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# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

July 2026

Charlotte/South Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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## STEP FORWARD WITH FREEDOM

Honoring Our Veterans  
as America Turns 250

## THE PERSON THROUGH THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOW

Understanding and Relating  
to Individuals Living with  
Cognitive Impairment

## PROTECT YOUR SKIN THIS SUMMER

## CARDIAC ARREST VS. HEART ATTACK

Know the Signs to Save a Life

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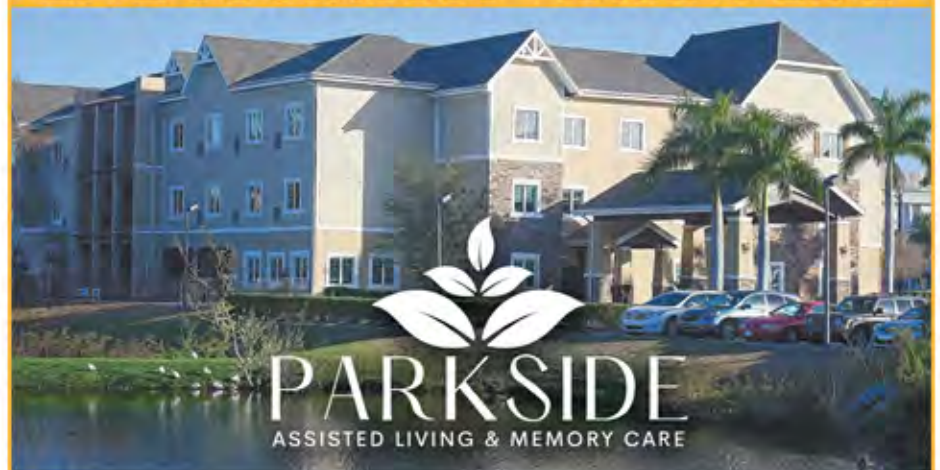
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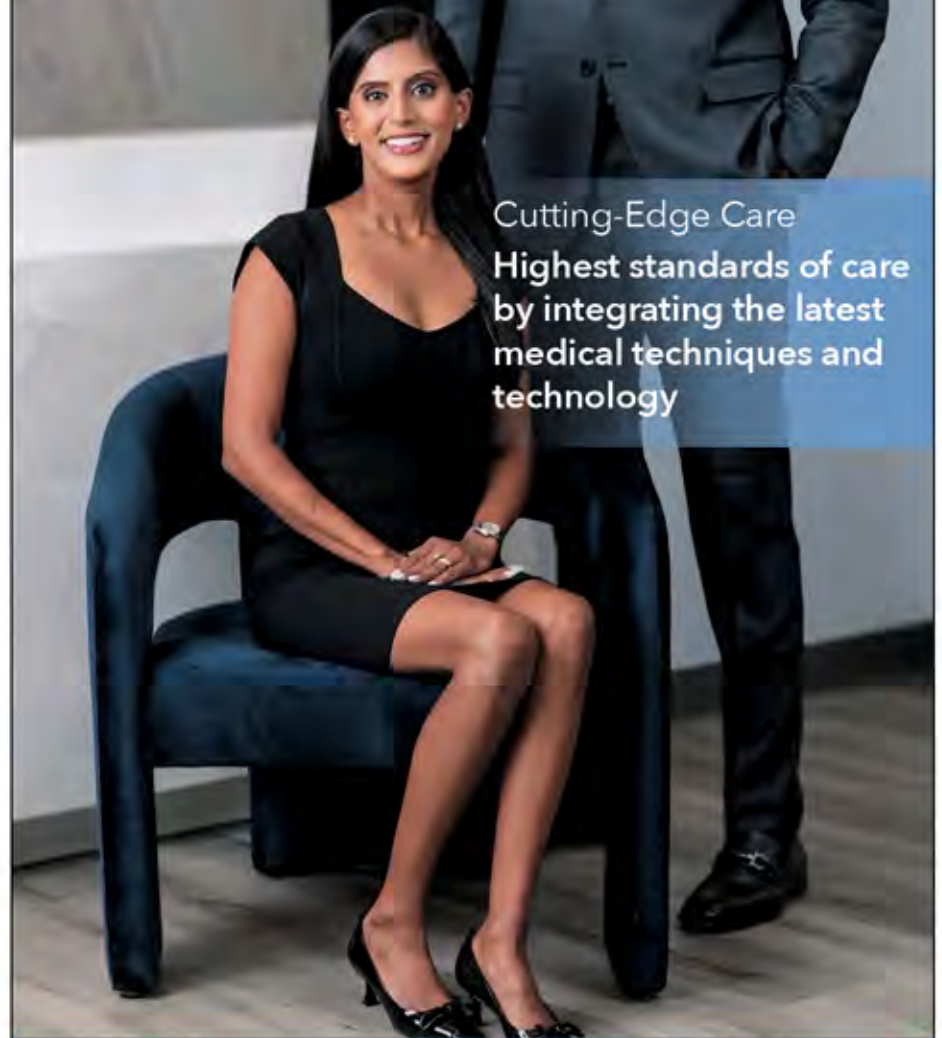
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# PROTECT YOUR SKIN THIS SUMMER: ART OF DERMATOLOGY WANTS YOU TO TAKE CAUTION

July marks UV Safety Month, a crucial time when Art of Dermatology reminds patients and the community about the importance of taking caution and protecting their skin from harmful ultraviolet radiation. As summer temperatures soar and outdoor activities beckon, exercising caution with your skin should be your top priority.

July marks UV Safety Month, a crucial time when Art of Dermatology reminds patients and the community about the importance of protecting their skin from harmful ultraviolet radiation. As summer temperatures soar and outdoor activities beckon, taking care of your skin should be your top priority.

## Understanding UV Radiation Risks

Ultraviolet radiation from the sun poses significant risks to your skin health year-round, but summer's intense rays make protection even more critical. UV exposure is the leading cause of skin cancer, including melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma. Additionally, prolonged sun exposure accelerates skin aging, causing wrinkles, age spots, and loss of skin elasticity.

## Art of Dermatology's Summer Protection Strategy

At Art of Dermatology, we believe prevention is the best medicine. Our comprehensive approach to UV safety includes education, early detection, and personalized protection plans for each patient's unique skin type and lifestyle.

## ESSENTIAL SUN PROTECTION TIPS:

- **Sunscreen Selection and Application** - Choose broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Apply generously 15-30 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply every two hours or immediately after swimming or sweating. Don't forget often-missed areas like ears, feet, and lips.
- **Seek Shade Strategically** - UV rays are strongest between 10 AM and 4 PM. Plan outdoor activities during early morning or late afternoon hours when possible. When shade isn't available, create your own with umbrellas, wide-brimmed hats, or UV-protective clothing.
- **Protective Clothing Matters** - Invest in UPF-rated clothing, sunglasses with 100% UV protection, and



wide-brimmed hats that shade your face, neck, and ears. Dark, tightly woven fabrics offer better protection than light, loose weaves.

## YEAR-ROUND VIGILANCE

UV Safety Month serves as an important reminder, but skin protection shouldn't end when summer does. UV rays reflect off snow, sand, and water, making protection necessary during all seasons and weather conditions.

## Professional Skin Examinations

Regular dermatological check-ups are essential for early detection of skin changes or potential cancers. Art of Dermatology recommends annual skin examinations for most adults, with more frequent visits for those with risk factors such as fair skin, family history of skin cancer, or numerous moles.

## Take Action Today

This UV Safety Month, commit to making sun protection a daily habit. Schedule your annual skin examination with Art of Dermatology, update your sunscreen supply, and invest in quality protective clothing and accessories.

Your skin is your body's largest organ and deserves the best care possible. By following these guidelines and partnering with Art of Dermatology, you can enjoy summer activities while keeping your skin healthy for years to come. Remember: today's sun protection is tomorrow's healthy skin.

## The Art of Dermatology Difference

At Art of Dermatology, we combine medical expertise with aesthetic sensibility. Our comprehensive skin examinations include advanced technologies

for detecting subtle changes invisible to the naked eye. Our dermatologists take time to understand your concerns, family history, and lifestyle factors affecting your skin health.

Rather than simply treating visible problems, we partner with you in preventative care—identifying risk factors and potential issues before they manifest. This approach not only supports graceful aging but potentially prevents serious health complications.

Don't wait for visible problems to appear. Schedule your comprehensive skin check at Art of Dermatology today and take the first step toward lifetime skin health. Remember, healthy aging isn't about fighting time—it's about supporting your skin's natural processes with expert care and attention.

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# Cardiac Arrest vs. Heart Attack: Know the Signs to Save a Life

## What is Cardiac Arrest?

One of the leading causes of death in the United States, cardiac arrest can happen at any age and can affect any person.

