



# 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.**

## Notes from Fran

Alf Nachemson, MD, an expert in the field of back pain, stated that the key to managing patients' injuries is to increase their coping skills and the sense of control that they've had over their treatments. He also stated that having patients do so would improve outcomes significantly in a much more cost-effective manner.

With this thought as the starting point of this newsletter, I would like to ask you all to rethink how you handle your physical therapy care. As I stated in the last issue, I am very much "into" taking responsibility for oneself. My parents made sure their ten children were aware of the importance of taking responsibility.

Our clinic has developed its great reputation through our service and the wonderful physicians who believed that we had something unique to offer. I can never express how thankful I am for all the physicians and patients who believed in us.

That said, I still think, as Dr. Nachemson stated, we all need to take more control of our care. You may not realize it, but you do have the option to choose which physical therapy group you go to at any time. Just because a physician recommends us does not mean you have to go to us (not even if the physician writes the referral on McDonald Physical Therapy referral pads.) No physician can control where you get your care. It is against the law! And although I am thankful for all the physicians who prefer to direct you to our clinic, I still believe Dr. Nachemson is correct; patients need to start taking control and start learning about their rights in the medical world.



## In this issue:

- ✓ Stretching
- ✓ Weightlifting
- ✓ Personal Medical Records
- ✓ Open House Invitation

We all have children, spouses, and family that get sick or injured at inopportune times. It is during these times that we are most vulnerable. We need proper direction, and sometimes do not know our rights as consumers. Can I get another opinion without the physician getting angry at me? Can I get a record of my physician's notes? Can I get a copy of my x-rays or MRI? Can I go to a different provider for physical therapy? These are just a few of the many questions that our patients have been asking us for years. The easiest answer to all these questions is YES!

Everyone in the medical profession has been asked to give or accept another opinion at one time or another. Each of us has had patients who have chosen to switch to another medical provider. This is not offensive to your physician or physical therapist. The key to this entire article is to hopefully, help you all realize that you are the controller. You can say to any of us in medicine that you want different or better care. It is your right, and furthermore, it is your duty to yourself and your family.

Sincerely,

*Fran McDonald PT*

Visit us on the web at  
[www.McDonaldPT.com](http://www.McDonaldPT.com)



## Stretching: A Good Deal More Than Just Warming Up

by Barb Knutson, P.T.

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Physical fitness is accomplished through workouts that focus on three major elements: cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and flexibility. Of these three, flexibility is the most neglected. True flexibility is achieved through a regular focused stretching program. For many stretching is something to do before exercise or a workout; it is frequently viewed as just a warm-up for the “real thing.”

Let's consider two major misconceptions about stretching. First, stretching is **not** a warm-up exercise, and second, stretching is an absolute necessity before and **after** any from of exercise.

If you go to any place where people step onto the playing field, gym, arena, or weight room, and they do a few fundamental stretches, and begin a game or workout, you can witness the minimal amount of stretching people do. Beginning physical exercise this way is at least improper and at worst dangerous. Warm-up for exercise with a five to ten minute walk, run, stationary bike ride, or other aerobic activity. Remember – prepare your body for stretching by warming up first – not the other way around. **Stretching is not warming up – it is exercise!**

Stretching can be a general workout, or it can be sport or activity specific. If you are stretching in preparation for a specific activity, it is suggested you check with your doctor, therapist, or trainer for stretching specifics that prepare you for the activity. For example, if you are a serious weight lifter, it is advisable to stretch each muscle group before and after you engage in specific lifts. A golfer can/should employ stretching throughout a round of golf. There are even specific stretching exercises recommended before working in the garden. It is worthwhile to know what to stretch, when to stretch, and how to stretch. If you prefer researching your own stretching techniques, there are books available and the internet offers sites dedicated to stretching.

There are three basic types of stretching: static, dynamic, and PNF. Static stretching consists of slow movement to a specific point and holding that position for 10 – 20 seconds before returning to a relaxed position. Dynamic stretching involves moving parts of your body and gradually increasing extension, speed of movement, or both. PNF (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation) is a more sophisticated method and requires proper training or the assistance of a professional.

