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March 2026

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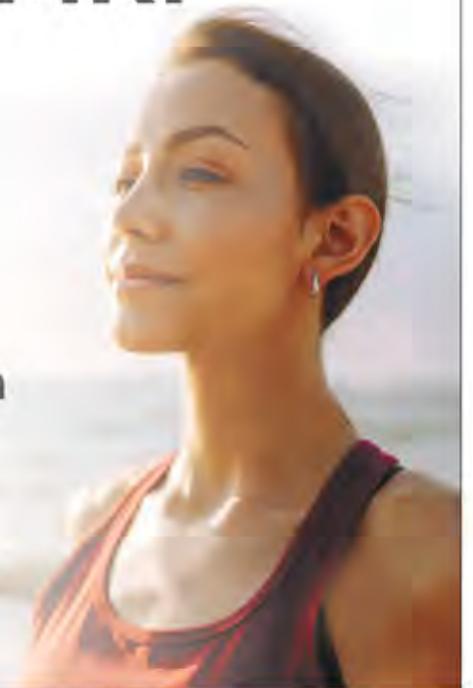
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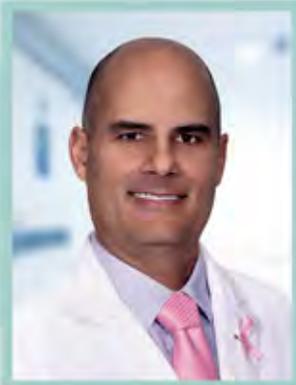
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 – Jose Erbella, MD, FACS, DipABLM, General Surgeon at Manatee Memorial Hospital.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING AS SMOKING CESSATION TOOLS

Are you looking to quit smoking? Have you tried to quit several times with little to no success? Are you frustrated and running out of ideas that could help you kick the habit for good? You are not alone! In fact, 7 out of 10 tobacco users want to quit and may struggle with these same questions. Some tobacco users might be tempted to turn to electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, vape pens, and other vaping devices) to ease the transition from traditional cigarettes to not smoking at all.¹ Though this may seem like a novel option for some, the question we must ask is whether using e-cigarettes or vaping is better for you than using tobacco products. According to Michael Blaha, M.D., M.P.H., director of clinical research at the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease, there are several important factors to consider:

1. E-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless “water vapor.”²

The aerosol used in e-cigarettes contains chemicals that can be harmful to health, including:

- Nicotine²
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs²
- Flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease²
- Volatile organic compounds²
- Cancer-causing chemicals²
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead²

2. The nicotine in tobacco and vaping products is addictive.

According to Dr. Blaha, nicotine is a toxic substance that raises your blood pressure and spikes adrenaline which increases your heart rate and the likelihood of having a heart attack.¹ Emerging data also suggests links to chronic lung disease and asthma.¹

3. Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional ones.¹

Many e-cigarette users get even more nicotine than they would from a combustible tobacco product as many vaping devices offer extra-strength cartridges, which have a higher concentration of nicotine to get a greater hit of the substance. ¹ This can be counterproductive to an individual’s goal to quit as higher doses of nicotine result in a stronger nicotine addiction.

4. E-cigarettes are not an FDA approved cessation tool.¹

E-cigarettes have not received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval as smoking cessation devices.¹ There are many FDA approved products on the market that are effective for quitting nicotine including the nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges.

If you are a tobacco user looking to quit smoking, help is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Tobacco Free Florida AHEC Cessation Program—offers free tobacco cessation sessions that are available to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group cessation sessions, held virtually and in-person, provide information about the effects of tobacco use, the benefits of quitting, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. Free nicotine replacement



therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (*if medically appropriate and while supplies last*) are provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

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Take Control of Your Health with BodyView Preventive MRI by Encore Imaging

In an era where healthcare costs continue to rise and medical conditions often go undetected until they become serious, preventive medicine has never been more crucial. Encore Imaging's BodyView Preventive MRI represents a revolutionary approach to health screening, offering comprehensive peace of mind in under 60 minutes through advanced, radiation-free technology.

Knowledge Is Your Greatest Health Asset

The old adage "knowledge is power" takes on profound meaning when applied to personal health. BodyView Full Body MRI empowers individuals to take charge of their wellbeing by providing detailed insights into their body's current state. This innovative screening technology transforms the traditional reactive approach to healthcare into a proactive strategy that can literally save lives.

For individuals with a family history of cancer or other hereditary conditions, the psychological burden of uncertainty can be overwhelming. BodyView MRI addresses this concern head-on, offering a simple yet comprehensive scan that can deliver worry-free results or identify potential issues while they're still manageable. The relief that comes from knowing your body is healthy – or the advantage of early detection – cannot be overstated.

Comprehensive Screening Without Compromise

What sets BodyView apart from traditional screening methods is its remarkable scope and safety profile. This radiation-free scan screens for cancer and over 500 different medical conditions across 13 vital organs, providing a full internal snapshot of your health in a single session.

The scan examines critical areas including the brain, thyroid, spine, lungs, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, adrenal glands, bladder, and reproductive organs (ovaries, uterus, and prostate). This thorough approach means that potential health issues across multiple body systems can be identified simultaneously, eliminating the need for multiple separate screenings and reducing the overall time and cost associated with comprehensive health monitoring.

**1 in 2 Men.
1 in 3 Women.
Will Develop Cancer**

Most don't know until it's too late.

Don't wait for symptoms.

BodyView

The Power of Early Detection

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of BodyView Preventive MRI is its ability to reveal hidden conditions before they become symptomatic. Many serious health conditions, including various forms of cancer, develop silently over months or years. By the time symptoms appear, treatment options may be more limited and outcomes less favorable.

BodyView MRI changes this narrative by enabling early intervention. When conditions are detected in their initial stages, treatment is typically more effective, less invasive, and often less expensive. For health-conscious individuals who understand the value of prevention, this technology represents the ultimate proactive health tool.

Safety and Convenience Combined

Unlike traditional CT scans or other imaging methods that expose patients to ionizing radiation, BodyView MRI utilizes magnetic resonance technology that is completely radiation-free. This safety advantage makes it suitable for regular health monitoring without the cumulative radiation exposure concerns associated with other screening methods.

In less than an hour, patients receive a comprehensive health screening followed by a virtual consultation with a physician to review the results in detail, which would traditionally require multiple appointments, various specialists, and extensive testing. This efficiency makes preventive screening accessible to busy professionals and anyone who values their time while prioritizing their health.

Investing in Your Future Self

BodyView Preventive MRI represents more than just a medical screening – it's an investment in your future health and quality of life. The peace of mind that comes from comprehensive health knowledge allows individuals to plan confidently, whether that means pursuing aggressive career goals, planning family expansion, or simply enjoying life without the nagging worry about undetected health issues.

For those ready to embrace truly preventive healthcare, Encore Imaging's BodyView MRI offers an unparalleled opportunity to gain comprehensive health insights quickly, safely, and conveniently. In the world of modern medicine, this level of preventive screening allows you to be in control of managing your health and your future.

Take the first step. It's peace of mind and early detection when it matters most.

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TINY TOES, BIG MILESTONES: A Guide to Pediatric Podiatry

By Ron Adduru, DPM - Family Foot & Leg Center (Sarasota, FL)

As a podiatrist here in Sarasota, I often see parents walk into my clinic with a mix of concern and curiosity. They've noticed their toddler's feet turning inward, or perhaps their pre-teen is suddenly "clumsy" on the soccer field. The most common phrase I hear is, "I thought they'd just grow out of it."

While children are incredibly resilient, their feet are not just smaller versions of adult feet. They are dynamic, developing structures made of flexible cartilage that slowly ossifies into bone. Because a child's skeletal foundation is literally setting the stage for the rest of their life, specialized pediatric podiatry isn't just about treating pain—it's about proactive alignment and long-term mobility.

The Foundation of Development

From the moment a child takes those first precarious steps, their feet undergo a complex transformation. At birth, the foot contains more cartilage than bone. As the child grows, these structures harden. This is why early intervention is so critical; we have a window of opportunity to guide development before the "wet cement" of the foot sets into permanent bone.

In our Sarasota practice, we focus on several key areas that are unique to the pediatric population:

1. Gait Abnormalities: In-toeing and Out-toeing

It is very common for parents to notice "pigeon toes" (in-toeing) or "duck feet" (out-toeing). In many cases, these are developmental phases related to the rotation of the hip or shin bone. However, if these gaits cause frequent tripping, limb pain, or asymmetrical shoe wear, it's time for a professional evaluation. We look at the entire kinetic chain—from the lower back to the tips of the toes—to ensure the child isn't overcompensating in ways that could lead to hip or knee issues later in life.

2. The Myth of the "Normal" Flat Foot

Almost all infants appear to have flat feet because of a natural fat pad that hides the arch. Typically, an arch begins to develop around age three. However, **pediatric flatfoot** can sometimes be symptomatic. If your child complains of "tired legs" or asks to be carried frequently during walks, it may be due to a lack of structural support in the midfoot.