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly. An electrical failure in the heart triggers it and causes an irregular heart-beat or arrhythmia. A person suffering from cardiac arrest may become unresponsive, unable to breathe or gasping for air. Symptoms include:

- Suddenly collapsing
- Loss of consciousness
- No breath
- No pulse

Celebrities who did not survive sudden cardiac arrest include musician Tom Petty, who died unexpectedly in 2017 at age 66; actor John Ritter, who was 54 when he suffered an aortic dissection that led to cardiac arrest in 2003; and child actress Heather O'Rourke, who was only 12 years old when her life was cut short by cardiac arrest in 1988.

What makes sudden cardiac arrest so dangerous is the sudden and drastic nature of its effects. With only about an 8% survival rate for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest when treated by emergency services, quick medical attention is required to survive.

## What is a Heart Attack?

On the other hand, a heart attack, also known as a myocardial infarction, occurs when fatty, cholesterol-containing deposits build up in your arteries and create what we call "plaque."

Symptoms of a heart attack include:

- Fatigue
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, neck, jaw or stomach
- Nausea/vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating/cold sweats
- Tightness, squeezing, pain or pressure in the chest/upper body (this feeling may go away and then come back)
- Trouble sleeping



These symptoms are often subtle and may go undetected as they creep up slowly, sometimes lasting for days or weeks before the attack. Many people brush off the symptoms as the flu, stress, or simply feeling under the weather. Always seek help to be sure.

## Causes of Heart Attack

Coronary artery disease is the primary cause of heart attacks. The plaque buildup narrows the walls of your arteries, reducing blood flow to your heart. And if this plaque breaks or ruptures, it can cause a blood clot in your heart.

A larger amount of plaque buildup in your arteries puts you at a higher risk for a heart attack, though many people do experience heart attacks with only partially blocked arteries.

Though the main cause of heart attacks, coronary artery disease is not the only cause. You may also experience a heart attack from the following:

- **Coronary artery spasm** — Known as angina, this severe squeezing of a blood vessel that isn't blocked is often caused by smoking, high blood pressure and other factors.
- **Infections** — Certain viral infections may cause damage to the heart muscle that can lead to an eventual heart attack.
- **Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD)** — This is a life-threatening condition in which there is a tear in one of your cardiac arteries.

## Cardiac Arrest vs. Heart Attack

Though often confused, cardiac arrest and heart attack are distinct medical emergencies that require immediate action.

## Cardiac Arrest: Sudden and Severe

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating, leading to loss of consciousness and no pulse. It affects about 1,000 Americans each day.

and survival with good brain function is just 8%. The most important factor in survival is early defibrillation, which can be provided by EMS or a bystander using an AED. Quick CPR and AED use can be lifesaving.

## Heart Attack: A Circulation Crisis

A heart attack — commonly called a myocardial infarction — happens when blood flow to the heart muscle is blocked, often due to a clot. This leads to heart muscle damage and can trigger cardiac arrest if untreated.

Preventing heart attacks involves managing blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and avoiding smoking. Those with heart disease may need further evaluation through imaging or stress testing, along with ongoing lifestyle changes like regular activity and a heart-healthy, plant-forward diet.

## What to Do

If you suspect someone is having a heart attack or cardiac arrest, call 911 immediately. Prompt action and prevention are both vital in protecting heart health.

## Risk Factors

Cardiac arrest is more common in adults, often linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, and other lifestyle factors. Regular checkups and heart-healthy habits are important for prevention.

In younger people, cardiac arrest is rarer but can happen due to undiagnosed conditions like:

- Congenital heart defects that affect blood flow
- Inherited arrhythmias (electrical issues in the heart)
- Cardiomyopathy, where the heart muscle is abnormally thick or weak

Many of these conditions have no warning signs, so family history and screenings can play a lifesaving role.

## Don't Hesitate to Seek Help

Most cardiac arrests occur at home. Performing CPR or even just compressions to the chest can improve the chances of survival until emergency medical teams arrive.

If you suspect you or a loved one is having a heart attack or cardiac arrest, call 911 immediately. It's always better to seek emergency care than to underestimate symptoms. To learn more about our cardiac services, visit [AdventHealthPortCharlotte.com](https://www.adventhealthportcharlotte.com).



# STEP FORWARD WITH FREEDOM: Honoring Our Veterans as America Turns 250

By Dr. Sahiba Singh, DPM - Family Foot & Leg Center

**A**s we approach this 4th of July, our nation stands on the threshold of a historic milestone: America is turning 250 years old. Two and a half centuries of freedom, innovation, and resilience are cause for immense celebration. Backyard barbecues will fire up, fireworks will illuminate the night sky, and communities will gather to reflect on the enduring American spirit.

But as we look at the flag and celebrate our nation's independence, we must pause to remember the foundation upon which this freedom was built. It was forged, protected, and sustained by the men and women who wore the uniform.

Here in Port Charlotte, that spirit lives on in our vibrant veteran community. This Independence Day, as we salute our country, all of us at Family Foot & Leg Center want to extend our deepest gratitude to our local veterans. You have marched through some of the toughest terrains on Earth to protect our way of life. Now, it is our distinct honor to help you march forward in comfort and health.

## A Dedicated Partnership with the Port Charlotte VA Clinic

At Family Foot & Leg Center, serving those who served is one of our highest privileges. We work in close collaboration with the **Port Charlotte VA Clinic** to ensure that our local heroes receive the streamlined, top-tier podiatric care they deserve.

Through our relationship with the VA, we aim to bridge the gap, making it seamless for veterans to get referred, seen, and treated without unnecessary delays. When you come through our doors, you aren't just another patient; you are a vital part of the community we love, and you will be treated with the utmost respect.

## From Simple Comforts to Complex Corrections

Military life is notoriously brutal on the feet and ankles. Years of carrying heavy packs, logging endless miles in rigid combat boots, and enduring unforgiving environments take a heavy toll. Many veterans return home carrying the physical reminders of their service right in their foundations.



Whether your military service ended last year or fifty years ago, foot and ankle pain should not dictate your quality of life. At our Port Charlotte clinic, we provide a comprehensive spectrum of podiatric care tailored to the unique wear-and-tear seen in veterans:

- **Ingrown Toenails & Routine Care:** Minor issues can cause major agony. We provide quick, highly effective relief for painful ingrown toenails, thick nails, and stubborn calluses.
- **Heel Pain & Plantar Fasciitis:** Decades of repetitive impact often lead to chronic heel pain. We utilize advanced diagnostic tools to target inflammation and get you back on your feet pain-free.
- **Custom Orthotics:** We design precision, custom-molded orthotics to realign your stride, distribute pressure evenly, and alleviate stress on your joints.
- **Complex Foot & Ankle Reconstruction:** For veterans dealing with severe structural trauma, advanced arthritis, or old service-related injuries, we offer cutting-edge surgical solutions to restore stability and mobility.

Your feet carried you through your service to our country. Our job is to carry you through the rest of your journey with ease.

## Why Foot Health Matters for Our Heroes

It is easy to shrug off an aching heel or a throbbing toe as just "part of getting older" or a lingering souvenir from boot camp. However, foot health is directly tied to your overall independence. When your feet hurt, you move less, which can negatively impact cardiovascular health and mental well-being.

## A Note from Dr. Singh:

*"Our veterans have spent years putting everyone else's safety ahead of their own well-being. Too often, they tolerate chronic pain as a habit. As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, my message to our veterans is simple: You don't have to just 'tough it out' anymore. You took care of us; let us take care of you."*

## This 4th of July, Take the Next Step

As the fireworks light up the Port Charlotte sky, let's celebrate the incredible journey of our nation and the remarkable people who secured it. To our local veterans: thank you for your sacrifice, your bravery, and your unwavering dedication.

If foot or ankle pain is keeping you from enjoying your retirement, playing with your grandkids, or simply walking around the neighborhood comfortably, let this milestone holiday be the catalyst for change.

If you are a veteran receiving care through the Port Charlotte VA Clinic, ask your primary care provider for a referral to see us, or contact our office directly to learn how we can help coordinate your care.

*Dr. Sahiba Singh is a podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Center in Port Charlotte, Florida, specializing in complex wound care and deformity reconstruction. She is committed to helping the Charlotte County community remain active and healthy.*



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# Inflammatory Lung Conditions and the Emerging Role of Stem Cell Exosomes

By Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS

Inflammatory lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, post-viral respiratory syndromes, pulmonary fibrosis, and environmental hypersensitivity pneumonitis pose ongoing challenges for patients and clinicians alike. Traditional treatments such as bronchodilators, corticosteroids, and biologic therapies are effective for managing symptoms and acute exacerbations, but many individuals continue to experience persistent inflammation and impaired lung function.

