamus signals for oxytocin production, it is released to other parts of the brain and spinal cord or into the bloodstream. From there, it binds to oxytocin receptors, and the "feel-good" benefits of oxytocin are triggered.

Oxytocin is involved in many life-affirming activities, including:

- reproduction
- social bonding
- raising children
- building relationships
- childbirth
- breastfeeding

In the past, oxytocin was thought to be a hormone only found in women because of its ties to childbirth and breastfeeding. However, research has since shown that both men and women require oxytocin. For instance, oxytocin helps with male and female production, affects the metabolism of both genders, and influences immune health. While women complete more activities that use and produce oxytocin, it is crucial in those of both genders.

The Benefits of Oxytocin

The benefits of oxytocin are numerous, spanning both your physical and mental health—there's a reason why this feel-good hormone is so important.

Reduces Anxiety and Depression

One of the quintessential elements of being a human being is an innate desire to have a group that we connect with and belong to. We can't help it; we're pack creatures and like to know that we're not alone, no matter what group we may fit into.

Oxytocin helps to promote these feelings of trust, connectedness, and intimacy, further helping you benefit from the sense of belonging.

The impact of oxytocin levels on your mental health is significant, with studies showing that low oxytocin is linked to anxiety and depression. So, supplementing oxytocin can help you feel more secure in your family or friend group, lessening the anxiety and/or depression you would otherwise feel from believing you don't belong.

Reduces Stress Hormones

When the body perceives a stressful situation, it releases the hormone cortisol, which puts your body into a fight-or-flight mode. While it would be good if a lion were chasing you, it's not a great reaction to the everyday stresses our busy lives subject us to. Even more, those with chronic stress have continually high cortisol levels, which can increase blood pressure, suppress your immune system, and increase the risk of diseases such as diabetes or atherosclerosis.

Oxytocin has been shown to reduce cortisol levels, helping your body better manage stress and leaving you more relaxed and with a lower risk of these hazards of chronic stress.

Improves Cardiovascular Health

As the love hormone, it should come as no surprise that oxytocin supplements can improve your heart health, but perhaps not in the way you would think.

Oxytocin has been shown to lower blood pressure and heart rate, helping to keep your heart from being overworked. High blood pressure, in particular, is commonly referred to as "the silent killer" because of the role it plays in the development of many life-limiting diseases. If you want to keep your health high, managing your blood pressure is a great place to start, and oxytocin can help.

Induces Labor

Oxytocin helps to strengthen the labor contractions during childbirth while also facilitating the production of prostaglandins. These are chemicals that help increase contractions and move labor along. In addition, oxytocin helps with controlling bleeding after childbirth so that your body can start the healing process.

Supports Breastfeeding

A 2018 study highlighted that one of oxytocin's primary functions is to support breastfeeding, which is also why it was initially considered only a female hormone (something we now know isn't true).

When a baby nurses from their mother's breast, nerves in the nipple send signals to the pituitary gland that trigger the production of oxytocin. This release then causes the tiny muscles around the nipple to contract, releasing milk.

Oxytocin Supplements

While the benefits of oxytocin are numerous, oxytocin supplements are generally believed to focus primarily on relieving social and emotional problems, such as:

- social anxiety
- autism
- depression
- schizophrenia

Additionally, a synthetic version of oxytocin (Pitocin) can be given intravenously to induce labor.

As of this time, oxytocin supplements are only available as injections or nasal sprays, as it is otherwise destroyed by the gastrointestinal tract.

Risks of Oxytocin Supplements

The most significant risk of oxytocin supplements is simply a lack of knowledge about their long-term impact. By this, we mean that it isn't entirely known how effective oxytocin supplements can be if used long-term. Furthermore, more research is still needed to determine how different people react to oxytocin supplements based on their genetics or underlying psychiatric disorders.

Some research has shown that some people may experience increased envy, prejudice, and dishonesty when taking oxytocin supplements. In other cases, taking too much oxytocin can cause watery eyes, a runny nose, or more severe complications, including seizures or uterine bleeding.

As for Pitocin, the oxytocin supplement injected to induce labor, it can have side effects that include digestive issues or increased pain. If taken in high doses, it may cause arrhythmia or other cardiovascular symptoms.

Still, many of these risks can be managed by ensuring you only take as much oxytocin as you need, which your doctor can help you with.

Ways to Naturally Boost Your Oxytocin

Oxytocin supplements are not the only way to boost the levels of this calming hormone. If you're feeling more stressed than usual, give the following a try and help increase your oxytocin levels.

Physical Contact

The number one thing associated with oxytocin is physical contact, but few people realize that it relates to any type of physical contact, with massages, hugs, handshakes, sexual activities, and breastfeeding all releasing oxytocin. Even more, whether you're connecting with a friend, lover, child, or parent, physical contact in any form will help increase your oxytocin.

Laugh

Laughter truly is one of life's greatest medicines. Watch a funny movie, get together with friends and share funny stories, read a humorous book; whatever gets you laughing will also help boost your oxytocin levels.

Give Your Pet Some Love

Spending some time each day giving extra attention to your pet will not only help to raise your oxytocin levels, but this can also help increase the bond you share with them.



Share The Love

Cook dinner for someone else, give a gift, or volunteer your time. All of these actions help to raise your oxytocin levels while also making you feel better for doing something for someone else.

Actions may speak louder than words, but saying "I love you" can also raise your oxytocin levels and those of the person you share the sentiment with. So, don't be afraid to share your feelings, and often.

Exercise

Going for a walk or some other form of exercise you like is a great way to boost your oxytocin levels while also improving your physical health. Want to boost your oxytocin even more? Try exercising with someone else.