3. Growing Pains vs. Sever's Disease

One of the most frequent diagnoses I make in active Florida kids is **Sever's Disease** (calcaneal apophysitis). Despite the scary name, it isn't a disease; it's an inflammation of the growth plate in the heel. It usually strikes between ages 8 and 14, especially in children playing basketball or soccer. Unlike general "growing pains," this is a mechanical strain that we can treat effectively with stretching, activity modification, and custom orthotics.

Why Specialized Care Matters

You wouldn't take a child to a cardiologist for a broken arm, and similarly, pediatric foot care requires a specific lens. At Family Foot & Leg Center, we utilize diagnostic tools tailored for smaller frames.

- **Custom Orthotics for Kids:** Unlike the generic inserts you find at a drugstore, pediatric orthotics are designed to "capture" the heel and provide a stable base. We don't want to "fix" the foot into a rigid position; we want to provide the right bio-mechanical cues so the foot grows into its healthiest alignment.
- **Sports Medicine for the Young Athlete:** Sarasota is a hub for youth sports. Whether it's competitive swimming, tennis, or football, the repetitive stress on young growth plates requires a nuanced approach to prevent long-term stress fractures.

When Should You See a Specialist?

I always tell parents to trust their instincts. However, here are a few "red flags" that warrant an office visit:

- **Asymmetry:** One foot looks or functions significantly differently than the other.
- **Withdrawal from Play:** A child who suddenly wants to sit out of sports they previously loved.
- **Skin and Nail Issues:** Ingrown toenails are incredibly common in teenagers (often due to tight shoes or improper trimming) and can lead to nasty infections if handled at home with "bathroom surgery."
- **Constant Tripping:** If your child seems more "clumsy" than their peers, it may be a mechanical issue rather than a lack of coordination.



A Note to Sarasota Parents

Living in Florida, our kids spend a lot of time in flip-flops or barefoot. While Vitamin D and sand are great, the lack of support in common summer footwear can exacerbate underlying foot issues.

My goal at Family Foot & Leg Center is to ensure that every child in our community can run, jump, and play without being sidelined by preventable pain. We treat our pediatric patients with a gentle touch, ensuring they feel comfortable and empowered in their own care.

Remember, your child's feet are their foundation for life. Ensuring that foundation is level and strong is one of the best gifts you can give their future self.

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.



Dr. Ron Adduru is a podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Center in Sarasota, Florida, specializing in complex wound care and deformity reconstruction. He is committed to helping the Sarasota community remain active and healthy.

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Seeing and Hearing: The Dynamic Duo of Your Senses

By Rodney Robison, H.A.S.

March is **Save Your Vision Month**, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of eye health. While most people recognize how crucial vision is to daily life, fewer realize how closely **our ability to see and hear are connected**. As a Doctor of Audiology, I often remind patients that their **ears and eyes work as a team** to help them navigate the world, maintain balance, and communicate effectively.

If one sense begins to decline, the other has to compensate. When people experience hearing loss, they unknowingly start relying more on their vision—watching lip movements, facial expressions, and body language to fill in the gaps. Similarly, those with vision impairment lean on their hearing to identify their surroundings. But what happens when both begin to fade?

The Eyes and Ears: A Perfect Team

Your **brain is constantly integrating information from both hearing and vision**, making sense of your environment in real-time. Think about the last time you had a conversation in a noisy restaurant—your ears were processing speech while your eyes helped you focus on the speaker's lips and expressions to piece together the words.

This connection is so strong that research shows vision can even **alter what we hear**. The **McGurk Effect**, for example, is a fascinating auditory illusion where your brain changes what you hear based on what your eyes see. If a person says "ba" but their lips form the shape of "fa," you might **hear "fa" instead of "ba"** (McGurk & MacDonald, 1976).

But when either hearing or vision is impaired, this natural teamwork is disrupted—making everyday activities like conversation, walking, and driving more challenging.

The Brain's Role: Why Dual Sensory Loss Matters

Hearing and vision aren't just passive senses; they're deeply linked to **cognition and brain function**. When one declines, the brain has to work harder to compensate, leading to:

- **Cognitive Overload** – Straining to hear or see pulls mental energy away from memory and focus.
- **Increased Fall Risk** – The inner ear plays a crucial role in balance, and vision is essential for spatial awareness. Older adults with hearing and vision loss are at a significantly higher risk of falls (Lin et al., 2012).
- **Greater Dementia Risk** – Studies show that **untreated hearing loss is linked to an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia**, and when combined with vision impairment, the impact on brain health is even greater (Gurgel et al., 2014).

The takeaway? **Hearing and vision should never be treated in isolation**. They work together, and when one is neglected, it puts more strain on the other.

Why People Prioritize Vision Over Hearing

When vision changes, most people rush to the eye doctor to get glasses or contacts. But when hearing starts to fade, many **ignore the signs**—even though **hearing loss is just as impactful on quality of life**.

Some common reasons people delay hearing care include:

- **They assume hearing loss is normal with age.** (So is vision loss, but that doesn't stop anyone from getting glasses!)
- **They don't realize how much they're missing.** Hearing loss happens gradually, so people adapt without noticing the slow decline.
- **They think hearing aids won't help.** Today's hearing technology is more advanced and discreet than ever, dramatically improving communication and cognitive health.

How to Protect Both Your Vision and Hearing

Since your **eyes and ears work together**, maintaining both is crucial for overall well-being. Here's how you can protect these vital senses:

1. **Schedule Regular Eye Exams** – Vision changes can be gradual, so regular checkups ensure early detection of conditions like cataracts or macular degeneration.

2. **Get Your Hearing Checked** – A simple baseline hearing test can help identify early signs of hearing loss before it impacts your daily life.

3. **Protect Your Ears from Noise** – Long-term exposure to loud sounds is a leading cause of hearing loss. Wear hearing protection in noisy environments and keep headphone volumes at safe levels.

4. **Exercise Regularly** – Physical activity supports healthy circulation, which benefits both your eyes and ears.

5. **Limit Screen Time** – Digital eye strain is real! Follow the **20-20-20 rule**: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds to reduce eye fatigue.

The Bottom Line: Prioritize Your Hearing Health

This **Save Your Vision Month**, let's take a more **comprehensive approach** to wellness. Seeing clearly is essential—but so is hearing clearly. Vision and hearing **work together**, and when we neglect one, we may be unknowingly **putting extra strain on our brain and body**.

At **AudioNova**, we believe that hearing health is a crucial part of overall well-being. That's why we offer **complimentary hearing evaluations** to help you stay proactive about your health.

If you've noticed any changes in your hearing—or even if you haven't—it's time to establish a baseline. **Call us today to schedule your free hearing test and keep your brain, balance, and communication at their best!**

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THE LIFE-SAVING POWER OF REGULAR SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS: WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

In a world where health consciousness is on the rise, one critical aspect of preventive care often goes overlooked: regular skin cancer screenings. With skin cancer being one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, the importance of early detection through routine check-ups cannot be overstated. This article delves into why staying vigilant about your skin health, particularly in checking for melanomas, could be a life-saving decision.

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells grow abnormally, often due to damage from UV radiation. While there are several types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most dangerous. Melanoma develops in the melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing skin pigment. Although it's less common than other skin cancers, melanoma is far more likely to spread to other parts of the body if not caught early.

The Power of Early Detection

The key to successfully treating skin cancer, especially melanoma, lies in early detection. When caught in its initial stages, the five-year survival rate for melanoma is an impressive 99%. However, this rate drops dramatically to 27% for melanomas that have spread to distant parts of the body. These statistics underscore the critical importance of regular skin checks and professional screenings.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

While professional screenings are crucial, being aware of your own skin and any changes is equally important. The "ABCDE" rule is a helpful guide for identifying potential melanomas:

Asymmetry: One half of the mole doesn't match the other half.

Border: The edges are irregular, ragged, or blurred.

Color: The color is not uniform and may include shades of brown, black, or tan.

Diameter: Melanomas are usually larger than 6mm (about the size of a pencil eraser).

Evolving: The mole changes in size, shape, or color over time.

Any mole or skin growth exhibiting these characteristics warrants immediate medical attention.

The Screening Process

A professional skin cancer screening is a quick, painless procedure that can be performed by a dermatologist or trained healthcare provider. During the screening, the doctor will thoroughly examine your skin, paying close attention to areas frequently exposed to the sun. They may use a dermatoscope, a special magnifying tool, to get a closer look at suspicious spots.

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

While everyone should be mindful of their skin health, certain factors increase the risk of skin cancer:

- Fair skin
- History of sunburns or excessive sun exposure
- Multiple or atypical moles
- Family history of skin cancer
- Weakened immune system

For those at average risk, an annual skin check is recommended. However, individuals with higher risk factors may need more frequent screenings. It's best to consult with a healthcare provider to determine the most appropriate screening schedule for your specific situation.