In recent years, researchers and clinicians have explored next-generation biologic approaches that aim to influence the underlying immune and tissue responses in the lung. One area of interest is stem cell-derived exosomes — microscopic vesicles released by stem cells that carry regulatory molecules involved in intercellular communication.

## What Are Exosomes?

Exosomes are tiny extracellular vesicles that carry microRNAs, growth factors, and signaling proteins between cells. Unlike living stem cells, they are not capable of replicating but can influence the behavior of other cells by modulating immune responses and tissue repair processes.

## Routes of Delivery: Systemic and Local Approaches

Two principal methods of administering exosome-based therapies are under investigation:

- **Intravenous delivery:** Introduces exosomes into the bloodstream, where they may interact with systemic immune pathways and support vascular and inflammatory regulation throughout the body.
- **Nebulized delivery:** Converts exosomes into an aerosol that can be inhaled directly into the airways, potentially enabling local interactions with airway epithelial cells and the surrounding immune environment.

## Inflammatory Lung Conditions of Interest

- **COPD:** COPD extends beyond airflow obstruction; it encompasses chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, and progressive structural changes in the lungs. Exosome-based approaches are being investigated for their capacity to influence immune signaling and support tissue homeostasis in this context.



- **Asthma:** Adult-onset and difficult-to-control asthma involve complex immune hypersensitivities. There is emerging interest in whether exosomes might help regulate aberrant immune signaling without broad suppression.
- **Post-Viral Lung Syndromes (Post COVID Syndrome):** Persistent respiratory symptoms following viral infections — including long-term post-viral inflammatory states — may be linked to ongoing immune activation even after the virus has cleared. Immune modulatory signals from exosomes are under study in this setting.
- **Pulmonary Fibrosis:** In fibrosis, chronic inflammation can lead to irreversible structural changes in lung tissue. Exosomes are not expected to reverse established fibrosis but may interact with inflammatory pathways associated with early or ongoing fibrotic processes.
- **Environmental Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis:** This immune-mediated inflammatory response to inhaled antigens highlights the need for environmental management. Biologic modulators like exosomes are being examined for their potential to support immune recalibration once triggers are removed.

## Scientific Context and Future Direction

It is important to emphasize that stem cell-derived exosomes are an area of scientific exploration, not established therapies. Rigorous clinical trials and regulatory evaluation are needed to clarify safety, efficacy, appropriate delivery methods, and long-term

outcomes. Current research draws from preclinical models and early clinical investigations demonstrating the biological activity of exosomes in immune regulation and tissue response.

As research continues, the concept of biological regulation — influencing how cells communicate and respond to stress and injury — may offer new avenues for understanding and potentially supporting lung health in inflammatory conditions.

## ABOUT AXEL RUIZ MD, DABFP, CWS

Axel Ruiz MD, DABFP, CWS is a member of the American Academy and a Board of Regenerative Medicine Researcher. Axel has been harnessing the Power of Stem Cells in Joint Pain Management since 2024.

Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS, brings over 20 years of dedicated experience to family medicine, with a passion for delivering exceptional patient care. Board-certified in Family Practice (DABFP) and specializing in wound care (CWS), Dr. Ruiz offers a comprehensive and compassionate approach to health and wellness.

He is known for his ability to explain conditions thoroughly and build strong, trusting relationships with his patients. Practices in Naples, Fort Myers and Lehigh Acres, FL. His commitment to ongoing learning and patient-centered treatment makes him an invaluable partner in your health journey.

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# THE PERSON THROUGH THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOW:

## Understanding and Relating to Individuals Living with Cognitive Impairment

**S**usie could still dress herself each morning, although her shirt might be inside out. She could still say “yes” when offered her favorite sweet treat and “no” when someone suggested washing her hair. She still smiled. She still laughed. Yet, at times, the world felt increasingly upside down. It was a feeling she could sense but could no longer fully describe. As aphasia gradually stole her words, expressing those emotions became increasingly difficult.

Time was relentless. By the end of each day, her cognitive reserve had been depleted, like sand slipping through an hourglass. By late afternoon, she was no longer able to independently complete many of the tasks she had managed earlier that morning, including personal hygiene and preparing herself for bed. Then, during a brief moment of clarity, she described what living with dementia felt like.

Almost unexpectedly, she said it was as though she were looking at herself through a stained-glass window. She could see herself on the other side, but she could not reach her.

It is a simple metaphor, yet one that powerfully illustrates the lived experience of cognitive impairment. Although memory, language, and executive function may gradually decline, the person behind the disease remains. Their identity, emotions, need for dignity, and desire for meaningful human connection persist, even as their ability to communicate those needs changes.

For family members, caregivers, and healthcare professionals, the ability to understand the perspective of an individual living with dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, or another neurocognitive disorder is fundamental to providing compassionate, person-centered care. Clinical knowledge is essential, but empathy often determines the quality of the caregiving relationship.

At Parkside, we believe exceptional memory care begins with understanding the individual, not simply the diagnosis. Every member of our team is given the opportunity to participate in Dementia Live®, an



immersive experiential training designed to simulate many of the sensory, physical, and cognitive challenges experienced by individuals living with dementia. Through this experience, caregivers gain a deeper appreciation for the confusion, frustration, vulnerability, and fatigue that often accompany cognitive decline.

While empathy cannot simply be taught, it can be cultivated through meaningful experience. Education combined with immersive training strengthens compassion, improves communication, and reinforces the principles of person-centered care by reminding us to see the individual before the diagnosis.

The impact of Dementia Live® has been so meaningful that Parkside Port Charlotte periodically opens these educational experiences to members of our community. These events provide family caregivers, healthcare professionals, and community members with an opportunity to better understand the realities of dementia while gaining practical insight into more compassionate and effective caregiving.

Understanding dementia begins with seeing the person through the stained glass, not simply the disease.



To learn more about our upcoming Dementia Live® experience, or to reserve your place at a future community event, please contact **Melissa Vanderbilt-Bestor**, Director of Sales and Marketing. We would be honored to share this meaningful educational experience with you.



**941-207-8609 | [parksidemc.com](http://parksidemc.com)**

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# A 'MINOR' HAND INJURY CAN COST YOU YOUR GRIP FOR LIFE – HERE'S WHY

By Dennis O. Sagini, MD

**T**hink about the last hour of your life. You used your hands to make coffee, type a message, turn a steering wheel, hug someone you love. We rely on our hands so constantly that we stop noticing them, until an accident reminds us exactly how much we need them.

Hand trauma is one of the most common reasons people end up in an emergency room, and it's also one of the most misunderstood. A "minor" cut, a smashed finger in a car door, a fall onto an outstretched hand, a deep puncture from a kitchen knife—these moments can look small and feel survivable. But the hand is an extraordinarily complex structure, packing 27 bones, dozens of tendons, ligaments, nerves, and blood vessels into a space smaller than most dinner plates. There is very little room for error, and very little tissue to spare.

## Why Hand Injuries Are Different

Unlike a broken bone in your leg, where surrounding muscle can sometimes compensate, the hand has almost no redundancy. Sever one tendon and a finger may never bend again. Crush one nerve and you may lose sensation permanently. Delay treatment on an open fracture and infection can spread through tendon sheaths in a matter of hours, threatening not just function but the limb itself.

I have seen patients delay care because the injury "didn't look that bad." A laceration that seemed shallow had actually nicked a flexor tendon. A jammed finger that swelled overnight turned out to be a fracture-dislocation requiring surgery. The visible damage to skin rarely tells the whole story of what's happening underneath.

## The Warning Signs You Should Never Ignore

Seek immediate evaluation if you experience any of the following after a hand injury:

- Inability to fully bend or straighten a finger
- Numbness, tingling, or loss of sensation
- A wound that won't stop bleeding or appears deep
- Visible deformity or a joint that looks out of place
- Rapidly increasing swelling, especially with pain that feels disproportionate to the injury
- Any injury involving machinery, power tools, or animal bites



These aren't reasons to "wait and see." They are reasons to act now. The window for the best possible outcome in hand trauma is often measured in hours, not days.

## Why Specialized Care Matters

General urgent care and even many emergency departments are not equipped to manage complex hand injuries. Reattaching a tendon, repairing a nerve under magnification, or stabilizing a small joint fracture requires the trained eye and microsurgical skill of a fellowship-trained hand specialist. The difference between general treatment and specialized care can be the difference between a hand that heals and one that never fully recovers its strength, dexterity, or feeling.

As an orthopaedic surgeon specializing in the hand, wrist, and elbow, I built my practice around a simple belief: every patient deserves the chance to get their full function back. That means accurate diagnosis from day one, a treatment plan tailored to how you actually use your hands—whether for surgery, art, sports, or simply holding your grandchild—and a recovery process that doesn't stop until you do.

## The Bottom Line

Your hands are irreplaceable tools that you will use every single day for the rest of your life. Treat every significant hand injury with the urgency it deserves. If you've experienced trauma to your hand, wrist, or elbow, don't wait for it to get worse.