Feel the Love: Oxytocin and Oxytocin Supplements

Oxytocin is the "love hormone" produced when you're surrounded by friends, family, or a significant other. It lowers your stress levels while also increasing trust, empathy, and contentment. Its benefits are wide-reaching, reducing anxiety and depression, improving cardiovascular health, and aiding in maternal tasks such as childbirth and breastfeeding.

With how vital oxytocin is for these tasks, it's natural to look into supplementation to boost oxytocin levels and see these benefits. However, as of right now, oxytocin supplements are primarily prescribed to aid the labor process or relieve social and emotional problems. There are some risks associated with oxytocin supplements, but your healthcare provider can help you weigh the risks versus the benefits.

Luckily, for those in need of a quick pick-me-up, there are many ways to naturally boost oxytocin levels that you can begin implementing immediately. They are especially useful for those under stress or looking to further improve their relationships.

Give oxytocin a boost and experience the benefits of love (hormones) on your mind and body.

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CAN A HIGH-TECH CHAIR CURE INCONTINENCE?

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Do you wear urinary pads or diapers? Do you leak when you exercise or sneeze? Aging, childbirth, and menopause can all lead to incontinence. There are many treatments such as surgical procedures, pessary devices, and medications to help cure or reduce incontinence.

There is a new device by BTL called Emsella that makes incontinence treatment as simple as sitting in a chair! The Emsella is a unique chair that patients can simply sit and relax in (fully clothed) and have their pelvic floor significantly strengthened during a 28 minute treatment.

The Emsella chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. Each treatment provides the equivalent of doing over 10,000 kegel exercises. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder. Results can often be noticed as quickly as the first treatment. Most women and men will undergo just six sessions in a full three-week program to restore their pelvic muscle strength. The best part is, 67% of treated patients totally eliminated or decreased the use of hygienic pads, and 95% of treated patients improved quality of life.

Who Is The Right Candidate For BTL Emsella?
BTL EMSELLA™ is a great option for patients of any age who desire solution for urinary incontinence and improvement in their quality of life.

How Long Is The Treatment?

How Many Sessions Do I Need?

Your provider will tailor a treatment plan for you. A typical treatment takes 28 minutes and you will need about 6 sessions, scheduled twice a week.

What Does The Procedure Feel Like?

Is It Painful?

You will experience tingling and pelvic floor muscle contractions during the procedure. The treatment is painless and you may resume daily activities immediately after the treatment.



The following patients should not seek Emsella treatment.

1. Subject is pregnant, planning to get pregnant or within 3 months postpartum;
2. Subject has a pacemaker;
3. Subject has an implant or IUD containing metal (e.g. copper 7);
4. Subject has piercing between the waist and knees and is not willing to remove it before each treatment

How Fast Will I See Results?

You may observe improvement after a single session. The results will typically continue to improve over the next few weeks.¹

This progressive treatment is helping numerous men and women find their freedom, confidence, and get their life back without having to worry about urinary incontinence. Emsella has been featured on the Doctors and in various news and media outlets.

References:

1. Body by BTL, A Breakthrough Treatment For Incontinence And Confidence, 2019 Btl Industries Inc.



Some comments from local users:

- I don't have to worry about peeing when I sneeze anymore
- My husband definitely notices the difference
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To learn more about this technology please go to our website at www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com. Call 239-449-7979 to schedule your Emsella consultation today.



Joseph Gauta, MD



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DEMYSTIFYING SHOULDER PAIN WITH ELECTRODIAGNOSIS AND MUSCULOSKELETAL ULTRASOUND IMAGING

By Dr. Scott Bradley PT, DPT, ECS

Shoulder pain is one of the most common problems that physical therapists treat in clinical practice. Prevalence of one month of shoulder and arm pain was reported to be about 30% (Luime et al., 2004). Shoulder pain, as one of the most common complaints for patient's visit to general practitioner and physical therapy practice, is often managed conservatively in a similar manner without knowing the exact underlying pathology causing shoulder symptoms. Shoulder symptoms are broadly categorized into a single diagnosis of 'shoulder pain', without knowledge of specific structure(s) that may be causing the symptoms. This is because clinical tests and physical examination may not be enough to differentiate the wide range of possible pathologies, related to the shoulder-neck area, which can often be confusing because of their similar presentations (Karel et al., 2016). Structures causing shoulder symptoms can be broadly classified into two categories, neural and nonneural and possible causes divided into the two categories presented in Table 1.

Physical examination, history taking and special tests may not provide complete information as to the cause(s) of shoulder complaints. Appropriate use of Electrodiagnosis and Ultrasound imaging can provide useful insights into specific pathology, and therefore should improve clinical decision making, and management of the patient. High levels of patient satisfaction, and patient perceived value, has been reported when clinic-based ultrasound imaging was used in an outpatient facility (Wheeler, 2010) since it helps patients to understand their problem, and improves their confidence in the provider.

1. NEURAL PATHOLOGY

Differentiating cervical radiculopathy, thoracic outlet syndrome, or other neural pathology from primary shoulder disease, can be difficult owing to the close proximity and overlap of symptomatology (Manifold and McCann, 1999). Appropriate use of EMG/ NCS studies can tease out the neural component of the shoulder pain. EMG/NCS studies can distinguish possible neural pathologies (listed in Table 1) contributing to shoulder pain, weakness and abnormal dynamics. These abnormalities are seen as abnormal responses in nerve conduction studies and positive needle EMG findings, from the selected muscles of the affected myotome. EMG/NCS tests are an extension of the neurological

examination and are tailored to examine the suspected neural structures. With the use of electrodiagnostic tests, it is possible to differentiate cervical radiculopathy that may be causing shoulder pain and weakness, from proximal nerve entrapment, such as axillary, long thoracic and suprascapular nerve entrapments. Electrodiagnostic tests are also helpful in ruling out less common neural pathologies of shoulder region such as Parsonage-Turner syndrome, or thoracic outlet syndrome. Abnormal findings present as delayed latency, slow conduction velocity, reduced amplitude, or abnormal long loop studies such as F waves in the distribution of the affected nerve. With abnormal needle EMG findings including fibrillations, positive sharp waves, abnormal recruitment or abnormal morphology of action potential, in the clinically affected muscles of the involved myotome.

