



PT Matters

A Quarterly Publication of McDonald Physical Therapy & Sports Rehabilitation Center

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McDonald Physical Therapy & Sports Rehab Center

Hours

Monday - Thursday

7 a.m. – 1 p.m.

2 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Friday

7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

CLOSED FOR LUNCH

Times may vary, please call.

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www.McDonaldPT.com

Have you ever looked back over your life and realized that you are where you are and who you are because of the sacrifices and sometimes painful experiences of others?

I pose this question because of something that I recently observed in my family. Maura and I are parents of a 20 year old daughter, Mara, who is a junior at Providence College and a 17 year old son, Michael, who is a senior at St. Joe High School. When Mara was growing up, she wanted to go to Notre Dame for college. My wife Maura and I had both attended Notre Dame, and in fact it was at the University that we met. We have involved ourselves with Notre Dame over the years we have lived in South Bend. Pre-Cana preparation, hosting summer service students, conducting senior rap sessions, and even helping out with coat drives brought Notre Dame into our home and family. Consequently, all four of our children have grown up involved with the Notre Dame community.

It became Mara's dream to attend Notre Dame one day. Unfortunately, Mara was not accepted at Notre Dame. At the time the experience was very painful and brought some tears to the whole family. She was an excellent student, a very good athlete and deeply involved in community service, but her SAT scores did not measure up. We accepted the fact that it was not meant to be.

Mara was accepted at Providence College, which was her second choice. Because Providence soccer, although still Division I, is not as competitive as Notre Dame, she was able to play at Providence. For the last three years, she has excelled in school and has become a stronger and more independent person than she was here in South Bend.

The crushing rejection from Notre Dame eventually proved to be a blessing. Mara was able to excel in academics and experience traveling and playing soccer, which she always loved. The curse became a blessing.



Surprisingly enough, Mara's rejection by Notre Dame also affected her brother Michael. When Michael saw that Mara was rejected by the school he wanted to go to – in spite of her grades, her involvement in sports and community service - he decided he would work even harder and increase his efforts in all areas.

To make a long story short, as a result of Mara's disappointment, Michael became an indirect beneficiary. Early this month, Michael received his acceptance from Notre Dame. As I sit here thinking about it, I can't help but be thankful for Mara. My first thoughts were pride for Michael, and my next thoughts were for Mara. I sat down at the computer and sent Mara an e-mail (she is studying in Spain this semester) telling her Michael was accepted by Notre Dame and that she played a major part in his acceptance. If he hadn't seen her go through the painful experience of rejection there is a chance that he wouldn't have raised the bar for himself and become focused enough to achieve one of his dreams.

Who knows why we are directed in whatever direction we are, but I do believe if we look more closely with a slight slant toward the positive, we will learn that our tough experiences may not only have helped ourselves grow but benefited others as well.

Francis McDonald PT



PREVENTING FALLS

We've all lost our balance at one time or another, but, as we get older, maintaining our balance is something we must strive for. With an estimated one in four people over the age of 65 experiencing falls each year due to a loss of balance, it is important to learn now what you can do to reduce your risk and improve your general health and mobility. Physical therapists recommend the following tips to help you prevent falls:

- Be aware of the side effects of certain drugs that may cause drowsiness, dizziness, and slowed reflexes that can lead to falls.
- Minimize obstacles in your home. Eliminate clutter, loose rugs, and unsecured wires and cords. Good lighting and furniture placement also can prevent mishaps.
- Exercise to improve your strength, flexibility, balance, and endurance. A physical therapist can help you develop a program tailored to your needs and physical condition.



SIMPLE EXERCISE SUGGESTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BEGIN A CONDITIONING PROGRAM

Start slowly, especially if you have not exercised in a long while. Doing too much, too soon can lead to injury.

Drink plenty of fluids when you are exercising. It is very easy to get dehydrated when sweating.

Be aware of your body when you are exercising. Exercising should not hurt or make you feel really tired. You might feel some soreness, a slight discomfort, or a bit weary, but you should not feel pain. If you do, stop exercising and see your doctor. Also, if you experience any of the following symptoms while exercising, stop immediately and seek medical help:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- The feeling that your heart is racing, skipping or fluttering
- Numbness or tingling in your arms or legs



The best way to start is to think of an activity that you enjoy. Your goal should be to exercise at least 30 minutes each day (or on most days of the week). If you can't tolerate exercising for 30 minutes all at once, break up your exercises into 10 minutes sessions, 3 times a day. Follow these 4 steps when choosing an exercise activity:

Step 1. Choose an activity that makes you breath a little harder. This is called endurance exercising. This will help build up your stamina and give you energy to do the things you want to do. How do you know if you are exercising hard enough? If you can talk with no trouble while doing your activity, your exercise is probably too easy; if you can't talk at all while exercising, you are working too hard

Step 2. Do strength training. People lose 20 to 40 percent of their muscle – and along with it their strength – as they age. Scientists have found that a major reason people lose muscle is because they stop doing everyday activities that use muscle power. Strength training exercises can also keep your bones strong and may help you avoid fractures due to fragile bones. You can incorporate strength exercises into your everyday activities. For example, walk briskly or uphill if possible. Take the stairs when you can. Rake the leaves. Use hand tools instead of power tools.