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

In between professional screenings, monthly self-examinations are crucial. These self-checks allow you to become familiar with your skin's normal appearance and help you spot any changes quickly. Use a full-length mirror and a hand mirror to examine your entire body, including hard-to-see areas like your back, scalp, and between your toes.

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

While regular screenings are vital, prevention remains the best strategy against skin cancer. Protect your skin by:

- Applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 daily
- Wearing protective clothing, including wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses
- Seeking shade, especially during peak sun hours (10 am to 4 pm)
- Avoiding tanning beds and sun lamps

The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

Regular skin cancer screenings don't just benefit individuals; they have a broader societal impact. Early detection reduces the overall burden on healthcare systems by catching cancers when they're most treatable. It also helps raise awareness about skin cancer, encouraging others to prioritize their skin health.

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

In the grand scheme of health maintenance, skin cancer screenings are a relatively small investment of time that can yield enormous benefits. By making these screenings a regular part of your health routine, you're taking a proactive step in protecting yourself against one of the most prevalent forms of cancer. Remember, your skin is your body's largest organ and its first line of defense against the environment. Treating it with the care and attention it deserves isn't just about aesthetics—it's about preserving your overall health and potentially saving your life.

Don't wait for a problem to arise. Schedule a skin cancer screening today and empower yourself with the knowledge and vigilance needed to keep your skin healthy for years to come. Your future self will thank you for this simple yet powerful act of self-care.



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Beyond the Face: How Ultherapy Prime Tightens and Lifts the Arms and Abdomen Without Surgery

When most people think of Ultherapy, they picture a non-surgical facelift—a way to lift sagging brows, tighten the jawline, or smooth the neck without going under the knife. But the newest generation of this FDA-approved ultrasound technology, Ultherapy Prime, is expanding the possibilities well beyond the face. At Naples Aesthetic Institute, we are excited to offer Ultherapy Prime for the upper arms and abdomen, giving patients a non-invasive option to address skin laxity in two of the most commonly requested body areas.

Why the Arms and Abdomen?

Loose, crepey skin on the upper arms and a lax abdominal area are among the top aesthetic concerns patients bring to our practice, especially as we enjoy the active, outdoor lifestyle here in Southwest Florida. Weight fluctuations, pregnancy, aging, and even genetics can leave behind skin that no longer snaps back the way it once did. For many patients, the idea of surgical intervention—such as a brachioplasty (arm lift) or abdominoplasty (tummy tuck)—feels like too big a step. They want improvement, but they also want to avoid incisions, anesthesia, and weeks of downtime. That is exactly where Ultherapy Prime fits in.

How Ultherapy Prime Works on the Body

Ultherapy Prime uses micro-focused ultrasound energy to reach the deep foundational layers of tissue beneath the skin—the same layers a surgeon would address during a surgical lift. The system's advanced DeepSEE imaging technology allows the provider to visualize tissue in real time, ensuring that energy is delivered precisely where it will have the greatest impact. When the focused ultrasound reaches the targeted depth, it creates controlled thermal coagulation points that trigger the body's own healing response. Over the following weeks and months, the treated area produces fresh collagen and elastin, resulting in gradual tightening and lifting of the skin.

What makes the Prime platform particularly well-suited for body treatments is its enhanced precision and improved efficiency. Treatment times have been reduced by approximately twenty percent compared to the previous generation, and the advanced transducers allow for highly customized protocols tailored to the unique tissue characteristics of the arms and abdomen. These areas have different



Actual patient. Individual results may vary. Abdomen treated.

skin thickness and tissue composition than the face, so the ability to adjust treatment parameters is critical for achieving optimal results.

What to Expect During and After Treatment

An Ultherapy Prime session for the arms or abdomen typically lasts between sixty and ninety minutes, depending on the size of the treatment area. Patients may feel brief sensations of warmth or tingling as the ultrasound energy is delivered, but most tolerate the procedure comfortably. There is no need for general anesthesia, and the vast majority of patients return to their normal activities immediately afterward. Temporary redness, mild swelling, or tenderness in the treated area may occur but typically resolves within a day or two.

Results develop gradually as new collagen forms. Some patients notice initial tightening shortly after their session, but the most noticeable improvements typically appear over the course of two to three months. Results can last twelve to eighteen months or longer, and many patients choose to schedule annual maintenance treatments to sustain their progress.

Is Ultherapy Prime Right for You?

The best candidates for Ultherapy Prime on the arms and abdomen are individuals with mild to moderate skin laxity who are looking for meaningful improvement without surgery. It is an excellent option for patients who have experienced skin loosening after weight loss, pregnancy, or simply the natural aging process but who are not yet ready—or do not want—a surgical procedure. It is important to have realistic expectations; Ultherapy Prime delivers a natural-looking, gradual improvement rather than the dramatic transformation of a surgical lift. For patients with severe skin laxity, a surgical approach

may still be the most effective path, and we are happy to discuss all available options during a consultation.

A Comprehensive Approach to Body Rejuvenation

At Naples Aesthetic Institute, we often recommend combining Ultherapy Prime with complementary treatments for a more comprehensive result. Pairing it with microneedling can enhance overall skin quality, while injectables like Sculptra can address volume loss in adjacent areas. Every treatment plan is customized to the individual patient's anatomy, goals, and lifestyle.

If you have been bothered by loose skin on your arms or abdomen and want to explore a non-surgical solution, we invite you to schedule a consultation with our team. Contact Naples Aesthetic Institute at (239) 596-8000 or visit kirangillmd.com to learn more about Ultherapy Prime and discover whether it is the right fit for your goals.



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FEELING LIKE YOURSELF AGAIN: Navigating Midlife Hormone Changes

By Karen Leggett, DO

Midlife is a powerful and meaningful chapter in a woman's life—but it is also a time when many women begin to notice changes they were never warned about. These changes are often rooted in the natural decline of estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and related hormones. For many women, the experience can feel confusing, discouraging, or even frightening. Yet with thoughtful, experienced care, this transition can be navigated smoothly and safely, allowing women to remain vibrant, clear-thinking, and fully engaged in life.

The most common concerns women experience in their forties, fifties, and beyond are familiar to every physician who cares for midlife women. Hot flashes and night sweats disrupt sleep and confidence. Mood changes may appear unexpectedly—irritability, anxiety, or low mood in women who have always felt emotionally steady. Insomnia becomes a nightly frustration, leaving women exhausted and foggy the next day. Weight gain appears despite unchanged habits. Hair thinning can feel alarming. Libido may decline, painful intercourse may develop, and vaginal dryness may make intimacy uncomfortable or even impossible. Motivation and mental clarity may fade, leaving women wondering what happened to their energy and passion.

These symptoms are not imaginary. They are not simply "aging." They are usually the result of hormone changes that affect every tissue in the body—including the brain, bones, heart, skin, muscles, and reproductive organs. Estrogen supports memory, mood stability, vaginal tissue health, and bone strength. Progesterone influences sleep and calmness. Testosterone contributes to energy, muscle tone, motivation, libido, and confidence and immune function. When these hormones fall out of balance, the body and mind feel it.

The good news is that balance can often be restored safely. Experienced physicians who specialize in midlife hormone care understand that treatment is not about chasing youth or giving one-size-fits-all prescriptions. It is about listening carefully, evaluating symptoms, reviewing medical history, and selecting thoughtful therapies tailored to each woman's



needs. For some women, lifestyle changes such as improved sleep habits, strength training, nutrition, and stress reduction make a profound difference. For others, carefully monitored hormone therapy—using bioidentical or conventional options when appropriate—can relieve symptoms and protect long-term health.

When guided by an experienced clinician, hormone care is thoughtful and individualized. Bone health can be monitored and protected. Vaginal and urinary symptoms can be relieved with local treatments that improve comfort and intimacy. Mood changes and insomnia can be addressed with a combination of hormone support, sleep-focused strategies, stress management, and, when needed, carefully chosen medications. Weight gain can be approached with metabolic evaluation, nutrition counseling, and modern therapies that respect both safety and sustainability. Hair thinning may improve as hormonal balance is restored and underlying contributors are treated.

Just as important, good hormone care respects each woman's overall health. Cardiovascular risk factors are reviewed. Breast and gynecologic health are monitored. Medication interactions are considered. Decisions are made slowly and thoughtfully, with room for questions and shared understanding. The goal is not simply symptom relief—it is long-term well-being, strength, and confidence.

For more than 25 years, Dr. Karen Leggett has cared for midlife women through these changes. Board-certified in Family Medicine and Geriatric Medicine, Fellowship trained in Metabolic, Nutrition and Hormone Medicine, Dr. Leggett has listened to thousands of women describe symptoms that were often dismissed or misunderstood. Her approach is grounded in careful evaluation, integrative medicine principles, and practical solutions that fit real lives. She believes women deserve clear answers, compassionate listening, and safe options that restore their sense of themselves.

Women often tell Dr. Leggett that they feel like themselves again after thoughtful care. Sleep improves. Energy returns. Intimacy becomes comfortable. Motivation and joy reappear. Bone strength and long-term health are protected. Most importantly, women regain confidence in their bodies and their futures.