2. NON-NEURAL PATHOLOGY

Adding ultrasound imaging to the physical examination can provide useful insights into localization of pathology, and also points towards the temporal component of the disease. For a full thickness rotator cuff tear, ultrasound imaging has been reported to have sensitivity of 60%; specificity of 100%, positive predictive value of 100%, negative predictive value of 78% and accuracy of 84% - whereas for partial thickness tears, ultrasound findings of greater tubercle cortical irregularity have an accuracy of 72%, sensitivity of 69% and specificity of 100%, and positive predicted value of 100% (Jacobson et al., 2004). Ultrasound imaging is considered to be equally effective to MRI in pathology related to the rotator cuff (Vlychou et al., 2009) and has an added advantage of real-time evaluation and use of dynamic imaging, which is not possible with MRI. In certain pathologies ultrasound is considered superior to MRI for example in identifying a mid-substance tear of supraspinatus, which may be missed with MRI or MR arthrogram, or evidence of neoangiogenesis in tendinopathy. Clinical history, physical

examination, special tests and musculoskeletal ultrasound is usually sufficient to identify the pathology related to soft tissue of the shoulder region. In some cases, further MRI examination may be necessary, for example for identification of a soft tissue mass, bone pathology-like occult fractures, or suspicion of intra articular pathologies, as evidenced during ultrasound evaluation of the region.

Musculoskeletal ultrasound is not only helpful in identifying underlying pathology, it is also helpful in guided procedures if indicated. High levels of accuracy have been reported with guided injections of involving the acromioclavicular joint, gleno-humeral joint & subacromial region, when compared to blind injections. Furthermore, musculoskeletal ultrasound is most effective and efficient in post-operative rotator cuff repair evaluation, if the patient complains of pain or dysfunction post-surgery, where MRI may be limited due to altered signals from suture material, anchors etc.

Electrodiagnostic tests and musculoskeletal ultrasound imaging together with the clinical history and physical examination, provide a detailed overview of the neural and non-neural soft tissue structures in the shoulder-neck region, and can help guide the proper management of the patient in a timely manner.

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Table 1
Neural and non-neural causes of shoulder pain.

Neural causes of shoulder pain	Non-neural causes of shoulder pain
C5-C6 Radiculopathy	Rotator cuff tendinosis/tendinopathy
Suprascapular neuropathy	Subacromial impingement syndrome
Axillary neuropathy	Partial tear of rotator cuff tendons
Long thoracic neuropathy	Full thickness tears of rotator cuff tendons
Thoracic outlet syndrome	Tenosynovitis of long head of biceps
Parsonage-Turner Syndrome	Subacromial Subdeltoid bursitis
	Calcific tendinitis
	Joint effusion
	Asthritis with or without loose bodies
	Adhesive capsulitis
	Soft tissue mass/tumor (rare)



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DENTAL EMERGENCIES

Dental emergencies can happen at any time. They could be a fall or bump that caused facial and tooth trauma (broken, avulsed, or luxated), a biking accident, a toothache, or a tooth abscess. Teeth are alive and have a nerve and a blood supply. If a tooth is traumatized, it could become loose (luxated), fractured (simple or complex), or completely fall out (avulsed). It is important for the health of the nerve to assess the situation and treat it as soon as possible. Tooth pain can be intermittent or constant. Various triggers can cause tooth pain: biting, grinding, hot, cold, or sweet. There are times when there is no tooth pain but swelling at the gum near the tooth and an abscess. All of these situations require a dentist to assess the situation. If there is dental pain that goes away, don't be fooled - it could escalate and need more extensive dental treatment. It is best to have a proper diagnosis to plan ahead.

Dr. Dainiak spent one year after dental school in a General Practice Residency at University Hospital at Stony Brook, New York. The residency was in a Level I Trauma Center and consisted of outpatient treatment of medically compromised patients, an Emergency Room rotation, an Anesthesia Rotation, and in-house treatment of hospitalized patients. When it comes to dental infection and dental trauma, most area hospitals in Southwest Florida do not have a dentist on staff in the hospital emergency room to properly assess the teeth.

Treatment that can be provided by Dr. Dainiak includes diagnostic treatment, palliative treatment, repairing tooth fractures, stabilizing loose teeth, treatment for dental infections, incision and drainage, sutures, and proper referrals when necessary. Dr. Dainiak takes dental emergencies seriously and consults on dental emergencies the same day.



**KELLY M. DAINIAK, DMD,
GENERAL DENTIST**

Dr. Kelly M. Dainiak provides all services mentioned in article. Dr. Dainiak graduated from The University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine in 1995 and went on to finish a Hospital Residency at The University Hospital in Stonybrook, NY in 1996. She has been practicing in Southwest Florida since 2001, having her own solo practice since 2005.



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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

The kidneys are a major part of our detoxifying system. These two small bean-shaped organs clean the blood and filter waste products and toxins from the body through the urine. Kidney cancer is one of the ten most prevalent cancers. The lifetime risk for developing kidney cancer is about 1 in 46 in men and 1 in 82 in women.¹

The symptoms of kidney cancer often go unnoticed or don't begin to show until the tumor(s) has grown. However, some of the key indicators are as follows:

- Blood in the urine
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fever or infection
- Swollen abdomen
- Lump on the side of the abdomen (with or without pain)
- Anemia
- Swollen legs and ankles
- Chronic inflammation
- High blood pressure
- Shortness of breath

If you have symptoms or your physician finds a lump during a physical examination, they will order diagnostic testing such as a renal arteriogram, MRI, CT Scan, blood and urine analysis, and a needle biopsy may be necessary.