The choices made in the first hours after an injury often determine the outcome for the rest of your life. Don't leave that outcome to chance, and don't let uncertainty keep you from getting answers.

A short phone call today could be the difference between a full recovery and a lifetime of limitation.

Contact us today to schedule an evaluation with Dr. Dennis O. Sagini and protect the hands that carry your life forward.



## Dennis O. Sagini, MD

Dr. Sagini is an orthopaedic surgeon with specialization in hand and upper extremity surgery. He specializes in arthritis of the hand, nerve compression, muscle and tendon injury, fracture care, and upper extremity dysfunction.

He completed his Bachelors of Science in Microbiology from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma in 1998 and his Doctor of Medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA in 2002. It was during medical school training that Dr. Sagini developed an interest in orthopaedic surgery. His residency in orthopaedic surgery was completed at Howard University Hospital, Washington, DC. Dr. Sagini completed his fellowship training in Hand and Upper Extremity surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

Dr. Sagini is a member of the Lee County Medical Society, the American Association of Orthopedic Surgery and the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery.

Dr. Sagini is active in research and community service and has a passion for overseas medical mission work. He also enjoys running, traveling, listening to music, cooking, tennis, and spending time with his family and friends.



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# What If We Could Change Your Mind?

**Transforming Brains... And Lives Through Advanced Regenerative Medicine**

**Leading Alzheimer's Dementia Out of the Shadows and Into the Light... Naturally!**

**TOP  
DOCTOR  
MAGAZINE**

By William J. Cole Jr., D.O.

Double Board Certified in PM&R Interventional Medicine and Regenerative Medicine

Here is the moment that "Changed My Mind" ...  
And became very personal.

It was a typical morning,

But, as I walked into the kitchen, the stove was on.

The water was running.

The back door was standing wide open.

And mom was nowhere to be found...

My mother is 88 years old.

She is diabetic.

She has dementia and memory loss.

And in that moment, my greatest fears were realized...

This was not happening to one of my patients.

This was "my" mother.

As a physician, I understood what was happening.

As a son, it broke my heart.

Because this is our mom.

I now see the world through a different perspective, as Dementia had hit home.

So, I Got To Work on Advanced Regenerative Treatments for Alzheimer's Dementia....

What if we could change your mind?

Not your opinion.

New thought process.

Not the way you think about the world.

What if we could change your mind by improving brain function?

What if the future of Alzheimer's Dementia is not simply about slowing decline?

What if it is about restoring hope?

What if it is about improving function?

What if it is about helping patients achieve a better brain... and a better "Quality of Life"?

Isn't that what is most important?

For decades, families facing Alzheimer's Dementia have been told to prepare for the inevitable.

Manage the symptoms.

Get your affairs in order.

Hope for more time.



What if there is another question worth asking?

What if the brain possesses a greater Neuroplastic capacity for adaptation, repair, and restoration than we once believed?

I began asking those questions long before they became personal.

And if someone you love is suffering from Alzheimer's Dementia, memory loss, cognitive decline, brain disorder or another neurological disorder, then you understand exactly what I am talking about.

You understand the fear.

The uncertainty.

The sleepless nights.

The constant worry.

You understand what it feels like to wonder whether your loved one is still safe when nobody is watching.

Alzheimer's Dementia doesn't simply steal memories.

It steals confidence.

It steals independence.

It steals relationships.

And eventually, it can steal the very identity of the person you love.

Nobody wants to lose their mind.

Nobody wants to forget the people who matter most.

Nobody wants to lose the memories that define who they are.

Yet that reality is affecting millions of families every single day.

Today, approximately 580,000 Floridians are living with Alzheimer's disease. More than 7.2 million Americans are affected, and worldwide, tens of millions of families are facing the challenges of dementia.

But every statistic represents a person.

A mother.

A father.

A spouse.

A grandparent.

A family desperately searching for answers.

For decades, conventional medicine has focused primarily on managing symptoms and slowing progression.

But perhaps we have been asking the wrong question.

Instead of asking:

*"How do we manage Alzheimer's Dementia?"*

*What if we asked:*

*"Why is the brain struggling in the first place?"*

At The Stem Cell Institute, those questions form the foundation of our Rebuild Your Brain™ Program.

As I often tell my patients:

*"The Body Tells You What Is Wrong... We Just Need to Listen."*

The brain is no exception.

Many individuals suffering from memory loss, cognitive decline, Long-COVID Brain dysfunction, and neurological disorders demonstrate underlying problems involving chronic inflammation, impaired circulation, metabolic dysfunction, insulin resistance, hormonal imbalance, nutritional deficiencies, toxic exposures, sleep disorders, and loss of neuronal connectivity.

In other words, the brain may not always be broken.

Many times, it is simply a short in the wiring. For years, medicine taught that damaged brains could not improve.

Today, the science of neuroplasticity tells a different story.

The human brain contains approximately 86 billion neurons connected through trillions of pathways. Research continues to demonstrate that the brain remains remarkably adaptable throughout life.

The brain can create new pathways.

Strengthen existing connections.

Develop alternative routes around damaged circuits.

And under the right circumstances, Rebuild Brain Tissue, Improve Memory, and Improve Function.

That understanding forms the foundation of our philosophy:

#### **Have the Body Heal the Body®**

Because there is "Nothing" on God's green earth that heals the body better than the body itself.

The body possesses extraordinary regenerative potential.

Our goal is to identify obstacles, optimize function, and create an environment where healing and restoration can occur.

Through advanced diagnostics, metabolic optimization, neuro-restorative strategies, precision treatment planning, and Natural Exponential Advanced Nano Biologics, we seek to support the body's own ability to repair, restore, and rebuild.

The objective is simple:

#### **Better Brain. Better Function. Better Life.**

Over the years, I have had the privilege of helping patients from across the nation who were searching for answers after being told little more could be done.

Many describe their outcomes using two words:



#### **Transformational Results.**

For one family, it was hearing:

*"Her memory returned and she can now function normal."*

For Debbie, who struggled with Long-COVID Brain dysfunction:

*"The fog lifted and now I have clarity."*

For Melissa:

*"Mom is responding and talking again."*

For Lily:

*"Mom is safe and secure and can now be left alone again."*

These are more than testimonials.

They are stories of hope.

Stories of possibility.

Stories that remind us why we continue searching for better answers.

As our population ages, Alzheimer's Dementia is rapidly becoming one of the defining healthcare challenges of our generation.

The question is no longer whether brain disease will affect our families.

The question is what we are willing to do about it.

Will we simply accept decline as inevitable?

Or will we continue searching for better answers?

Better diagnostics.

Better understanding.

Better strategies.

#### **Better Quality of Life.**

In my opinion, Quality of Life should be the goal of all medical treatments.

And if it isn't... you're seeing the wrong doctors.

There is one thing every family facing Alzheimer's Dementia eventually discovers:

**TIME is our Most Precious Commodity.**

Once the memory is gone and the functions decline, we wish we would have started earlier.

Once opportunities are lost, we wish we had more time.

**TIME WAITS ON NO ONE!**

Make time to ask questions.

Make time to explore your options.

Make time to discover what may still be possible.

If I can make time for my own mother, I can make time for your family too.

At [TheStemCellInstitute.com](http://TheStemCellInstitute.com), we would love to have a conversation with you and your loved one.

Whether in person or through a Zoom consultation, our goal is simple: help you understand your options and determine whether a customized Advanced Regenerative Treatment Plan may be appropriate.

You deserve to know the truth about Alzheimer's Dementia treatments and what may be possible through today's evolving regenerative technologies.

Life itself is an experiment. Medicine is an experiment. These therapies continue to evolve, and patient outcomes vary. But the science behind helping the body support its own healing and restorative processes continues to advance.

And that is why we are committed to leading Alzheimer's Dementia out of the shadows and into the light... naturally.

Because hope matters.

TIME matters.

Quality of Life matters.

And for some families, the most important call they ever make may be the one they make today.

To learn more, visit [TheStemCellInstitute.com](http://TheStemCellInstitute.com), [RegenaMed.US](http://RegenaMed.US), or call 941-371-7171.