Midlife does not have to mean decline. With knowledgeable guidance and balanced hormone care, it can be a time of renewed clarity, strength, and purpose. When women are heard, understood, and cared for by an experienced physician, they can move through these changes with grace—and continue living the vibrant, meaningful lives they imagined.



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I KNOW PAIN!

I wish I didn't. But life does not always give you a choice.

By Prof. William J. Cole, Jr., DO - Double Board-Certified in PM&R Interventions & Regenerative Medicine

There are moments when your life divides into two parts: before... and after. Mine happened when I woke up from surgery.

When I woke up from the cervical spinal decompression surgery for the large bone spurs that were crushing my right C-7 nerve root, rendering my right arm useless, and robbing me of any sleep for the last 30-days and 30-nights....

I leaned forward and felt this ripping sensation, deep in my neck, and then the shooting electrical cattle prod type pain went down to all my arms and legs with searing nerve pain.

This is NOT like any other type of pain, and those who have experienced **True Neurologic Pain** know how intense and unrelenting nerve pain can be.

I then reached up to touch my "Standard Operating Procedure Neck Safety Collar, WHICH WAS NOT THERE!"

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE?

I didn't freak out like most people... I GOT MAD AS HELL... I WAS FURIOUS!

How could this happen? Who was responsible? Why me? Am I going to be able to walk? Will I be able to work as a Doctor? Will I recover? How will I provide for my Lovely New Wife? What can I do to reverse the damage? And what the F___ Were They Thinking When They Are Operating on Another Doctor..?

That moment—right there—was the moment I realized I was potentially going to be a quadriplegic.

The difficulty became evident years before after a young girl fell asleep while driving and I was a passenger and she ran into the guardrail at 80 miles an hour where I went headfirst into the corner post with no airbag.

Of course, this was a devastating injury, which forced me to have **Multiple Surgeries** to "Decompress my bilateral Ulnar nerves" as my arms became useless, "Reattach my Bicep Tendon 3 times" within 5 weeks, "inject my Collar Bone" on Both Sides as it had been displaced one inch medial and shoved on top of my chest wall, and had "Countless Cervical Injection" due to the worsening neck pain and Endless PT that Just Did Not Work.

I survived these challenges, as "I am a Hardhead", which anyone who knows me can confirm, but then the "Real Pain" started.

I STOPPED SLEEPING ALL TOGETHER

Read that again: I stopped sleeping altogether. Not "I had trouble sleeping." Not "I was uncomfortable." I stopped sleeping.

It took a few years for this massive bone spur to develop, but after it started crushing my C7 spinal nerve and I had no choice but to have it removed.

And if you've ever been there—where your body won't let you rest—then you already know what happens next: you stop thinking clearly, you stop healing, you stop functioning, you stop being You!

Losing the use of your arms twice is devastating enough, let alone realizing that you may not be able to use your arms or legs in the future. That's why I was so upset and furious post-surgery when I realized that this was a Real Possibility.

It's one thing to be hurt. It's another thing to look into the future and realize you may never walk again or hold your loved ones. And if you've ever had that moment, then you know exactly what I mean, as "I Have Been Exactly Where You Are Now!"

I then told my partner at the time that we had this Amazing Ultra PRP treatment that he was going to perform in my epidural space and rebuild my spinal cord. He looked at me and said, "Never heard of it!" I said, "I Don't Care! That's What We're Going to do..."

The "Future Me"

So, I had a series of **Ultra PRP epidural procedures** performed in my cervical spinal canal, which **Rebuilt My Spinal Cord** and changed the course of my life forever.

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But the real breakthrough wasn't the procedure... it was what it forced me to understand about what all patients go through and the pain that they suffer due to the limitations of traditional medicine.

You're getting PAIN Signals. Signals are your body's warning signs. And when you decode them, you stop guessing and start making decisions that actually make sense, and this is **How I Became the Future Me.**

The "Future You"

Are You Ready to Meet the "Future You"?

Is it someone in crippling pain and dysfunction so bad that they just Gave Up? Will you stop participating in life? Will you just take another pill or schedule yet ANOTHER surgery, when the first ones didn't work?

What do you do with the frustration, anger, shame, guilt, insomnia, anxiety, depression, embarrassment, and inadequacy that comes from "Unfulfilled Dreams?"

YOUR LIFE WITHOUT PAIN

Now, instead, I want you to take a minute... Close Your Eyes, and IMAGINE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT PAIN.

Without any of the negative feedback from your body, brain, friends, or family. What would your life be like to live life to the fullest, free from endless drugs and surgeries? You are happy, healthy, pain free, and living the best life you can imagine.

Who would you be if you had no pain? What would you do? Where would you go? What would you accomplish? What does YOUR LIFE look like? Do you want to know how to get to the "Future You"?

Where is YOUR Pain...?

The body, back, brain, bones, or BioMet...? Well, THAT is what we can figure out together, along with how these problems affect every aspect of your life, now and in the future, and how to properly identify the real pain and problem generators.

Then, how to work toward resolution to live your best life—the Future You.

Pain is your body telling you that something is wrong, so **LISTEN TO YOUR BODY** as you know it better than any doctor.

Let's Decode Your Pain Signals.

Then Let's **"Have the Body Heal the Body"**®, as There is Nothing on God's Green Earth That Can Heal the Body Better Than the Body... Nothing!

We All Know This, Right?

Do you want to know how...?

"The Future You" is Waiting!

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Do You Need Assisted Living Or Another Level of Care?

Today's older adults have more levels of care to choose from than ever before, and while this variety helps ensure families can find a level of care that meets their needs, there is a lot to learn about each type.

In a Life Plan Community like Freedom Village of Bradenton, you'll find what is referred to as a continuum of care. It's an option that accommodates a senior's current needs while also planning for their future. Because multiple types of care are found on the same campus, residents can seamlessly transition from one type to another if their health changes.

Before you begin making calls and scheduling in-person visits to communities, it might be helpful to learn more about independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing; and short-term rehabilitation. And to compare assisted living, one of the most popular types of senior living, with other options.

WHAT IS ASSISTED LIVING?

An assisted living community is a senior living option many consider an ideal combination of support and independence. Each resident has their own private apartment or suite to call home that enables residents to maintain a sense of independence and to feel they are still in charge of their own life.

They do so, however, knowing the support of caregivers is nearby 24/7. The caregiving staff can assist with everything from taking a shower to helping with medication. Residents of an assisted living community generally require help with two or three activities of daily living (ADLs), as well as medication management support. This could include personal care tasks such as bathing, grooming, dressing, transferring, toileting, and continence care.

Other services and amenities usually found at an assisted living community are:

- Healthy, chef-inspired meals and snacks
- Transportation program for outings and appointments
- Personal laundry, linen changes, and housekeeping
- Wellness programs, daily activities, and community events
- Utilities, internet access, and cable
- On-site security and emergency call systems

For many, the most popular part of community living are life-enrichment activities. These can vary from one community to another but often include exercise



classes, book clubs, art workshops, card groups, happy hours, movie nights, shopping trips, cultural outings and participating in volunteer projects.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASSISTED LIVING AND OTHER TYPES OF SENIOR CARE?

The best way to understand how assisted living differs from other senior care options is to learn a little more about each one:

• **Independent living:** Older adults who are looking for maintenance-free living are often attracted to independent living communities. Instead of spending your days mowing the yard, making home repairs, or cleaning the gutters, you'll have time to socialize, travel, and enjoy life. It's a lifestyle that promotes choice, flexibility, and freedom. Independent living residents are generally more active and able to care for themselves than those in assisted living.

• **Skilled nursing:** While residents in an assisted living community typically require help with ADLs, seniors in a life plan community's skilled nursing center tend to have more complex medical needs. Licensed nurses are on-site around-the-clock to assist residents. Many also have nurse practitioners and physicians who oversee care. These residents still enjoy the same amenities as assisted living communities, such as nutritious meals, life enrichment programming, and support with personal care.

• **Memory care:** When a senior loved one has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another type of dementia, family caregivers face unique challenges with safety being a leading concern. Because judgment can become impaired, an older adult with dementia might not be safe alone. They may also experience episodes of wandering from home, agitation, and increased

anxiety. Even figuring out what meals to cook can be tough. In a memory care program, you'll find a secure environment designed to be peaceful and comforting. Activities are developed to work around disease-related losses, enabling the resident to feel successful and productive. Every aspect of these specialty programs is focused on protecting dignity.

• **Rehabilitation:** This type of care is short term and typically follows a hospital stay. If an older adult has had a serious illness or injury or a planned surgery, they may transition from the hospital to a rehabilitation center to continue their recovery. In addition to nursing staff, you will usually find physical, occupational, and speech therapists. The goal is to help the senior recuperate and return to whatever setting they call home, whether it is a private residence or an apartment in an independent or assisted living community.