There are some increased risk factors, which make some individuals more susceptible to renal cancer. The risks factors included:

- Being over the age of 40
- Being male
- Being black
- Smoking
- Obese
- Overuse of NSAIDs and other prescription medications
- Family History
- Chemical Exposures
- Kidney disease

Most kidney cancer appears first in the tubules of the kidneys. When the malignant cells form a tumor(s) the growth rate is typically slow, so the

likelihood of an early diagnosis is increased, and the treatment can usually be performed before the tumor has metastasized into any other organs.

Treatment

Depending on the stage and size of the tumor(s), your physician will develop a specific treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Typically, performing a nephrectomy treats kidney cancer. There are three main types of this surgical option. The first is a Partial nephrectomy, which removes the tumor and some of the surrounding tissue. The second is a Simple nephrectomy, which removes the entire kidney, and the third treatment method is a Radical nephrectomy, which removes the kidney, adrenal glands, lymph nodes, and any questionable surrounding tissue margins. These procedures can usually be done laparoscopically. Some patients may also require radiation or chemotherapy treatments.

Associates in Nephrology

Associates in Nephrology has been providing comprehensive kidney care and transplant services in Southwest Florida since 1984. Our team of nephrologists, nurse practitioners, and medical assistants are engaged in all aspects of providing the most advanced services for kidney disease and kidney transplants.

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) means that the kidneys have become damaged. The common causes of CKD are diabetes mellitus, hypertension, inherited diseases, and nephritis.

The purpose of the CKD program is to slow the progression of damage to the kidneys and treat associated complications such as hypertension, anemia, and bone disease. If we are unable to arrest the disease process and the kidney damage progresses to end stage renal disease (ESRD), our plan is to manage these complications while preparing patients for renal (kidney) replacement therapy. This therapy can consist of peritoneal dialysis, hemodialysis, home hemodialysis, or kidney transplantation.

Source:

1. https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM7OKwmg3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE

Managing these complications and preparing patients for renal replacement therapy is a complex process of visits, treatment, and teaching sessions. Our medical team consists of nephrologists (kidney doctors), nurse practitioners, registered dietitians, nurses, and medical assistants.

Services Provided

Associates in Nephrology provides treatment for many kidney related conditions, as well as kidney transplant services.

- All forms of Dialysis – Hemodialysis and Peritoneal
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- Kidney Transplant Services: Patient and Donor Evaluations, Post-Transplant Follow-up Care
- Lupus Nephritis
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Pyelonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Recurring kidney stones
- Renal Failure
- Renal Insufficiency

We work collaboratively with a patient's primary care physician and specialists to slow the progression of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and prevent or manage complications such as hypertension, anemia, and bone disease. Additionally, our multidisciplinary team of professionals can assist you in arranging a wide array of supportive services and education programs for patients in all stages of CKD. For patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), our nephrologists can prepare them for all renal replacement therapies: in-center or home hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and kidney transplant.

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2025 Open Enrollment is Here!

By Ulla-Undine Merritt (Dee) National Producer Number (NPN) 8853366

Medicare Open Enrollment is January - March. What can be changed at this time of the year is Medicare Part D Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans. You can make one change from one Part C Advantage Plan to another Advantage Plan from the same company or another. You can change from one Advantage Plan to a stand-alone Part D Drug Plan, this is not advised unless you have a secondary to Original Medicare, which is a Medigap and also called a Medicare Supplement. I always do the Medicare Supplement Applications 1st to make sure that the person is approved. Medicare Supplement have medical underwriting and you may not qualify. There are certain Special Election Periods that may qualify you as a guaranteed issue. You can NOT change from one Part D drug Plan to another this time of year.

Substantial changes to Medicare Part D, stand-alone drug plans as well as Advantage Plans, you won't have to pay more than \$2,000 in out-of-pocket costs, which include deductibles, co-pays, and coinsurance. It is especially important to check your plans formulary as medication must be in formulary to be capped. 2025 RX deductibles will be capped at \$590.00. As a reminder the cost of the plan is not as important as the cost plus your medications, that is what you look at, the total cost. It is important to know what the medication is used for to determine if it is covered by the plan. Example Wycovy may be covered but in order to be covered it must be used for certain heart conditions or diabetes, Medicare does not cover weight loose medications at this time.

Medicare Part C / Advantage Plans annually Medicare Advantage Plans make changes. They must all include the same features as Original Medicare but not at the same cost share. They can have a premium, Medical and or Prescription deductible, copays and coinsurance can change. Extra Value such as Vision, Dental, Over the Counter, Part B Give Back, transportation, etc. can all change or be eliminated. Medicare sets the annual in-network out of pocket maximum; in 2025 it is \$9,350 and \$14,000 for in-network and out-of-network services combined. However, individual insurance plans may set lower limits. These limits apply to Part A and B services only, and do not apply to Part D cost share.



The old saying if it is not broken do not fix it DOES NOT apply to Medicare Advantage Plans. Every year I see many people that have not checked/compared their current plan to what is new. I have saved so many people hundreds and in many cases thousands of dollars. You should be working with a broker that represents many insurance companies. Make sure you check them out, especially if you are going to allow someone in your house. I recommend meeting in their office. For myself we represent most insurance companies in our area and to carry all their literature with me is almost impossible. We use three large screens so that our clients can clearly see and compare the differences between the plans. The minimum information we needed is all your doctors, medications: names, milligrams, and dosage. We load your current plan and then compare it to all the other companies in your area. What companies have all your doctors, the price for your medication normally makes a significant difference. Then the Extra Value, what is most important to you. We do NOT CHARGE for our review and if warranted we will change your insurance plan for you. Ethics is most important and if you are on the best plan we will tell you, plus you can see for yourself.