(Then fill in the contact info please)

**[TheStemCellInstitute.com](http://TheStemCellInstitute.com)**



**941-371-7171**  
**RegenaMed.US**  
kNOwPAIN.com

# NORTH PORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH URGES SOUTHWEST FLORIDIANS TO PREPARE THEIR MINDS – NOT JUST THEIR HOMES – AS PEAK HURRICANE SEASON APPROACHES

Local behavioral health leader expands trauma-informed services, free community resources, and rapid-access support ahead of August-October peak storm window

As the 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Season moves toward its historic peak, **North Port Behavioral Health (NPBH)** is calling on Southwest Florida residents, families, employers, and first responders to put mental health preparedness on the same checklist as water, batteries, and shutters. NOAA's 2026 outlook projects 8–14 named storms, 3–6 hurricanes, and 1–3 major hurricanes between June 1 and November 30 — and forecasters caution that "it only takes one" to devastate a community. [spacecoastdaily.com], [noaa.gov]

While the season is forecast to be **below-normal** due to a developing El Niño, NPBH leaders suggest that a quieter forecast does not equal a quieter mind. Research shows that **30–40% of people directly affected by a major disaster develop significant PTSD symptoms**, and Florida residents repeatedly exposed to hurricanes face elevated rates of post-traumatic stress, generalized worry, depression, and functional impairment long after the skies clear. [floridacoa...seling.com], [tools.niehs.nih.gov], [cambridge.org]

"In Southwest Florida, hurricane season isn't just a weather event — it's a mental health event," said **Kelly Shanklin, Director of Business Development at North Port Behavioral Health**. "We see it every year: the hypervigilance when a system enters the Gulf, the sleepless nights, the children who flinch at thunderstorms, the seniors who isolate, the first responders carrying secondary trauma home with them. Preparing your mind is just as essential as boarding up your windows."

## The Hidden Storm: What the Data Tell Us

- **Repeated exposure compounds harm.** Floridians who lived through previous storms show higher post-traumatic stress symptoms and worry with each subsequent hurricane — a pattern documented in representative Florida samples after Hurricanes Irma and Michael. [tools.niehs.nih.gov]
- **PTSD doesn't always look like fear of storms.** Common signs include hypervigilance during storm season, nightmares, irritability, avoidance of flooded areas, trouble concentrating, and a persistent "on-edge" feeling that doesn't fade. [floridacoa...seling.com]

- **Secondary trauma is real.** First responders, healthcare workers, teachers, and even neighbors who absorb others' stories can develop PTSD-like symptoms without ever being in the storm's direct path. [leehealth.org]
- **Children, seniors, and people with prior trauma are at highest risk** for lasting depression and anxiety following hurricanes and flooding. [cambridge.org]

## How NPBH Is Responding This Hurricane Season

In July, North Port Behavioral Health is launching a Hurricane Season Mental Wellness Initiative for the communities we serve, including:

- **Rapid-Access Crisis & Assessment Line** — Walk-ins and same-day evaluations for adults, youth (ages 10–17), and seniors experiencing storm-related anxiety, panic, or PTSD symptoms.
- **Free Community Workshops** — "Calm Before the Storm: Mental Preparedness for Families" sessions throughout July and August at NPBH and partner sites.
- **Youth & Senior Outreach** — Trauma-informed group therapy for children ages 10–17 and a dedicated seniors track addressing isolation, displacement fear, and grief.
- **Detox & Co-Occurring Care** — Storms often trigger relapse; NPBH's medically supervised detox and co-occurring mental health/substance use programs remain fully staffed and accessible throughout the season.
- **Free "Mental Health Go-Bag" Checklist** — Available at npbehavioralhealth.com and at all NPBH locations.

**NORTH PORT**  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**  
**(941) 613-5311**  
**www.northportbehavioral.com**  
4501 Citizens Parkway, North Port, FL 34288

## A Mental Health Preparedness Checklist for Every Florida Household

NPBH clinicians recommend that every family add the following to their hurricane plan:

1. **Refill prescriptions early** — A minimum 30-day supply of all psychiatric and other medications.
2. **Write down provider contacts** — Therapist, psychiatrist, crisis line, and pharmacy numbers on paper, not just your phone.
3. **Identify a "calm person"** — Pre-select a friend or family member to check in with daily before, during, and after the storm.
4. **Build a comfort kit for kids** — Familiar toys, books, headphones, and a written reassurance plan.
5. **Limit storm-media exposure** — Set scheduled check-in times rather than continuous coverage to reduce vicarious trauma. [leehealth.org]
6. **Know the signs of trauma** — Sleep changes, withdrawal, irritability, panic, and substance use are signals to seek help, not to "tough it out." [hup-cfl.com]
7. **Have a post-storm mental health plan** — Schedule a wellness check-in with a provider 2–4 weeks after any major weather event.

## Free Help Is Available — Before, During, and After the Storm

North Port Behavioral Health encourages anyone struggling — whether from this season's anxiety or from unhealed wounds of Ian, Helene, Milton, or earlier storms — to reach out today, not after the next watch is issued.

**NPBH 24/7 Access Line: 941.867.9470**

Admissions Fax: 941.213.0124

npbehavioralhealth.com

In crisis? Call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or **211** for disaster mental health resources via Florida Disaster. [floridadisaster.org]

## About North Port Behavioral Health

North Port Behavioral Health is a Southwest Florida-based provider of comprehensive behavioral health services, including inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment, medically supervised detox, co-occurring disorder care, and specialized programs for youth (ages 10–17) and older adults. NPBH is committed to accessible, outcomes-driven care that strengthens the resilience of the communities we serve.

# BLINDNESS AND BURNS IN BACKYARD: Fireworks Displays Can Go Haywire in a Hurry

By Rick Weber

**K**elly Goebel can't unsee the horrific images. They are permanently embedded in her memory, forever altering how she views the events that caused them.

In her 36 years of nursing experience, she has witnessed the devastating consequences of fireworks-related injuries. Having worked in a Level I trauma center and served as Chief Flight Nurse for an aeromedical transport program, she has cared for and transported patients suffering from severe burns, traumatic eye injuries and even amputations caused by fireworks.

"I am certain that none of those individuals anticipated that a day meant for celebration would end with a trip to the emergency department—or an emergency flight to a trauma center," says Goebel, program director and assistant professor in the School of Nursing in the Marieb College of Health & Human Services at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"Many believed they were taking appropriate precautions, yet accidents still occurred. These experiences have reinforced my belief that no celebration is worth a life-altering injury and that safer alternatives can create lasting memories without the devastating consequences that can accompany fireworks. Years of providing care in these arenas have taught me one thing: People rarely expect to become the patient."

She says backyard fireworks displays are clouded by the misconception that legal means safe. In reality, even legal fireworks are considered small explosives and are capable of causing severe injury.

"Consumers also may believe that certain fireworks such as sparklers are safe," she says. "While media and advertising portray fireworks as fun and exciting, the devastating injuries they can cause receive less attention. Fireworks are deeply associated with celebrations such as the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, and many people have used fireworks for years without incident. But it's important to remember that while people may have had years of backyard fireworks display, it only takes one incident to change a life."

Class 1.4G consumer fireworks are legal to purchase in Florida for those 18 years of age or older, but their recreational use is restricted to three designated

holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and the Fourth of July. Year-round use is only legal for agricultural purposes or if the devices are non-aerial "sparklers."

Lee County's strict burn ban—which was extended through the spring months due to drought—has officially been rescinded following recent seasonal rainfall. But local fire departments still urge extreme caution and recommend keeping a connected hose or fire extinguisher immediately on hand. And if you live in a neighborhood governed by a Homeowners Association, your HOA rules can legally override state law. Many Lee County HOAs fine residents heavily for setting off loud or aerial fireworks.

As a Critical Care Nurse Practitioner currently practicing at Naples Comprehensive Health (NCH), Goebel would rather see fewer people celebrate the holiday with backyard fireworks displays.

"I think attending a community fireworks display is safer," she says.

But if consumers are determined to stage their own backyard fireworks displays, Goebel stresses that they should follow established safety guidelines by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the National Safety Council, HealthChildren.org, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the American Burn Association (ABA) and the National Fire Protection Agency.

"Consumers should never point or throw fireworks at another person, never hold lighted fireworks in their hands, never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol, never ignite devices in a container," she says. "Additional safety measures include wearing protective eyewear when using or standing near someone using fireworks."

In 2024, there were 11 reported fireworks-related deaths in the United States—a 38% increase over 2023, with most involving misuse and device misfire/malfunctions, according to the CPSC. An estimated 14,700 people were injured by fireworks, up 52%. An estimated 1,700 emergency room-treated injuries in 2024 involving sparklers.

In multi-year tracking of fireworks-related deaths by the CPSC, 44% of the victims had consumed alcohol or drugs prior to the fatal incident. Multi-year injury estimates analyzed by Monge & Associates reveal that 11.7% of all adult fireworks injury cases treated in emergency departments directly involve alcohol or drug impairment.

"Burn injuries account for most firework injuries and may involve the hands, face, arms and legs," Goebel says. "Burn injuries may result in redness, blistering, swelling, severe pain, and in full-thickness injuries, the burn may destroy all layers of the skin and underlying tissues. Do not apply ice, butter, ointments or home remedies. Burns should be covered with a clean, dry dressing. 911 should be called for severe burn injuries."

Goebel's recommendation: Keep kids out of the equation.