SEE WHY LIFE IS BETTER HERE

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SPRING CLEANING THE MIND:

Mental Health, Substance Use, and the Season of Renewal

March arrives with subtle promises. The days stretch a little longer. Windows open. Closets get cleared. And everywhere you look, there's talk of "resetting," "refreshing," and "getting back on track." National Nutrition Month often brings attention to caring for the body—but spring is just as much an invitation to check in on the mind.

This season can stir more than motivation. Changes in routine, anniversaries of loss, or pressure to "feel better now" can quietly impact mental health and substance use. Renewal sounds uplifting—but it can also feel overwhelming.

The good news: spring doesn't require a full transformation. Small, intentional choices can support emotional balance and stability without adding pressure.

A Softer Kind of Spring Reset

Spring cleaning isn't about perfection—it's about making room.

Emotionally, that might mean letting go of habits or expectations that no longer serve you. Maybe winter routines included more isolation, disrupted sleep, or increased reliance on alcohol or medications to cope with stress or loneliness. Warmer weather doesn't magically erase those patterns—but it does offer a chance to pause and reassess.

Instead of asking, "What should I change?" try asking, "What feels heavy right now?" Awareness is often the first step toward relief.

When "Getting Back on Track" Feels Hard

Seasonal transitions can be deceptively difficult. For adults managing anxiety, depression, grief, or substance use concerns, spring can amplify feelings of comparison or self-judgment—especially when others seem energized and hopeful.

If motivation feels low or emotions feel unpredictable, that's not a personal failure. Mental health doesn't follow the calendar. Some people feel more vulnerable during transitions, not less.



Pay attention to signals such as:

- Increased irritability or withdrawal
- Changes in sleep or energy
- Using substances more frequently or differently than intended
- Feeling pressure to "keep up" despite emotional fatigue

These are signs to slow down—not push harder.

Growth Doesn't Have to Be Loud

Spring growth is quiet. It happens underground first.

Supportive habits don't need to be dramatic to be effective. A few grounding practices—like maintaining simple routines, checking in with trusted people, or setting gentle boundaries around social commitments—can make a meaningful difference.

For those in recovery or working to reduce substance use, this season may bring more invitations, gatherings, or unstructured time. Planning ahead—knowing your limits and identifying support—can help you stay steady without isolating yourself.

If You Feel Off Course

Slips, setbacks, or emotional dips don't erase progress. They offer information.

If you notice yourself struggling more than usual, respond with curiosity rather than criticism. Ask what support might help right now. Sometimes that's rest or connection. Other times, it's professional care.

Reach out promptly if:

- Substance use feels harder to control
- Mood changes feel intense or persistent
- Anxiety, panic, or sadness interferes with daily life
- Safety becomes a concern

Getting help early can prevent small concerns from becoming crises.

When Professional Support Is the Right Next Step Inpatient psychiatric care and medically supervised detox exist for moments when extra structure, monitoring, and support are needed. These services provide a safe, stabilizing environment to address mental health symptoms and substance use concerns—without judgment and without delay.

Spring is about renewal—but sometimes renewal begins with asking for help.

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POST-CONCUSSION SYNDROME

How Upper Cervical Chiropractic Can Help

By Dr. Drew Hall

Post Concussion Syndrome (PCS) is a complex and debilitating condition that can occur after a head injury. It is estimated that up to 30% of people who experience a concussion will go on to develop PCS, which can cause a range of symptoms that can last for weeks, months, or even years. As a chiropractor who practices Blair's upper cervical chiropractic technique, I have seen firsthand how this approach can help alleviate the symptoms of PCS and improve patients' quality of life.

Symptoms of Post Concussion Syndrome

The symptoms of PCS can vary widely depending on the individual and the severity of the head injury. Some common symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness or vertigo
- Fatigue or lethargy
- Memory or concentration problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability or mood swings
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Ringing in the ears

These symptoms can be frustrating and disruptive, making it difficult to perform everyday tasks or engage in activities that were once enjoyable. While some people may recover from a concussion within a few days or weeks, others may experience symptoms for much longer, leading to a diagnosis of PCS.

How Upper Cervical Chiropractic Can Help

Upper cervical chiropractic is a specialized form of chiropractic care that focuses on the relationship between the upper cervical spine (the top two vertebrae of the neck) and the nervous system. When these vertebrae become misaligned, it can disrupt the flow of nerve impulses between the brain and the body, leading to a wide range of health problems, including PCS.

Blair's upper cervical chiropractic technique is a specific type of upper cervical chiropractic that uses a gentle, precise approach to identify and correct misalignments in the upper cervical spine.



By using advanced imaging techniques, such as digital x-rays, to precisely measure the misalignment, we can develop a customized treatment plan that is tailored to each patient's individual needs.

One of the ways that upper cervical chiropractic can help with PCS is by restoring proper alignment to the upper cervical spine. When the vertebrae are misaligned, it can put pressure on the surrounding nerves and blood vessels, leading to inflammation and irritation that can exacerbate the symptoms of PCS. By correcting the misalignment, we can relieve this pressure and improve the flow of nerve impulses, allowing the body to function more effectively.

Another way that upper cervical chiropractic can help with PCS is by reducing inflammation in the body. Inflammation is a natural response to injury, but when it becomes chronic, it can cause a wide range of health problems, including PCS symptoms. By using a combination of chiropractic adjustments, dietary changes, and other natural therapies, we can help reduce inflammation in the body, allowing it to heal more effectively.

Finally, upper cervical chiropractic can help improve blood flow to the brain, which is essential for optimal brain function. When the upper cervical spine is misaligned, it can disrupt the flow

of blood to the brain, leading to a range of neurological symptoms, including those associated with PCS. By correcting the misalignment and improving blood flow, we can help alleviate these symptoms and improve overall brain function.

Post Concussion Syndrome is a complex and challenging condition that can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life. While traditional medical treatments such as rest, medications, and physical therapy can be helpful, they may not always address the underlying causes of PCS. Upper cervical chiropractic, particularly Blair's technique, offers a safe, effective, and natural approach to addressing the underlying causes of PCS and improving patients' overall health and wellbeing.



Dr. Drew Hall



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EMSCULPT NEO: A Revolutionary Approach to Pain Management

By Dr. Michael Jonathan Clark

New innovative solutions that address both body composition and chronic pain. At Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology, we're proud to offer EMSCULPT NEO, a groundbreaking technology that's transforming how patients approach pain management while achieving their wellness goals.

Understanding EMSCULPT NEO

EMSCULPT NEO represents the latest advancement in non-invasive body contouring technology, combining two powerful modalities in a single treatment. This FDA-cleared device simultaneously delivers high-intensity focused electromagnetic energy (HIFEM) and radiofrequency heating to build muscle and reduce fat. However, its benefits extend far beyond aesthetics, offering significant advantages for those managing chronic pain conditions.

The Connection Between Muscle Strength and Pain Relief

Chronic pain, particularly in the back, knees, and core areas, often stems from weak or imbalanced muscles. When muscles lack strength, surrounding joints and tissues compensate, leading to increased strain and discomfort. EMSCULPT NEO addresses this root cause by inducing approximately 20,000 supramaximal muscle contractions in just 30 minutes, equivalent to performing thousands of crunches or squats that would be impossible to achieve through conventional exercise.

This intensive muscle building helps stabilize joints, improve posture, and reduce the burden on pain-prone areas. Patients with lower back pain, for instance, often experience relief as their core muscles strengthen and provide better spinal support.

Benefits for Pain Management

Enhanced Muscle Support: Strengthened muscles provide better support for joints and the skeletal system, reducing strain that contributes to chronic pain. This is particularly beneficial for individuals with arthritis, joint instability, or degenerative disc disease.



Improved Mobility: As muscle mass increases and fat decreases, patients often experience improved range of motion and flexibility. This enhanced mobility can break the cycle of pain-induced inactivity that often worsens chronic conditions.

Non-Invasive Relief: Unlike surgical interventions or ongoing medication regimens, EMSCULPT NEO offers a non-invasive alternative with no downtime. Patients can resume normal activities immediately after treatment, making it an ideal option for those seeking pain relief without disrupting their daily lives.

Postural Correction: Poor posture is a significant contributor to chronic neck, shoulder, and back pain. By strengthening core and back muscles, EMSCULPT NEO helps patients maintain proper alignment naturally, reducing pain caused by postural dysfunction.

Inflammation Reduction: The radiofrequency component of EMSCULPT NEO generates controlled heating that can help reduce inflammation in treated areas, providing additional pain relief benefits.

Why Choose Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology

At Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology, we understand that pain management requires a comprehensive, personalized approach. Our experienced team evaluates each patient's unique needs

and develops customized EMSCULPT NEO treatment plans that align with their pain management goals.

Take control of your pain and wellness journey. EMSCULPT NEO offers a unique opportunity to build strength, reduce discomfort, and reclaim your quality of life without surgery or prolonged recovery periods.

Schedule a consultation with Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology today at 941-786-0386 to discover how EMSCULPT NEO can become an integral part of your pain management strategy. Let this Pain Management Awareness Month be the turning point toward a stronger, more comfortable you.