As a reminder it is illegal for an insurance agent to contact you unless you give them permission. There are specific forms that you should sign, such as a Scope of Appointment which outlines what you want to talk about. This form should be signed at least 48 hours prior to your meeting or if you walk into their office, prior to speaking about Medicare.

Medicare Seminar's they are good for general information. A one-to-one appointment where you can dive into your doctors and medication is best, plus you can then compare other companies in one place.

When you turn 65 you are eligible for Medicare, once you have worked 40 quarters roughly 10 years there is no cost for Medicare Part "A". Part A covers Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, Home Health & Hospice. Medicare Part B you can choose to take at 65 or you can hold off if you are still working and have credible coverage. If you do not have group health insurance that is considered qualified, and then you want it you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D, and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guaranteed issue, you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6 months on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! *Especially important:* when you *move* you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

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Revolutionary Weight Loss:

THE FUTURE OF BODY TRANSFORMATION

In the ever-evolving world of weight loss and body sculpting, a groundbreaking program has emerged, combining cutting-edge pharmaceutical interventions with state-of-the-art technology. This innovative approach integrates GLP-1 receptor agonists like semaglutide and tirzepatide, 3D body scanning, and advanced light therapy to offer a comprehensive solution for those seeking to shed pounds and transform their physique.

The Power of GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

At the heart of this revolutionary program are GLP-1 receptor agonists, specifically semaglutide and tirzepatide. These medications, originally developed for type 2 diabetes management, have shown remarkable efficacy in promoting weight loss.

Semaglutide, marketed under brand names like Wegovy for weight loss, works by mimicking a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1). This hormone plays a crucial role in regulating appetite and food intake. By activating GLP-1 receptors, semaglutide helps individuals feel fuller for longer periods, naturally reducing calorie intake.

Tirzepatide, a newer entry in this class of medications, goes a step further. It acts as a dual GIP (glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide) and GLP-1 receptor agonist. This dual-action approach not only suppresses appetite but also enhances metabolic function, potentially leading to even more significant weight loss results.

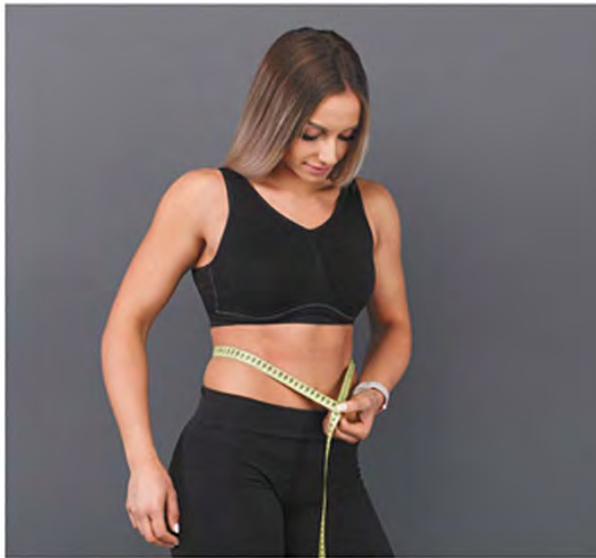
Precision Tracking with 3D Body Scanning

To complement the pharmaceutical approach, this program incorporates cutting-edge 3D body scanning technology. This non-invasive imaging technique provides a detailed, three-dimensional representation of an individual's body composition.

The 3D scanner captures hundreds of measurements in just seconds, offering a level of precision that far surpasses traditional methods like calipers or tape measures. This technology allows participants to:

1. Visualize their progress in vivid detail
2. Track changes in body composition, including muscle mass and fat distribution
3. Set more precise, personalized goals based on their unique body structure

By providing such detailed insights, the 3D body scanner serves as a powerful motivational tool, helping individuals stay committed to their weight loss journey.



The Magic of Light: Red Light Therapy and Invisa-RED

To further enhance body contouring and skin tightening, the program incorporates advanced light therapy techniques:

Red Light Therapy

Red light therapy, also known as low-level laser therapy (LLLT), uses low-wavelength red light to treat various skin issues and promote overall skin health. In the context of weight loss, red light therapy offers several benefits:

1. Increased cellular energy production, potentially boosting metabolism
2. Reduced inflammation, which can aid in recovery from workouts
3. Improved circulation, enhancing the delivery of nutrients to skin cells

Invisa-RED Technology

Invisa-RED takes light therapy to the next level. This non-invasive treatment combines multiple wavelengths of light with gentle electrical stimulation to:

1. Target and shrink fat cells
2. Tighten and tone skin
3. Reduce the appearance of cellulite

The Invisa-RED system is particularly effective for spot reduction and body contouring, helping to refine areas that may be resistant to diet and exercise alone.

A Holistic Approach to Body Transformation

What sets this program apart is its comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to weight loss and body sculpting. By combining the appetite-suppressing

and metabolic effects of GLP-1 receptor agonists with the precise tracking of 3D body scanning and the toning benefits of light therapy, participants can achieve remarkable results.

The program doesn't just focus on weight loss; it's designed to reshape the body, improve skin texture, and boost overall confidence. Participants benefit from:

1. Significant and sustainable weight loss through medication-assisted appetite control
2. Precise progress tracking and goal-setting with 3D body scanning
3. Enhanced skin tightening and body contouring through advanced light therapies
4. A more comprehensive understanding of their body composition and how it changes over time

As with any medical intervention, it's crucial for individuals to consult with healthcare professionals before starting this program. The use of GLP-1 receptor agonists should be carefully monitored, and the entire regimen should be tailored to each participant's unique needs and health status.