"Children should never be allowed to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers," she says. "While sparklers may be considered 'safe', they burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and, according to the National Fire Protection Association, accounted for 29% of fireworks injuries for children under the age of 5 in 2022.

"Safer alternatives to sparklers or traditional fireworks include glow sticks, LED light toys, bubble machines, confetti poppers and colored streamers. Families can create a festive atmosphere and reduce the risk of fireworks-related injuries by planning safer alternatives such as outdoor movie nights, glow-in-the-dark games and patriotic craft activities. Decorating flag, painting rocks and other hands-on projects provide children with engaging experiences while eliminating the risk of injury."

Have fun. But be safe.

## FGCU

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# Elevate Your Self-Care with Exomind Technology

By Dr. Michael Jonathan Clark

**A**t Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology, we're excited to introduce Exomind, a revolutionary brain wellness technology that's transforming how we approach mental self-care and cognitive health.

In our fast-paced world, stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue have become unwelcome companions for many. While traditional self-care often focuses on physical wellness through exercise, nutrition, and relaxation techniques, we're now recognizing that true self-care must also address our cognitive and neurological well-being. This is where Exomind comes in.

## What is Exomind?

Exomind represents the cutting edge of neurotechnology, offering a non-invasive approach to optimizing brain function and promoting mental wellness. This sophisticated system uses advanced brainwave technology to help balance neural activity, reduce stress, and enhance overall cognitive performance. By working directly with your brain's natural rhythms, Exomind creates a personalized experience designed to restore mental clarity and emotional equilibrium.

The treatment is remarkably simple yet profoundly effective. During an Exomind session, you'll relax comfortably while the technology gently guides your brainwaves toward optimal patterns associated with calmness, focus, and mental clarity. Many patients describe the experience as deeply relaxing, similar to meditation but requiring no prior experience or effort on your part.

## The Self-Care Benefits of Exomind

Self-care isn't selfish—it's essential. When we prioritize our mental and cognitive health, we're better equipped to handle life's challenges, maintain meaningful relationships, and perform at our best in all areas of life. Exomind supports these goals by addressing several key areas of brain wellness.

First, stress reduction is one of Exomind's most immediate benefits. By promoting balanced brainwave patterns, the technology helps activate your body's natural relaxation response, counteracting the harmful effects of chronic stress. Users often report feeling calmer and more centered after just one session.



Second, many patients experience improved sleep quality. In our sleep-deprived society, restorative rest is a crucial component of self-care. Exomind helps regulate the neural patterns associated with healthy sleep cycles, making it easier to fall asleep and achieve deeper, more rejuvenating rest.

Third, enhanced focus and mental clarity represent another significant advantage. Whether you're struggling with brain fog, attention difficulties, or simply want to optimize your cognitive performance, Exomind can help sharpen your mental edge and improve concentration.

## Making Exomind Part of Your Self-Care Routine

At Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology, we believe that comprehensive care means addressing all aspects of health—including the often-overlooked realm of brain wellness. Our experienced team is trained in the latest neurotechnology protocols and will work with you to develop a personalized Exomind treatment plan tailored to your specific needs and goals.

Consider investing in your most important asset: your brain. Whether you're dealing with stress, seeking better sleep, wanting to enhance focus, or simply looking to optimize your mental well-being, Exomind offers a powerful tool for transformation.

Self-care is about creating sustainable practices that support your long-term health and happiness. Unlike quick fixes or temporary solutions, Exomind works with your brain's natural capacity for healing and optimization, creating lasting changes that support your wellness journey.

We invite you to discover how Exomind can elevate your self-care routine and help you achieve new levels of mental clarity, emotional balance, and cognitive vitality. Contact Island ENT Wellness Spa and Audiology today to schedule your consultation and experience the future of brain wellness. Because when it comes to self-care, your mind deserves the same attention and care as your body.

Your journey to better brain health starts here.

## 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 performs 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 breathe 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.



**Island ENT**  
Wellness Spa and Audiology

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# Why Does Consistency Matter to Long-Term Investment Returns?

By Rick Walker, Financial Planner & CPA, and Kimberlee Clark, Financial Planner

**W**hen we talk about consistency in investing, we're referring to the ability to generate solid, dependable returns over many years rather than chasing spectacular gains one year followed by significant losses the next.

Why does this matter? The concept has parallels in many areas of life. In baseball, players who consistently get on base help their teams score more runs and win more games over the course of a season. Investing works much the same way. While some investments may post exceptional returns in a single year, those gains can be erased if they are followed by sharp declines. That type of volatility often creates unnecessary stress, sleepless nights and leads investors to make emotional decisions at the worst possible times.

Consider two hypothetical investment funds. One experiences dramatic highs and lows, while the other delivers steadier, more consistent returns. Although the more volatile fund may outperform in certain years, investors often react emotionally—buying after periods of strong performance and selling after significant declines. Unfortunately, this pattern of chasing returns and locking in losses can be one of the greatest obstacles to long-term success.

The real key isn't how you react during a difficult market. More important is the discipline exercised during periods of strong performance. Investors who remain focused on long-term goals rather than short-term market movements are often better positioned to achieve lasting results.

## Flexibility in Decision-Making

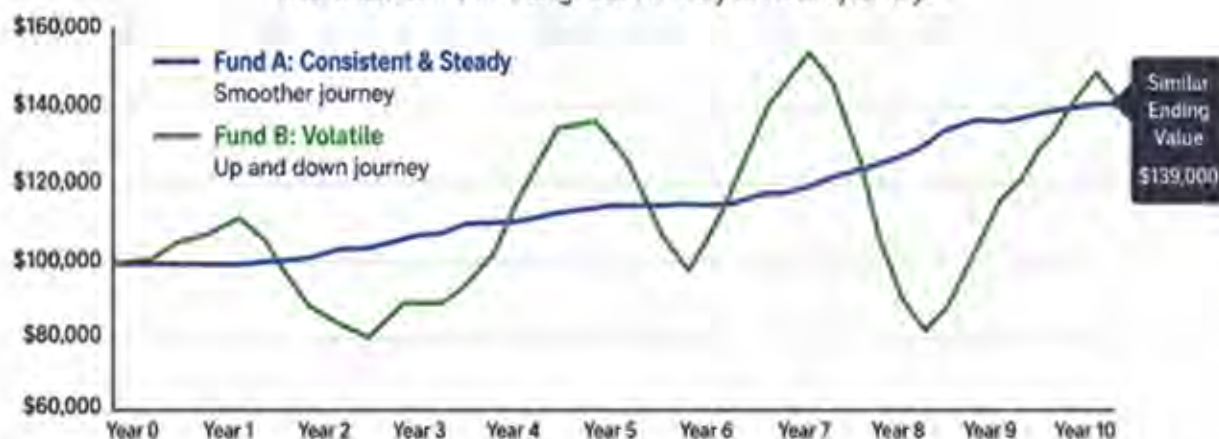
Consistent investment performance also provides greater flexibility when building a portfolio. When investors have confidence in the stability of part of their portfolio, they often feel more comfortable allocating an appropriate portion to long-term growth investments. That balance can help improve long-term returns while reducing the temptation to make emotional investment decisions.

## Using Income to Fuel Growth

Many investors establish a "core" portion of their portfolio consisting of high-quality income-producing investments. These holdings often generate interest and dividends while providing greater stability during periods of market volatility.

## THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

Two funds. Similar ending returns. Very different journeys.



Rather than spending that income, some investors choose to reinvest it into growth-oriented investments. For example, a \$500,000 income portfolio generating approximately \$27,000 annually could provide about \$2,250 each month to invest in growth assets. Over time, consistently reinvesting that income may significantly increase long-term portfolio value while preserving the stability of the core holdings.

## Consistency During Retirement

Consistency becomes even more important during retirement. Owners of traditional IRAs and 401(k) plans are generally required to begin taking Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) beginning at age 73. The amount required increases over time and is based partly on the value of the account.

A portfolio with more consistent returns can provide retirees greater flexibility in deciding when to take those withdrawals, reducing the likelihood of having to sell investments during unfavorable market conditions.

## Knowing When to Harvest Gains

Successful investing isn't just about buying quality investments—it's also about knowing when to take profits. Occasionally, certain holdings appreciate far beyond expectations. Rather than allowing a single investment to become an outsized portion of a portfolio, investors may choose to trim the position, rebalance into more diversified holdings, or simply recover their original investment while allowing the remaining shares to continue growing.

needs, and income sources all influence the appropriate strategy. As those circumstances change, investment plans should evolve as well.

Financial planning software and professional guidance can help investors evaluate different scenarios objectively and develop strategies designed to support their long-term goals. While no investment can guarantee future results, maintaining a disciplined, consistent approach often provides investors with greater confidence and a better opportunity for long-term success.