About Dr. Michael Jonathan Clark

Dr. Clark has surgical skills that encompass much of the head and neck, and really enjoys a challenge. Dr. Clark loves cochlear implants and their ability to replace the function of the inner ear by directly stimulating the auditory nerve. There is just something special about watching the face of someone hear for the first time in a long time. He also preforms ossicular chain reconstruction, which repairs the tiny bones in the middle ear. It's pretty amazing, really. He removes thyroids and parotid glands that have gone awry, or tonsils that won't stop getting infected. Dr. Clark offers balloon sinuplasty in office (or in the OR if needed) that is comfortable and heals within a few weeks, giving people a whole new way to breath easy. He also offers in office insertion of ear tubes, which he places with ease. Most importantly, Dr. Clark will explain any procedure he performs in detail and makes the patient feel confident and comfortable. He will also guide you through medical and lifestyle changes that may reduce your need for surgery. He really wants to find the best solutions for you and your family.



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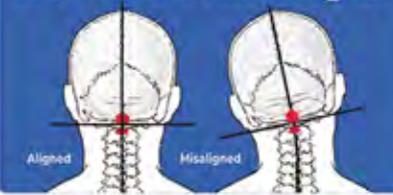
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MARCH IS NATIONAL KIDNEY AWARENESS MONTH

Every March, the nation turns its attention to one of the most underrecognized health crises in the United States: kidney disease. National Kidney Awareness Month is a dedicated time to educate communities, raise awareness, and encourage early detection of a condition that silently impacts millions of Americans. At RAVE, we are proud to join this important movement by spotlighting the facts, risks, and preventive measures that can help protect kidney health for individuals and families across the country.

A Growing Health Crisis

The numbers surrounding kidney disease in America are staggering. More than 37 million Americans are currently living with some form of kidney disease, and many of them do not even know it. The condition currently affects more than one in seven American adults, which translates to roughly 14 percent of the adult population. Approximately 815,000 Americans are living with kidney failure, the most advanced stage of the disease, and about 131,000 Americans are newly diagnosed with kidney failure each year. These statistics paint a clear picture of a public health emergency that demands greater attention and action.

Understanding the Leading Causes

Kidney disease does not develop in isolation. Two of the most common chronic conditions in the United States, diabetes and high blood pressure, are the leading causes of kidney failure. Diabetes damages the small blood vessels within the kidneys over time, reducing their ability to filter waste effectively. Similarly, high blood pressure places excessive strain on the delicate filtering units of the kidneys, gradually causing irreversible damage. Because both of these conditions are so widespread, the risk of kidney disease extends to a significant portion of the population. Managing blood sugar levels and maintaining healthy blood pressure are among the most effective strategies for protecting kidney function.

The Silent Nature of Kidney Disease

One of the most dangerous aspects of kidney disease is that it often progresses without noticeable symptoms until the damage is severe. Many people feel perfectly healthy while their kidney function is declining. By the time symptoms such as fatigue, swelling, changes in urination, or difficulty concentrating appear, the disease may have already

advanced significantly. This is why routine screening is so critical, especially for those with diabetes, high blood pressure, a family history of kidney disease, or who are over the age of 60. Simple blood and urine tests can detect kidney problems early, giving patients and their healthcare providers the opportunity to intervene before the condition worsens.

Steps You Can Take Today

Prevention and early detection are the cornerstones of kidney health. Staying physically active, eating a balanced diet that is low in sodium and processed foods, drinking plenty of water, avoiding excessive use of over-the-counter pain medications, and refraining from smoking are all practical steps that support kidney function. Regular check-ups with a healthcare provider are essential, and individuals who are at higher risk should ask specifically about kidney screening. Awareness is the first step toward prevention, and conversations about kidney health should happen not just in March but throughout the entire year.

RAVE's Commitment to Awareness

At RAVE, we believe that health education is a powerful tool for change. By celebrating National Kidney Awareness Month, we aim to empower our community with the knowledge they need to take charge of their health. Whether it is scheduling a screening, making healthier lifestyle choices, or simply sharing information with loved ones, every action counts. Together, we can reduce the impact of kidney disease and help ensure that more Americans live longer, healthier lives. This March, join RAVE in spreading the word and making kidney health a priority.

- More than 37 million Americans have kidney disease.
- About 815,000 Americans are living with kidney failure.
- It currently affects more than 1 in 7 (or 14%) of American adults.
- There were about 131,000 Americans newly diagnosed with kidney failure
- Diabetes and High Blood Pressure are the leading causes of Kidney Failure.

RAVE CELEBRATES MARCH AWARENESS



ALL RADIOLOGY TESTING IS OFFERED AT RAVE IMAGING

- **Renal Ultrasounds** = the preferred study to evaluate kidney size, tumors, cysts, or obstruction
- **Doppler Ultrasounds** = Evaluates renal blood flow, looking for renal artery stenosis or thrombosis
- **CT Computed Tomography (non-contrast CT)** evaluates for kidney stone and obstruction.
- **CT Urogram/Contrasted CT** = used to evaluate hematuria (blood in urine), renal masses.
- **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** = Used for Characterizing renal masses, renal vein thrombosis.
- **Nuclear Medicine Renal scans** = used to assess split kidney function, GFR rate, obstruction, or vascular issues.



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AVOID FADS AND QUICK FIXES: Align Dietary Strategy with Individual Physiology for Optimal Nutrition

By Rick Weber

Our current diet culture is driven by trending diets and quick fixes. That can take us down the wrong road, because the goal should be personalization, not perfection.

“Public health guidelines are designed to serve large populations, not individuals,” says Joan Faris, who has served on the faculty of the Marieb College of Health and Human Services at Florida Gulf Coast University since 2001, teaching nutrition and mentoring future health professionals. “While general principles such as emphasizing whole foods, fiber, healthy fats and reducing ultra-processed foods are valuable, individual responses to the same diet can vary dramatically.

“Two people can eat the same diet and have completely different outcomes in weight reduction, blood sugar control, lipid levels, inflammation markers or cognitive clarity. Our genetics, lifestyle, stress levels, activity patterns—and even our life stage—all influence how food affects us.”

One of the most compelling developments in personalized nutrition is nutrigenomics—the study of how nutrients interact with genes and how genetic variations influence dietary response.

Genes are not static blueprints that dictate our destiny. Many genes are regulated by environmental inputs, including food. Certain bioactive compounds found in foods such as cruciferous vegetables, berries, green tea, turmeric and omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to influence gene expression related to inflammation, detoxification and antioxidant defense.

Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) are small genetic variations. These SNPs can alter how individuals process nutrients.

“One individual may metabolize caffeine rapidly with minimal cardiovascular impact, while another person will experience elevated blood pressure and sleep disruption from the same intake,” she says. “Some people thrive on higher carbohydrate intakes, while others demonstrate improved metabolic markers with moderated carbohydrate distribution. Sodium sensitivity, lactose tolerance, folate metabolism, vitamin D receptor activity and inflammatory response to dietary fats can all differ significantly between individuals.”

Recognizing this variability has shifted her professional focus toward integrative and functional nutrition where personalization becomes central.

Throughout her career at FGCU, Joan has integrated academic instruction with clinical practice. She has provided nutrition counseling through Student Health Services, worked with FGCU student-athletes to optimize performance and recovery and supported veterans participating in the Home Base Warrior Health and Fitness program.

She has always used a personalized approach when developing a plan for students and clients. As nutrition science has evolved, more tools—like nutrigenomics—are available for a more targeted approach for the individual. Her approach blends evidence-based science with real-world strategies, helping individuals use food to support inflammation balance, metabolic health, cognitive function and healthy aging. Rather than prescribing rigid rules, she encourages curiosity and awareness, learning how your body responds and adjusting accordingly.

“Nutrigenomics does not replace foundational nutrition principles or justify extreme or restrictive diets,” she says. “It moves nutrition from generalized recommendations toward a more refined, targeted strategy. Nutrigenomics reinforces what years of clinical practice have taught me—the best nutrition plan is tailored to the individual.”

To design an individual plan:

- **Pay attention to patterns, not just rules.** Instead of following generic diet plans, start noticing how your body responds to certain foods. Do you feel energized after meals, or sluggish? Satisfied, or hungry? Tracking patterns for even one week can provide valuable insight.
- **Consider your life stage and activity level.** Nutritional needs shift with age, stress, sleep, hormonal changes and physical activity. What worked in your 20s may not work in your 50s. Adjust protein, fiber and overall intake to reflect your current reality.
- **Focus on food quality and preparation.** Food is more than calories and macros. How it's sourced, prepared and combined matters. Emphasize whole foods, anti-inflammatory ingredients, herbs and spices, and simple cooking methods that preserve nutrients and enhance flavor.

Many people don't realize that food has healing properties. It's medicine because it directly influences the biological systems that determine our health.

“Nutrients are not simply sources of calories—they are biochemical signals,” she says. “Every meal influences gene expression, inflammatory pathways, insulin sensitivity, mitochondrial function, immune response and neurotransmitter production.