In conclusion, this innovative weight loss program represents a paradigm shift in how we approach body transformation. By harnessing the power of cutting-edge pharmaceuticals, precise imaging technology, and advanced light therapies, it offers a holistic solution for those seeking not just to lose weight, but to comprehensively reshape their bodies and boost their confidence.

Call Simply U MedSpa today to find out how our clinically proven, doctor-prescribed weight-loss medication can help you. We can help you schedule an appointment or answer any questions you may have about the program.

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FINDING BALANCE: CBD'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

In recent years, cannabidiol (CBD) has emerged as a promising natural compound that may offer potential benefits for mental health management. As individuals increasingly seek alternative approaches to supporting psychological well-being, CBD has garnered significant attention from researchers, healthcare professionals, and individuals struggling with mental health challenges.

Understanding CBD's Interaction with the Brain

CBD is a non-psychoactive compound derived from the cannabis plant that interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system. Unlike THC, CBD does not produce a "high" effect, making it an intriguing option for those seeking potential therapeutic benefits without altered mental states. Scientific research suggests that CBD may influence neurotransmitter function and help regulate mood-related neurological processes.

Potential Benefits for Anxiety and Stress

One of the most studied areas of CBD's potential mental health applications is anxiety management. Preliminary research indicates that CBD might help reduce symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety, and panic disorders. By potentially modulating serotonin receptors, CBD may contribute to improved emotional regulation and stress response.

Some studies have demonstrated that CBD could:

- Decrease physiological symptoms of anxiety
- Promote a sense of calm and relaxation
- Support more balanced emotional processing
- Potentially reduce the impact of stress-related hormones



Depression and Mood Regulation

Emerging research explores CBD's potential role in addressing depressive symptoms. While not a replacement for professional mental health treatment, CBD might offer supplementary support in mood management. The compound's potential neurogenic properties could help stimulate brain cell growth and protect against neural inflammation, which are factors associated with depression.

Sleep and Mental Health Interconnection

Quality sleep is fundamental to mental health, and CBD may help improve sleep patterns. By potentially reducing sleep disturbances and addressing underlying anxiety or stress, CBD could indirectly support overall psychological well-being.

Important Considerations and Precautions

While promising, it's crucial to approach CBD as a complementary approach rather than a standalone treatment for mental health conditions. Individuals should:

- Consult healthcare professionals before incorporating CBD
- Purchase high-quality, third-party tested products
- Start with low doses and monitor personal responses
- Understand that individual experiences may vary

The Future of CBD in Mental Health Research

As scientific understanding evolves, more comprehensive studies are needed to fully establish CBD's efficacy and mechanisms in mental health support. Current research provides hope for a holistic, potentially natural approach to psychological wellness.

Ultimately, CBD represents an exciting frontier in mental health management, offering a potential tool for individuals seeking alternative strategies to support their psychological balance and emotional resilience.

About Hemp Joi

It all started back in 2019, we set out to change the way the world deals with chronic aches and pains. Having a background in functional medicine and a passion for entrepreneurship, we set out to bring quality products to the greater SW Florida area and beyond.

We were inspired by family members, in the massage therapy industry, that kept getting requests from clients to use CBD oils because of their natural healing properties.

We felt this was a great and underserved need, so we began our search for the most natural most authentic CBD oils and lotions.

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ACUPUNCTURE POINT INJECTION THERAPY AND ACUPUNCTURE FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

By Dr. Mary Lambert, AP, DOM

Pain can significantly impact one's quality of life, limiting physical activity, disrupting sleep, and affecting overall well-being. While conventional treatments such as medications or invasive procedures are common, natural and effective options like Acupuncture Point Injection Therapy (APIT) and traditional acupuncture are gaining recognition for their ability to provide relief. At Lambert Wellness, Dr. Mary, a board-certified acupuncturist and doctor of Oriental medicine, specializes in musculoskeletal disorders, offering a unique approach to pain management that combines modern techniques with ancient healing practices.

What is Acupuncture Point Injection Therapy?

Acupuncture Point Injection Therapy (APIT) enhances traditional acupuncture by incorporating natural substances like ultra high dilution medicines, saline, vitamins, or Chinese herbal extracts. These substances are injected into specific acupuncture points, stimulating the body's natural healing mechanisms while targeting areas of pain and dysfunction.

APIT works particularly well for:

- Muscle tension and spasms
- Joint pain
- Tendonitis
- Sports injuries
- Chronic pain conditions, such as sciatica and fibromyalgia

The therapy is minimally invasive and is known for providing long-lasting relief by reducing inflammation, promoting tissue repair, and improving blood flow to affected areas.

Acupuncture for Pain Management

Traditional acupuncture has been used for thousands of years to treat pain naturally. By inserting thin, sterile needles into specific acupuncture points, this technique stimulates the body's nervous system, releasing endorphins (natural painkillers) and increasing blood circulation.

Clinical research supports acupuncture as an effective treatment for various pain conditions:

1. Lower Back Pain: A large-scale study published in Archives of Internal Medicine showed that acupuncture is more effective for chronic back pain compared to standard treatments like medications or physical therapy.



2. Osteoarthritis: Research in The Journal of Pain found that acupuncture reduces pain and improves function for individuals with knee osteoarthritis, making it an excellent alternative to medications.

3. Neck and Shoulder Pain: A clinical trial in Pain Medicine revealed that acupuncture significantly relieves tension and muscle tightness, particularly in patients with chronic neck and shoulder pain.

These results highlight acupuncture as a powerful tool for managing pain naturally, without the potential side effects of medications.

Dr. Mary's Expertise in Musculoskeletal Disorders

As a specialist in musculoskeletal disorders, Dr. Mary combines acupuncture and APIT to create tailored treatment plans that address the root causes of pain. Musculoskeletal conditions often result from injuries, repetitive strain, poor posture, or chronic inflammation. Common conditions she treats include:

- **Sciatica:** Acupuncture reduces nerve pain and muscle spasms that can result from sciatic nerve irritation.
- **Tendonitis:** APIT helps repair damaged tissue and reduces inflammation in the tendons, improving mobility.
- **Sports Injuries:** Dr. Mary works with athletes to accelerate recovery and prevent long-term complications.