If you have questions about your own investment strategy or retirement plan, we'd be happy to discuss your individual circumstances. Please contact us at (239) 434-6613 or *RSVP to our next Luncheon at Seasons 52 August on 28th!*



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# 3D MAMMOGRAPHY

**A**s technology advances, understanding medical exams and procedures becomes more complex. The quality of services provided is an important consideration.

The American Cancer Society endorses mammography, along with yearly physical examinations and monthly self-examinations, as the most effective means of detecting breast cancer at its earliest and most treatable stage. Generally, mammography can reveal benign and cancerous growths before you or your physician can feel them. If detected at the earliest stage, breast cancer has a five-year survival rate of over 95 percent, as small breast cancers are more treatable and can be removed before they spread to other parts of the body.

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in American women. Unfortunately, 70% of women have no identifying risk factors. The American Cancer Society recommends mammography as a life saving tool for screening women without symptoms for breast cancer. And 3D Mammography specifically is becoming the preferred choice for physicians in Southwest Florida. With over 30 years of experience and 10 Board Certified Radiologists, Radiology Associates of Venice & Englewood (RAVE) is proud to offer 3D Mammography to our patients.

## What is 3D Mammography?

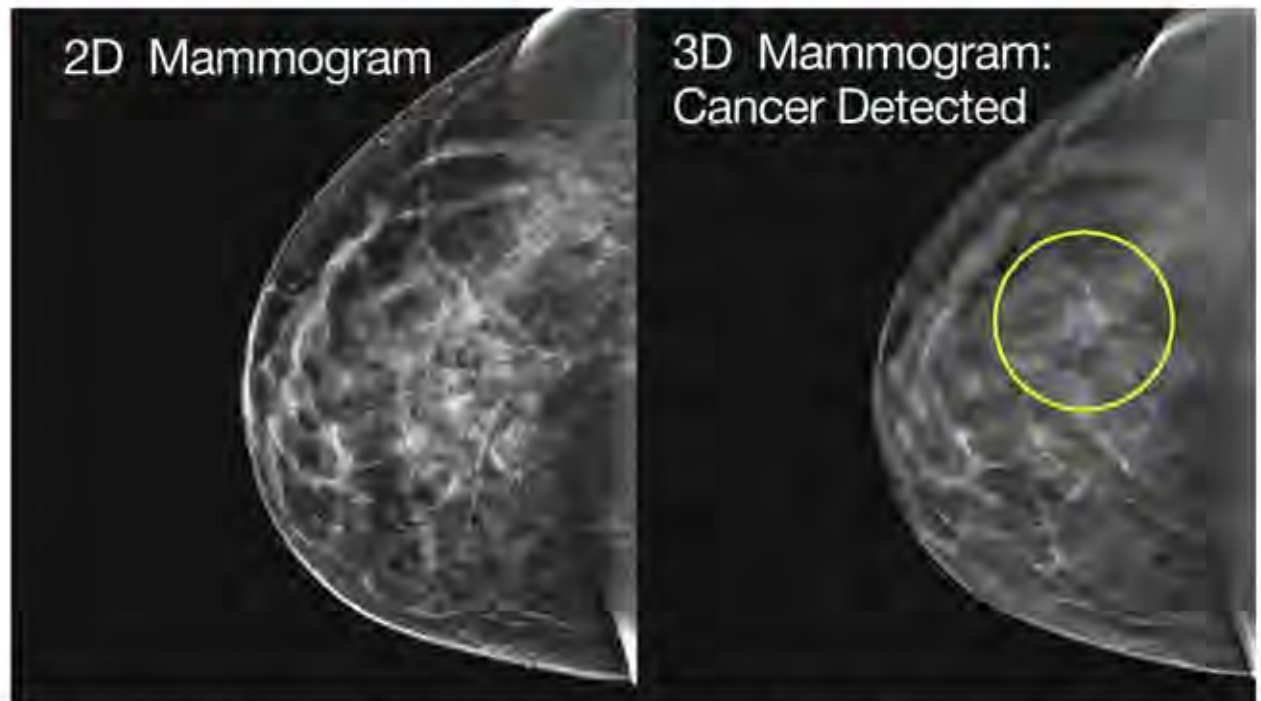
3D mammography is a revolutionary state of the art technology approved by the FDA in February 2011, which gives radiologists the ability to view inside the breast layer by layer, helping to see the fine details more clearly by minimizing overlapping tissue. During a 3D mammogram, multiple low-dose images known as "slices" of the breast are acquired at different angles. With 3D technology, the radiologist can view a mammogram in a way never before possible.

## Is 3D a separate exam or part of my usual mammogram?

The 3D exam is a separate procedure that is performed at the same time as your regular mammogram.

## What is the cost and will my insurance cover the 3D exam?

Medicare does cover 3D mammography. Even though 3D mammography is FDA approved and covered by Medicare, most private insurance companies are not yet reimbursing for this exam. However, RAVE has never charged the patient the additional 3D portion of the exam if their insurance doesn't cover it.



"The Radiologists of RAVE include the additional 3D imaging regardless of payment because it's in the best interest of patient care, so there is never an additional charge." (Philip Mihm, M.D. RAVE Radiologist)

## What are the benefits?

**FEWER MAMMOGRAM CALLBACKS** for additional mammography – 3D mammography helps distinguish harmless abnormalities from real cancers, leading to fewer callbacks for additional mammography and less anxiety for women. With 3D mammography, RAVE radiologists have reduced patient callback rates by 20-30 percent.

Doctors and scientists agree that early detection is the best defense against breast cancer. 3D mammography has been shown in clinical studies to be more accurate than conventional mammography alone by detecting cancers earlier. This new technology increases breast cancer detection by 38%. It's truly an important component in the screening process.

After 3D Mammography, if continued tests and imaging are needed, RAVE uses state-of-the-art technology, including MRI guided breast biopsies and the Philips 3T wide bore MRI that allows our radiologists to view the breasts in a higher resolution, enabling us to have even more clarity within the breasts. RAVE has been performing MRI breast

imaging for over 15 years and with Wide Bore technology, it allows us to accommodate most any sized patient comfortably. With the Philips 3T wide bore MRI, we are able to cut down on the amount of time it takes for the patient to be scanned. Most Breast MRI's take 30 minutes or less, allowing the patient to go on with their day with little disruption.

## How long will it take?

The exam will take about 4 seconds longer per view while in compression than the 2D mammography.

## How much radiation will I be exposed to?

It varies from person to person and is roughly equivalent to film/screen mammography. The amount of radiation is below government safety standards.

## What if my doctor did not mention 3D Mammography to me?

3D is an optional service at this time and elected by the patient. Many physicians know about our new 3D technology and the feedback we have received has been very positive. If you need additional information to help you make this decision, please visit [www.RaveRad.com](http://www.RaveRad.com).

## Why is RAVE Radiology offering 3D Mammography?

RAVE prides itself on offering the highest quality care for our patients. Our radiologists believe strongly that 3D mammography will benefit our patients.

We are approaching our 3rd Breast Cancer Awareness month since the COVID pandemic began. Breast Imaging, usually fairly insulated from worldly events, has shared in the challenges over the past few years. Initially concerns regarding post vaccination lymphadenopathy made its way to the nightly news. Confusion set in about whether and when to get a mammogram following vaccination. Luckily this was never a diagnostic dilemma for us at RAVE and we were able to encourage most women to stick to their annual screening schedule. Unfortunately, and for understandable reasons, several women have not come in for mammographic screening since the pandemic began. Because breast cancer detection and management are a primary mission at RAVE, we have risen to the challenge of ensuring safe access to breast cancer screening exams and any additional/follow-up care needed. Please be reassured that we are providing our standard high level of imaging care while maintaining/exceeding current CDC guidelines to ensure patient safety.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that RAVE offers the cutting edge in imaging technology unsurpassed in our region. We utilize the newest mammographic machines, each equipped with 3D Intelligent HD Clarity from Hologic. Tradename aside, the image quality is unparalleled, akin to the highest end Ultra HD television. This is important not only because it allows us to diagnose smaller cancers but also facilitate accurate characterization of benign findings other radiology groups mistake for malignancy.

Our ultrasound equipment is also the highest quality available in the industry which has implications for our breast cancer mission as well as our other imaging services. Finally, our 3 Tesla MRI also

generates extremely high-quality breast images which facilitate screening in our high-risk patients and important staging information in our women diagnosed with breast cancer. Equipped with these tools we recently identified a 3mm cancer via mammography! I would argue this tiny cancer is the earliest and smallest lesion a screening examination could hope to accurately identify.