“Proteins provide amino acids necessary for tissue repair and neurotransmitter synthesis. Fats influence cell membrane integrity and inflammatory signaling. Carbohydrates affect glucose metabolism and hormonal balance. Phytonutrients found in plants modulate oxidative stress and detoxification pathways. Even the gut microbiome responds dynamically to dietary patterns.

“Over time, daily food choices can either support resilience and healing or contribute to chronic disease. Unlike a prescription taken occasionally, food is information we provide to our bodies multiple times a day—making it one of the most powerful and consistent tools we have for shaping long-term health.

“Over months and years these signals accumulate, shaping metabolic resilience or vulnerability. This is why dietary patterns are strongly associated with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, neurodegeneration, autoimmune disorders, and certain cancers. Despite this powerful influence, dietary recommendations are often generalized.”

She says scientific insight alone is insufficient if it cannot be implemented. Food must be practical, culturally meaningful and enjoyable. Culinary nutrition bridges the gap between research and real life.

“Rather than focusing solely on nutrients and numbers, I feel it is important to emphasize how food is prepared, shared and enjoyed,” she says. “Anti-inflammatory dietary patterns, adequate protein distribution, blood sugar stabilization and phytonutrient diversity can all be achieved through simple, well-prepared meals. Herbs and spices provide bioactive compounds and seasonal produce enhances both flavor and nutrient density. Cooking methods influence nutrient retention.

“I provide my students and clients with simple recipes and encourage them to experiment with different flavors and cooking methods and, most of all, to have fun with cooking!”

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Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

VAX-D, short for Vertebral Axial Decompression, is a patented non-surgical therapy proven to successfully treat chronic low back pain, caused by prolapsed, bulging, herniated or degenerative discs, facet syndrome, stenosis and sciatica. Even post-surgical patients and those suffering from central canal or foraminal stenosis have reported significant pain relief with VAX-D therapy. Over a series of relaxing treatment sessions, patients experience powerful pain reduction and healing. Some patients even notice relief after just one visit.

VAX-D's proven and patented technology is currently being utilized by leading physicians in orthopedic medicine, pain medicine, neurology and other specialties in hundreds of clinics around the world. Many doctors choose VAX-D over other devices because it employs the original, patented technology from which decompression therapy was born. VAX-D effectiveness is backed by clinical research. Back pain has grown to be a \$54 billion industry and has literally become a national epidemic. Due to the astounding array of varied treatment options, finding a back pain solution can be a daunting task. Knowing that a product backs its claims with clinical research makes all the difference, and that is what VAX-D offers. A recently completed 2 1/2 year study has demonstrated that VAX-D achieved a remarkable 88% success rate in the 283 chronic back pain patients studied! The patients selected for the study had been unsuccessful at finding relief with at least two previous non-surgical treatments.

VAX-D is not to be confused with traction. VAX-D lengthens and decompresses the spine, reversing high intradiscal pressure through the application of negative pressure via a patented "slow ramp-up" process. This reversal of pressure creates a vacuum inside the discs that not only takes pressure off of pinched nerves, but helps to reposition bulging discs and pull extruded disc material back into place. Simultaneously, nutrients, oxygen and fluids are drawn into the disc to create a revitalized environment conducive to healing. VAX-D stimulates the body's repair mechanism, providing the building blocks needed to actually mend injured and degenerated discs. VAX-D's process is the only patented treatment clinically proven to decrease disc pressures to the negative levels needed to facilitate healing!

How does VAX-D work?

High intradiscal pressures cause discs to bulge out and press painfully on nerve roots. They also make for a compressed, anaerobic environment unsuitable for healing. Decompression produces and sustains negative pressures within the disc, creating a vacuum effect which draws in nutrients and fluids to promote the repair of injured discs and surrounding tissues. This vacuum has also been shown to aid in the retraction of escaped cushioning gel from herniated discs. Much like gauging the air pressure in a car tire, scientists have been able to use pressure sensors to



measure the various pressures put on spinal discs while lifting, standing, sitting, lying down, undergoing traction, and during VAX-D Therapy. Like other pressures found in the body such as blood pressure, intradiscal pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). While traction, physical therapy and manipulation may reduce disc pressures to as low as 40mmHg, only VAX-D has been shown to achieve negative pressures within the spine. Clinical studies have shown that, with VAX-D Therapy, negative pressures as low as -160 mmHg* are created within the injured disc during the treatment session!

The key to the "distraction" of VAX-D is achieved through an intricately timed series of pulls, holds, and releases over the course of a treatment session. VAX-D's biofeedback system adjusts this curve of tension specifically to each patient's needs, making every session a truly individualized treatment.

VAX-D Therapy involves three phases that repeat fifteen times throughout a treatment session: the Decompression Phase, the Retraction Phase, and finally, the Rest Phase. During the Decompression Phase, tension slowly mounts, lengthening the spine; up to 99 pounds of tension may be exerted directly on the injured discs. This is where spinal pressures drop and decompression actually occurs. During the Retraction Phase, tension is slowly decreased and the spine is retracted slowly. This is followed by a short Rest Phase.

Is VAX-D Right for Me?

You may be a candidate for VAX-D if:

- You have chronic and/or severe back and/or neck pain caused by bulging or herniated discs. Degenerative disc disease, sciatica, and/or facet syndrome.
- You have been diagnosed with a clinically unstable low back.
- You have failed back surgery syndrome.
- You have been told to consider surgery.

Many patients have experienced more than a 50% reduction in pain after their first treatment! For those suffering from herniated and degenerated discs, the escaped nucleus pulposus may be partially or completely retracted back into the disc after just the first session (though usually it takes longer), relieving a great deal of pain. However, pain reduction does not indicate full recovery, and a full

recovery is essential to preventing re-injury. Each treatment session lasts approximately 45 minutes. A typical VAX-D treatment regimen consists of about 20 sessions. Some conditions require fewer visits; some require more. Many patients report relief from their pain and other symptoms during the first few treatment sessions, and most experience dramatic pain relief after completion of their prescribed VAX-D Therapy program.

VAX-D therapy is a non-surgical procedure to reduce pain by decompressing your spine and reducing the stress and pressure on your discs and spinal nerves. Contact Dr. Craig Aderholdt, at 941-756-5528 for a **free consultation** to see if you are a candidate for this revolutionary procedure. We hope you enjoy the information within and share it with others.

Contact Dr. Aderholdt today to find out if you can finally relieve your pain and suffering with this proven safe and effective nonsurgical breakthrough for neck and back pain.

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Dr. Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC



At Back Pain Institute of West Florida, located in Bradenton, FL, our number one concern is to help our patients with a natural approach to pain treatment. Dr. Craig Aderholdt, BSc, DC, received his undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State

University State College, and his Doctor of Chiropractic from life University School of Chiropractic in Marietta, GA. He then later graduated Cum Laude.

Dr. Aderholdt also holds certification in chiropractic adjunctive physiotherapy from New York Chiropractic College and completed extensive postgraduate training in therapeutic modalities at National-Lincoln School. He is a member of the Florida Chiropractic Association and American Chiropractic Association and is a certified VAX-D consultant. He was also voted a Bradenton Herald People's Choice Awards Winner for 2008, 2025 and is the Manatee Herald-Tribune Awards winner for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020 and 2021 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune finalist for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023, 2025 and winner in 2019 and 2024.



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GainsWave Therapy:

Understanding the Benefits of Acoustic Wave Treatment for Men's Health

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

GainsWave therapy has emerged as a promising non-invasive treatment option for men seeking to improve their vascular health and overall wellness. This innovative procedure utilizes low-intensity extracorporeal shockwave therapy (LI-ESWT) to enhance blood flow and stimulate natural healing processes within the body.

The primary mechanism behind GainsWave therapy involves the application of high-frequency, low-intensity sound waves to targeted areas. These acoustic waves trigger a process called neovascularization, which promotes the formation of new blood vessels and improves circulation. Additionally, the treatment stimulates the release of growth factors and stem cells, contributing to tissue regeneration and repair.

One of the most significant advantages of GainsWave therapy is its potential to address blood flow issues without the need for medications or invasive procedures. The treatment sessions are typically brief, lasting about 20-30 minutes, and patients can return to their daily activities immediately afterward. Unlike traditional treatments, GainsWave doesn't carry the risk of side effects associated with oral medications or surgical interventions.

Research has shown that GainsWave therapy may provide long-lasting results. Many patients report experiencing benefits for up to two years following a complete treatment protocol. The therapy typically involves a series of 6-12 sessions, with maintenance treatments recommended periodically to sustain the results.

The versatility of GainsWave therapy extends beyond its primary applications. While commonly known for addressing vascular health concerns, the treatment has shown promise in improving overall performance and vitality. The enhanced blood flow and tissue regeneration can contribute to increased energy levels, improved physical function, and better overall well-being.