Her integrative approach targets pain while improving range of motion, reducing inflammation, and promoting overall healing. Patients often experience noticeable relief almost immediately, with continued improvement over time.

Why Choose Acupuncture and APIT?

Unlike conventional treatments that often focus solely on symptom relief, acupuncture and APIT address the underlying causes of pain. These therapies are:

- Natural and drug-free
- Safe with minimal side effects
- Effective for chronic and acute pain
- Focused on long-term healing

Additionally, acupuncture can enhance other treatments, making it an excellent complementary therapy for individuals undergoing physical therapy, chiropractic care, or post-surgical recovery.

Experience Pain Relief at Lambert Wellness

If you are struggling with pain from musculoskeletal disorders, sports injuries, or chronic conditions, Dr. Mary at Lambert Wellness is here to help. Her expertise in acupuncture and Acupuncture Point Injection Therapy can provide you with the natural relief you've been searching for.

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ACHIEVING YOUR NEW YEAR'S HEALTH RESOLUTIONS

By Justin Ceravolo, PharmD

As the calendar turns and a new year begins, millions of people worldwide set ambitious health-related New Year's resolutions. Whether it's losing weight, managing chronic conditions, improving fitness, or simply maintaining better overall wellness, these goals often seem challenging to achieve. However, one often-overlooked healthcare professional can be your greatest ally in this journey: your local pharmacist.

Pharmacists are much more than medication dispensers. They are comprehensive healthcare professionals with extensive knowledge about medications, health conditions, and wellness strategies. Their expertise can be instrumental in helping you transform your New Year's resolutions from well-intentioned wishes into achievable realities.

Medication Management and Review

One of the most valuable services pharmacists offer is a comprehensive medication review. If your resolutions involve managing existing health conditions or starting a new health regimen, a pharmacist can help ensure your medications are working effectively. They can identify potential interactions, recommend alternatives, and provide personalized advice on optimal medication usage.

Chronic Condition Support

For those managing chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, or heart disease, pharmacists can be invaluable partners. They can help you develop strategies for medication adherence, provide guidance on



lifestyle modifications, and offer regular health monitoring. Their expertise can help you make informed decisions about your treatment plan and support your long-term health goals.

Wellness and Prevention

Pharmacists are also excellent resources for preventive health strategies. They can provide guidance on vaccinations, screenings, and health maintenance. If your resolution involves boosting your immune system, managing stress, or improving nutrition, a pharmacist can offer evidence-based recommendations tailored to your specific health profile.

Weight Management and Nutrition

Many New Year's resolutions center around weight loss and improved nutrition. Pharmacists can provide advice on over-the-counter weight management supplements, recommend nutritional strategies, and help you understand how medications might impact your weight loss journey.

Mental Health and Lifestyle Support

Mental health is a crucial component of overall wellness. Pharmacists can offer insights into medication management for mental health conditions, provide resources for stress management, and recommend lifestyle interventions that support emotional well-being.

Creating a Personalized Action Plan

The most effective approach is to schedule a consultation with your pharmacist. They can help you create a personalized health action plan that aligns with your specific goals, medical history, and current health status.

This New Year, don't navigate your health resolutions alone. Your local pharmacist is a trusted, accessible healthcare partner ready to support you in achieving your wellness objectives.

Justin Ceravolo, PharmD - Owner & Pharmacist

Justin Ceravolo, also known as J.T., earned his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Florida A&M University's College of Pharmacy in 2012. That same year, Justin began working in Florida's Panhandle before becoming a new member of the Cypress Wellness Pharmacy family in October of 2012. Cypress Wellness Pharmacy believes that each patient, whether he or she is a human or pet, should be given their own special attention and service. In 2024 Justin became the owner of Cypress Wellness Pharmacy and is committed to advancing the pharmacy's phenomenal reputation for personalized service with a focus on education and well-being for all patients and customers. Whether you need your medication in another compounded form or you simply need advice, Justin and his team will ensure fast and efficient service that goes above and beyond your average pharmacy.

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DNA:

Making Informed New Year's Resolutions Through Genetic Testing

By Jo Ortiz, PMHNP-BC

As another year approaches, many individuals contemplate resolutions focused on mental health and wellbeing. While traditional goals like meditation, therapy, and stress reduction remain valuable, advances in genetic testing are revolutionizing how we approach mental health treatment. This emerging field, known as pharmacogenomics, helps healthcare providers prescribe medications that work best with a patient's unique genetic makeup, potentially transforming the effectiveness of mental health treatment.

The Challenge of Finding the Right Medication

For decades, prescribing psychiatric medications has largely been a process of educated trial and error. Patients often endure months or even years of medication adjustments, dealing with unwanted side effects and inadequate relief before finding an effective treatment. This frustrating journey leads many to abandon their medication altogether, with studies showing that up to 50% of patients discontinue their antidepressants within six months of starting treatment.

How Genetic Testing Works

Genetic testing for mental health medications involves analyzing specific genes that influence how your body processes different drugs. These genes, primarily found in the liver, affect how quickly or slowly medications are metabolized. The testing process is straightforward: a simple cheek swab or blood sample is analyzed to identify genetic variations that could impact medication effectiveness.

The test results provide valuable information about which medications your body is likely to process effectively and which ones might cause adverse reactions. For example, some individuals may be "rapid metabolizers" of certain medications, meaning they process the drugs too quickly for them to be effective at standard doses. Others might be "poor metabolizers," leading to a buildup of medication in their system and increased side effects.