Step 3. Do exercises that help your balance. For example, stand on one foot, then the other, without support. Get up from a sitting position without using your hands or arms. Every now and then, walk heel-to-toe (the toes of the foot in back should almost touch the heel of the foot in front when you walk this way).

Step 4. Don't forget to stretch! Stretching won't build your endurance or muscles, but it may help keep you limber and flexible.

In a study, men with a large circle of friends that they saw regularly were almost half as likely to develop heart disease compared to men who had little social contact or support. Both casual friendships and deeper, more supportive relationships appeared to be protective of heart health. - www.realage.com

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Wrong Pitching Mechanics Can Force Little Leaguers to Throw Away More Than a Game



ALEXANDRIA, VA, May 26, 2000 - From the youngsters playing their first game of tee-ball to the last team standing at the Little League World Series in August, spring and summer baseball is a rite of passage in schoolyards and fields across both America and the world. But in their attempts to throw the farthest and fastest, millions of little leaguers put themselves at major league risk of arm and shoulder injuries.

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) says that the most coveted position on the team – pitching – can also be the most dangerous when it comes to arm injuries. Pitchers often throw 100 balls per game, placing substantial stress on a young arm. “Kids (and coaches with inadequate training) sometimes mistake strength for proper pitching mechanics and may be trading six innings of excitement for years of arm problems,” says Marty Stajduhar, a physical therapist who treats professional baseball players and current little leaguers. The pitcher runs the greatest risk of injuries resulting from overuse or improper mechanics, leading to a condition known as “little league elbow,” a chronic inflammation of the growth plate in the elbow joint.

With continued stress, the growth plate may separate from the joint, requiring surgery to re-attach it. Most little leaguers mistakenly throw with the force coming from the arm instead of the trunk, says Stajduhar. “I ask players to show me their batting stance. I point out how different the torso is positioned when they’re at bat and how much power they get from their trunk by ‘stepping in’ to the pitch. It surprises them when I say they should have a similar position for pitching.” His advice: “Do not stand up straight to throw. Bend at the waist, and direct the front shoulder and hip towards the target. When the front foot lands, get the belly button over the front knee as quickly as possible. Then the trunk supplies the power, not the arm.”

Shoulders are also in danger during a pitch. Because the shoulder is the most mobile joint in the body, it is also the most unstable. The four muscles surrounding the shoulder, called the rotator cuff, are stretched during the acceleration and deceleration. Bones can shift, leading to damaged ligaments or pinched structures within the shoulder joint. Torn or strained rotator cuff muscles can result in permanent damage. To reduce the risk of injury, it is important that the muscles of the trunk and shoulder be strong, stable, and flexible. Because children tend to be less aware of their physical limitations, it is especially important that parents and coaches watch their children carefully for correct throwing mechanics, while advocating proper conditioning and pre- and post-game stretches.

“Attentive parents and coaches will maximize their child’s chances of having a healthy season,” says Stajduhar. APTA recommends three important upper body stretches: the inferior shoulder stretch, the posterior shoulder stretch, and the rotator cuff stretch. “Once kids understand the proper way to throw, they need to concentrate on being in the best condition possible,” Stajduhar said.

- American Physical Therapy Association

In a small study, men and women who drank about 17 ounces of cold water after a meal temporarily experienced a 30 percent increase in the rate at which their bodies burned calories. The increased calorie burning was attributed to thermogenesis, a process by which the body burns calories for digestion purposes. - www.realage.com

WELCOME TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



**ERIN BAILEY,
M.S., O.T.R.**



The Occupational Therapy Room at McDonald Physical Therapy



**CHRISTY
NEUHAUS,
M.S., O.T.R.**

McDonald Physical Therapy is well known in the community for providing 16 years of excellent Physical Therapy and Sports Rehabilitation services. Over the last two to three, we have expanded our commitment to hand therapy. We are using this opportunity to introduce ourselves, our department and the benefits of hand therapy. Our hand therapy department consists of two Occupational Therapists who have continued their education to specialize in hand therapy. We treat a variety of injuries of the hand and UE, such as Carpal Tunnel, Arthritis, Tendonitis, Fractures, Tendon/Ligament injuries, and a variety of others. In addition to treating the injuries, we also provide custom splinting for patients who do not require a full cast and/or if an over-the-counter brace is not fitting them.

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