Athletes and active individuals have also reported benefits from GainsWave therapy. The treatment's ability to promote healing and improve circulation can aid in recovery from sports-related injuries and enhance athletic performance. The non-invasive nature of the therapy makes it an attractive option for those seeking natural performance optimization methods.

Another advantage of GainsWave therapy is its potential to complement other wellness treatments. Many healthcare providers integrate this therapy into comprehensive treatment plans, combining it with lifestyle modifications, nutritional support, and other therapeutic approaches to maximize results.

The treatment process itself is straightforward and well-tolerated by most patients. During a session, a trained healthcare provider applies the acoustic wave device to specific areas, delivering precise energy pulses that penetrate the tissue. While some patients may experience mild discomfort during treatment, the procedure generally doesn't require anesthesia or downtime.

As with any medical treatment, results can vary among individuals, and success often depends on factors such as overall health, age, and lifestyle habits. Patients considering GainsWave therapy should consult with qualified healthcare providers to determine if they are suitable candidates and to develop appropriate treatment plans tailored to their specific needs.

The non-invasive nature, minimal risk profile, and potential for long-lasting results have made GainsWave therapy an increasingly popular option for men seeking to improve their vascular health naturally. As research continues and technology advances, this innovative treatment continues to demonstrate its value in the field of men's health and wellness.

SEEK EARLY TREATMENT & DON'T JUST MASK YOUR SYMPTOMS—TREAT THE ROOT CAUSE!

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Dr. David Zamikoff and Natural Healing Arts Medical Center - a professional Bradenton Chiropractic and Medical office. In practice as well as online, Bradenton Florida 34209, chiropractor Dr. Zamikoff strives for excellence through superior patient treatment, education and satisfaction.

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BREAKING THROUGH CHRONIC PAIN:

How Myofascial Release Offers Hope When All Else Fails

By Michael Via, MSPT

For millions of people living with chronic pain, the journey to relief can feel endless. After exhausting traditional medical treatments, surgeries, medications, and conventional therapies, many find themselves trapped in a cycle of temporary fixes that never address the root cause of their suffering. However, there's a therapeutic approach that's offering new hope to those who have tried everything else: Myofascial Release.

Understanding the Hidden Culprit

Myofascial Release targets the body's fascial system—a continuous web of connective tissue that surrounds and supports every muscle, bone, nerve, and organ in your body. When trauma, inflammation, or surgical procedures damage this system, they create restrictions that can generate crushing pressures of up to 2,000 pounds per square inch on pain-sensitive structures.

The frustrating reality is that these restrictions often remain invisible on standard diagnostic tests like X-rays, MRIs, CT scans, or electromyography studies, leaving patients feeling dismissed and their pain unexplained. This diagnostic blind spot contributes to the stress and frustration experienced by countless individuals who know something is wrong but can't get concrete answers from traditional medical testing.

Think of these fascial restrictions as an internal straightjacket, creating a web of tension that pulls and compresses throughout your body. Restrictions in one area create compensatory patterns that can manifest as pain and dysfunction in seemingly unrelated parts of the body. While traditional medicine focuses on masking pain symptoms with medications, and conventional physical therapy treats only the surface effects, Myofascial Release addresses the underlying structural cause of the problem.

The Gentle Power of Sustained Pressure

The John F. Barnes' Myofascial Release Approach represents a paradigm shift in pain management that prioritizes safety, gentleness, and lasting effectiveness. This technique involves applying gentle, sustained pressure directly to fascial restrictions without oils, creams, or machinery. The direct skin contact enables therapists to accurately detect fascial restrictions and apply the appropriate amount of pressure needed for release.

The key lies in the "time element"—allowing the viscous properties of fascia to respond to low-load pressure applied slowly and consistently. During treatment, skilled therapists use their hands to detect restrictions and apply sustained pressure for extended periods, sometimes several minutes at a time. This approach leverages the piezoelectric phenomenon, where gentle, prolonged pressure allows the viscoelastic fascia to elongate and release naturally.

Unlike aggressive massage or forceful manipulation techniques, Myofascial Release works with the body's natural healing mechanisms rather than forcing change. Each treatment session is uniquely tailored to the individual, recognizing that every person's fascial restrictions and pain patterns are different.

Why Traditional Approaches Fall Short

The reason many patients experience only temporary relief with conventional treatments becomes clear when you understand fascial restrictions. Traditional physical therapy, massage, and medical interventions often treat symptoms while leaving the underlying fascial straightjacket intact. It's like trying to fix a house's foundation problems by only painting the walls—the cosmetic improvements are temporary because the structural issue remains.

Myofascial Release takes a whole-body approach, recognizing that restrictions in one area can create compensatory patterns and pain throughout the entire system. This comprehensive perspective explains why patients who have traveled from around the world seeking this treatment often find the lasting relief that eluded them through other methods.

A Beacon of Hope

The transformative power of Myofascial Release is consistently demonstrated in patient testimonials. Dawn Scheffer, who suffered from TMJ dysfunction, found success with this approach after tirelessly seeking treatment elsewhere without success. Peter Dorsa, himself a physical therapist with nearly three decades of experience who began studying Myofascial Release in 1994, describes the technique as "one of the most effective manual therapy treatments that exists."

These success stories reflect a broader pattern seen in patients who travel from around the world specifically seeking Myofascial Release treatment when traditional medicine, surgery, and conventional therapy have failed to provide lasting relief.

For those who have exhausted other options and feel trapped by chronic pain, Myofascial Release offers something precious: the possibility of authentic healing rather than temporary symptom management. By addressing the fascial system's restrictions at their source, this gentle yet powerful technique can break the cycle of chronic pain and restore the freedom of movement and quality of life that seemed lost forever.

If you're living with chronic pain and feeling hopeless about finding relief, Myofascial Release may be the comprehensive solution you've been searching for.

Call Now and SAVE \$25 OFF Initial Evaluation!

About

Michael Via, MSPT, is a licensed Physical Therapist who brings over 29 years of comprehensive physical therapy experience to his practice, including 10 specialized years in pelvic floor rehabilitation. He graduated from the University of Miami in 1994 with his Masters of Science in Physical Therapy (MSPT) degree and has since become expert-level trained in John F. Barnes Myofascial Release, a distinction that reflects his deep commitment to this transformative treatment approach. His extensive training also includes Herman and Wallace pelvic floor assessment and treatment certification, as well as completion of Titleist Performance Institute Level 2 Medical, Level 2 Fitness, and Level 2 Junior Training programs. As the owner of Michael Via Therapy and Training Services since 2012, Mike has built his practice around a passion that drives his daily work: providing clients with the incredible feeling of chronic pain relief, particularly when other treatment avenues have previously failed them, making him a beacon of hope for those who have exhausted traditional therapeutic options.

MICHAEL VIA
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DARING GREATLY

By Pastor Tim Neptune

Life with God is a grand adventure. Along the way we may encounter unforgettable moments of joy or unthinkable times of disappointment. Either way, the journey requires faith, trust, and the courage to keep moving forward.

Faith rarely blooms in the safety of the familiar. Comfort zones feel secure, but they often keep us stagnant. Playing it safe—hiding our talents, avoiding risks, or clinging to the known—may feel good in the short term but it won't really grow our faith. Think of it like investing: nothing ventured yields nothing gained. When we step out, we exercise a muscle of trust that builds inner strength and confidence.

A life without faith requires no trust, and without trust, we miss the rewards that come from exploring something new.

Consider the stories of those who have dared greatly. I think of the disciples of Jesus—just ordinary people—fishermen most of them—who encountered a call that pulled them from the routine into something truly extraordinary. They left behind security for uncertainty, and in doing so, witnessed wonders!

Their lives were forever changed because they said yes to the unknown. Think of it, they walked with Jesus, witnessed miracles, and became part of the greatest story ever told. Life was not always easy, in fact most of them were martyred. But here we are, two-thousand years later, talking about their faith and courage.

For this young group of early Christians, the excitement wasn't just in the highs; it was in the deepening trust that carried them through lows.

When we lean into challenges rather than retreat, our faith grows and we discover a resilience we never knew we had.

One of my favorite quotes is from a speech given by President Theodore Roosevelt in the early 1900's. It is known as "The Man in the Arena," and it challenges the listener to step out of the grandstands and onto the playing field. Yes, you may get muddy—or even bloody—but you will not be like the poor timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Life is too short to always play it safe. Sometimes you just need to step out in faith and try something new—or even scary. When was the last time you took a leap of faith? The next time someone invites you to go somewhere new, have the courage



to say, "Sure, why not!" The greatest joy of your life might be right around the corner, but you'll never know if you don't take that first step.

Those who step forward often look back in awe at how far they've come. Challenges refine us. They make us better. They push us to deeper levels of trust and commitment. Pain is not always bad... it is often a sign that we've been stretched.

So, my encouragement is to embrace a life of adventure. Take some risks. Try something new. Push yourself a little further today than you did yesterday. Don't quit, give up, or throw in the towel! The most exciting chapter in your story may be around the next bend.

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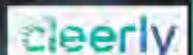
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