Making Informed Treatment Decisions

Armed with genetic testing results, healthcare providers can make more informed decisions about:

- Which medications are most likely to be effective
- Appropriate starting dosages based on metabolism
- Medications to avoid due to potential adverse reactions
- Combinations of medications that might work best together

This personalized approach can significantly reduce the time spent finding an effective treatment, potentially leading to faster symptom relief and better outcomes.

The Role of Genetic Testing in New Year's Mental Health Goals

As you set mental health goals for the new year, considering genetic testing can be a game-changing first step. Rather than making broad resolutions like "improve my mental health," you can work with your healthcare provider to create a scientifically-informed treatment plan based on your genetic profile.

Practical Steps for Implementation

1. Discuss genetic testing with your healthcare provider to determine if it's appropriate for your situation.
2. Research insurance coverage, as many providers now cover mental health genetic testing.
3. Create a treatment plan that incorporates your genetic testing results.
4. Set realistic timelines for medication adjustments based on your genetic profile.
5. Keep detailed records of your response to medications to share with your healthcare team.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Personalized Mental Health Care

The field of pharmacogenomics continues to evolve, with researchers discovering new genetic markers that influence medication response. This ongoing research promises even more precise treatment recommendations in the future, potentially leading to higher success rates in mental health treatment.

Making Your Resolution Count

When setting mental health resolutions this year, consider making genetic testing part of your strategy. This scientific approach to treatment can provide clarity and direction in your mental health journey, potentially saving months or years of trial and error with medications.

Remember that while genetic testing is a powerful tool, it's just one component of a comprehensive mental health plan. Combining this personalized approach with other evidence-based practices like therapy, lifestyle changes, and stress management techniques can create a robust foundation for mental health improvement in the coming year.

By taking advantage of genetic testing, you're not just making a resolution – you're making a scientifically-informed decision to optimize your mental health treatment. This approach represents a significant step forward in personalizing mental health care and improving outcomes for individuals seeking better mental health in the new year.



Meet Jo Ortiz, PMHNP-BC

Bilingual in Spanish and English, Jo is one of the visionary leaders at Phoenix Behavioral Group. As a board-certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Jo brings a wealth of expertise and a compassionate touch to the forefront of patient care. With unwavering dedication, she strives to empower individuals to reclaim their mental health and lead more fulfilling lives.

Jo is currently accepting the majority of insurances, give us a call to schedule an appointment.



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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Remember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

²In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.
Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *²¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ²²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ²³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: *⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things.

Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Contentment will come easier when you realize two things: life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.

Jesus said it like this, *²⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."* Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:

- My life is a rat race.
- I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.
- I am just so exhausted.
- I don't know how much more of this I can take.
- I just want to escape.

These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.

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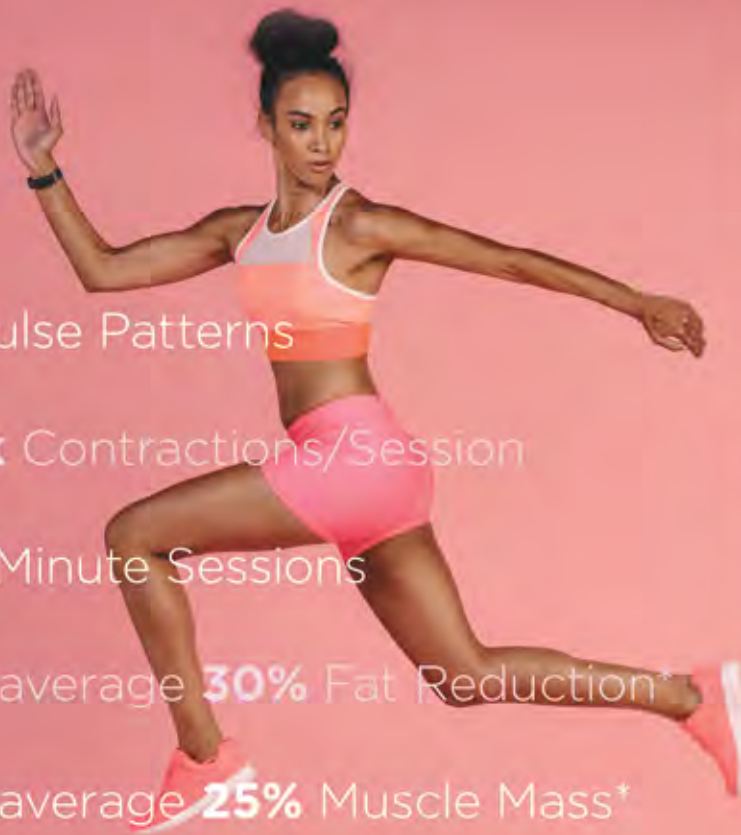
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CLINICAL DIRECTOR, CHIROPRACTOR

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Results and patient experience may vary.

As with any medical procedure, ask your doctor if the EMSculpt Neo® procedure is right for you. EMSculpt Neo® is intended for non-invasive lipolysis (breakdown of fat) of the abdomen and reduction in circumference of the abdomen with Skin Type I to Skin Type III. EMSculpt Neo® is also cleared for improvement of abdominal tone, strengthening of the abdominal muscles and development of firmer abdomen. Strengthening, toning, firming of buttocks, thighs, and calves. Improvement of muscle tone and firmness, for strengthening muscles in arms. ©2020 BTL Group of Companies. All rights reserved. BTL®, EMSculpt Neo® and EMSculpt® are registered trademarks in the United States of America, the European Union, or other countries. The products, the methods of manufacture or the use may be subject to one or more U.S. or foreign patents or pending applications. Trademarks EMSculpt®, EMSculpt Neo®, EMSella®, EMTone®, EMBODY®, and HIFEM® are parts of EM™ Family of products. *Data on File.

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