We do not stop at the detection of breast cancer! Currently we are providing ultrasound breast biopsies at our Venice and Sarasota offices. At RAVE we know biopsy procedures are a scary process. We work hard to inform our patients beforehand regarding what to expect during the procedure. Professional, personalized, warm, and caring treatment is provided during the procedure. Lastly, follow up afterwards ensures nothing falls through the cracks. Most women leave our biopsy suite much more informed and prepared regarding their individual case and the forthcoming steps. For our referring physicians we provide critical radiology pathology concordance following all biopsies to help manage pathological results they may not be familiar with. This ensures suspicious lesions are pursued even if pathology results are not as expected and offers reassurance when benign results match less suspicious findings. In the not-too-distant future we will be offering the newest biopsy method which allows sampling of "3D" or tomosynthetic findings. This system is the final piece in the definitive management of the lesions we can detect and complements our current ability to perform MRI guided breast biopsies. I am very proud to be a part of the comprehensive breast program we offer at RAVE and am very grateful for the opportunity to serve our area's patients and referring physicians.

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RAVE is happy to announce  
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DEXA with TBS (Trabecular Bone Score) is a tool to assess risk of fractures, bone micro-architecture, and providing additional information about bone health. This special for self-pay patients of \$103.00 will only be available for the month of July to bring awareness to this advanced study.

Make sure to look out for our special in September for Vascular Disease Awareness.

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## Dental Visit with CEREC

By Dr. Joseph Farag

**N**ew technologies are making our lives simpler and easier everyday and dentistry has certainly not been left behind. Thanks to a great new system called CEREC, you can now have a high-tech smile in a single visit.

In days gone by, you may have needed to visit the dentist two or three times to have a quality, white ceramic restoration. The dentist would need to take a special impression to make a plaster model for the dental laboratory to generate an extra replica of your tooth in order to hand-make your porcelain restoration. The craftsmanship of the laboratory technician is highly regarded, but generally requires a minimum turn-around time of two weeks, leaving you to function with a temporary, generally plastic, restoration.

Instead of multiple dentist appointments and weeks for a complete restoration, CEREC allows the dentist to achieve the same, if not better, results in a single visit.

CEREC is an acronym for Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramics. Translated, it means that a dentist can economically restore damaged teeth in a single appointment using high-quality ceramic material that matches. CEREC uses the latest Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture (CAD-CAM) technology incorporating a camera, computer and milling machine in one instrument to give you perfect, white fillings, veneers or crowns, all in a fraction of the time it used to take.



### Here's how it works.

Once your dentist determines that CEREC is the correct course of treatment, your visit will begin by preparing the tooth. Any decay, if present, is removed, leaving as much possible of your healthy tooth to support the CEREC restoration. Next, your dentist will use a specially designed electronic camera that makes a digital 3D model of your tooth in seconds.

You can then watch your dentist design your new restoration on a computer screen, right beside the dental chair using the 3D image created by the camera. The virtual filling is then transferred into reality, again using CEREC. A solid block of porcelain ceramic is inserted into the CEREC milling unit. Special tools then sculpt your restoration to the finest detail based on the restoration designed on the CEREC computer.

The perfect-fit restoration is completed and placed in your mouth with the whole process only taking around an hour! CEREC fillings are natural looking, smooth, white and hard-wearing, just like the enamel surface of the rest of our teeth. The ceramic material is biocompatible and is not effected by hot or cold.

The office of Dr. Joseph Farag offers CEREC restoration. For more details and CEREC or to schedule an appointment for a check-up please call (941) 764-9555 today.



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# Summer Travel and Hearing Loss: What You Need to Know

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

**S**ummer is prime travel season, with many people taking vacations to explore new destinations. However, certain aspects of travel can potentially impact your hearing health. Whether you're hitting the road, taking to the skies, or embarking on a cruise adventure, it's crucial to be mindful of potential risks to your hearing and take preventative measures. Here's what you need to know about summer travel and hearing loss.

## 1. Air Travel and Ear Pressure

Air travel can be particularly challenging for your ears due to changes in air pressure during take-off and landing. These pressure fluctuations can cause discomfort, pain, and even temporary hearing loss if not managed properly. To alleviate this issue, try chewing gum, sucking on hard candies, or using ear plugs or noise-canceling headphones specifically designed for air travel. These simple steps can help equalize the pressure in your ears and prevent discomfort.

## 2. Loud Noises and Hearing Damage

Summer travel often involves exposure to various loud noises, such as airplane engines, concerts, fireworks displays, and crowded venues. Prolonged exposure to these loud sounds can lead to noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), which is cumulative and irreversible. To protect your hearing, consider using earplugs or noise-canceling headphones when in

loud environments. Additionally, try to take breaks from loud noises by stepping away from the source periodically.

## 3. Water Activities and Ear Infections

Swimming, water sports, and other water-based activities are popular during summer travel. However, water exposure can increase the risk of ear infections, which can lead to temporary hearing loss if left untreated. To prevent ear infections, use earplugs or custom-fitted swim molds when engaging in water activities. Additionally, be sure to dry your ears thoroughly after swimming or showering to remove any excess moisture.

## 4. Heat and Humidity

Extreme heat and humidity can cause swelling in the ear canal, leading to discomfort, itching, and potential hearing issues. Additionally, excessive sweating can introduce moisture into the ear canal, increasing the risk of infection. To mitigate these risks, use a hat or headband to keep sweat from entering your ears, and consider using a portable fan or air conditioning when possible to stay cool and dry.

## 5. Travel Fatigue and Stress

Travel can be physically and mentally exhausting, leading to fatigue and stress. These factors can

contribute to temporary hearing loss or tinnitus (ringing in the ears). To combat travel fatigue and stress, make sure to get enough rest, stay hydrated, and practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation.

By being aware of these potential risks and taking the necessary precautions, you can enjoy your summer travels while protecting your hearing health. Don't hesitate to consult a hearing health-care professional if you have any concerns or experience any hearing-related issues during your travels.

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## BREAKING THROUGH CHRONIC PAIN:

# How Myofascial Release Offers Hope When All Else Fails

By Michael Via, MSPT

**F**or 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.

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# THE POWER OF HELPFUL HABITS

By Pastor Tim Neptune

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in busyness and miss what truly matters. We only get one chance to make our mark in the world, so it is important that we make wise choices and build good habits that will help us reach our goals.

Have you ever wondered what habits Jesus had during his life? In the Gospel of Luke, we discover that when Jesus was just 12-years-old, he stayed behind in Jerusalem during Passover. His parents discovered that he was not with him and went to search for him. When they found him, he was in the temple listening to teachers and asking questions.

Everyone was amazed at His understanding. Luke 2:52 reveals the balanced growth Jesus experienced: *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."* This covers intellectual development (wisdom), physical growth (stature), spiritual connection (favor with God), and social well-being (favor with man).

Jesus didn't skip the ordinary. He worked as a carpenter, spent time with family and friends, fished, laughed, and learned Scripture through regular synagogue attendance and prayer. These weren't flashy moments but consistent rhythms that shaped Him. Even during His ministry years, Jesus rose early for solitary prayer (Mark 1:35), withdrew to quiet places amid crowds (Luke 5:16), and returned to the Mount of Olives *"as was His custom"* (Luke 22:39). As the Son of God in human flesh, He modeled disciplined habits to stay grounded amid life's demands.

The same principle applies to us. Success in health and wellness rarely comes from one dramatic change but from small, repeated actions. As James Clear notes in *Atomic Habits*, tiny adjustments compound into remarkable results. Your weight reflects your eating habits, your energy your movement patterns, your peace your daily rhythms with God and others.

Think of an ice cube in a 25-degree cooler. Raising the temperature one degree at a time does nothing visible—until 32 degrees, when it melts. Breakthroughs build from incremental shifts. Reduce calories by 500 daily for steady weight loss. Commit to a short morning prayer or Scripture reading, even if just a few verses or sentences, like King



David's habit: *"In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice"* (Psalm 5:3). Take a brief walk, sit quietly in your car, or pause in the shower to breathe and recenter.

If you're feeling stressed, rushed, or disconnected, examine your habits. Struggle with consistent Bible time or exercise? Start with 10 minutes. Want deeper relationships? Schedule regular, undistracted connections. Scripture reminds us: faithfulness in little things leads to greater things. Compound interest works in finances, fitness, and faith alike.

We face evil days, as Ephesians 5:15-16 warns, so wise living means making the most of every opportunity. Daily habits of prayer, movement, learning, and connection build resilience, reduce stress, and align us more closely with God's design for flourishing.

One year from today, you'll be the same person you are today unless you choose new rhythms now. Don't wait for motivation—build the habits that create it. Commit to small, consistent steps toward intellectual curiosity, physical stewardship, spiritual depth, and meaningful relationships. You're a work in progress, being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Make the changes today, and watch transformation unfold.

*Pastor Timothy Neptune is the founding lead pastor of Venture Church Naples. For more on building life-giving rhythms, visit [venturenaples.com](http://venturenaples.com).*



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