Three factors to keep in mind as you develop a stretching routine: **1)**Do not bounce or over stretch. Using ballistic movement (bouncing) can cause injury to the muscle. **2)**Stretching should not be painful. You may stretch to a point of discomfort; that is your body reaching new heights. Pain however is your body's way of warning you of danger. **3)**If you stretch with or around others, do not compare your accomplishments with another. Know your goals and your limitations.

General stretching programs and exercises are available through many fitness books and manuals. For specific questions regarding the exercises best for you, check with your doctor, therapist, or trainer. As you incorporate more stretching into your workout program, keep in mind that the increased flexibility that results from stretching programs reduces the risk of injuries, helps in recovering from demanding workouts, increases general range of motion, improves form in activities, and lessens fatigue at the end of the day.

### Summary of the Benefits of Stretching

- ✓ Reduces the risk of injury
- ✓ Reduces muscular tension
- ✓ Maintains the normal functional length of all muscles
- ✓ Eases joint stress
- ✓ Increases joint range of motion
- ✓ Corrects muscle imbalances
- ✓ Improves movement patterns
- ✓ Improves overall functional ability and freedom of movement
- ✓ Enhances posture
- ✓ Develops better body awareness
- ✓ Decreases delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS)
- ✓ Promotes circulation
- ✓ Allows you to feel and perform better
- ✓ Helps improve balance and stability



**Weightlifting** by Ken Mack, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist

*This short piece is the first in a series on starting and developing a weight training program. Please note that weight training is not just for the young or for those focused on improving the way they look. Consistent weight training can help you lose weight, increase bone density and muscle strength, and improve your self image. These factors are not limited to the young.*

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## Starting from scratch....

Let's get to the nitty gritty. Weight training is a tool to help us maintain our health. It is a life long commitment, not just days, weeks, or months. Weight training must become a part of your lifestyle to be beneficial. That being said, this stage of the program is for a beginner who has not made the commitment to lifting before.

As with all workouts or exercises be sure to warm up and stretch well before you start lifting. Stretching each muscle group you plan on working is a must.

The key to lifting, of course, is to not hurt yourself. So, I am a fan of starting on machines as opposed to free weights, but your choice depends on your current level of fitness. I propose starting at two days a week and increasing to three times a week after a month, or depending on your fitness level, sooner. Your tendons, ligaments, and muscles are very adaptable, but you need to use progressive overload, not just overload. (Overload is simply trying to lift more than your body is able to handle.) Too many people start out with too much weight, injure themselves, or get so sore they can't walk the next day.

Remember, a good lifting program is a lifestyle change. The body will adapt, and you have a long life to work on increasing the weight. The program also needs to be changed frequently to see results. I recommend varying your routine every 4 to 6 weeks. You should do exercises that work on each major muscle group: chest, back, biceps & triceps, quads & hamstring, calves, shoulder, and abdominals.

I start people who have never worked out before on two sets of 15 repetitions. The last two reps should be challenging. If you do not "struggle" with your last couple of weights, you should increase the weight you are lifting.

Early gains in your workouts are due to neural changes. This means your nerves are stimulating muscle fibers, and that increases strength in the beginning. Later you will start to see some muscle growth or definition. (For guys, this is why they frequently quit so quickly; they don't see size gains soon enough.) Women are often afraid of getting bulkier. This happens less than 1% of the time in women lifting for fitness purposes.

A couple words of caution - be sure to stretch after lifting or completing exercise on a specific muscle group. Also, remember muscles are 78% water, so drink plenty of water to help in your recovery.

## *You are invited...*

Open House / Health Fair  
Saturday, October 25 – 9 A.M. to 11 A.M.  
at McDonald Physical Therapy

Members of our treatment staff will conduct small seminars, discussion groups, and questions and answer sessions on a variety of personal health related topics:

- Preventing and treating back and neck pain
- Ergonomic education for home and work
- Easy, general strengthening exercises
- Issues on women's health, and others

There is no charge for the health fair, and staff will be available to answer questions.



# Personal Medical Records by Amy Morton

You are driving out of state on vacation, and you are in an accident. The injuries you suffer are not serious, but they do require a visit to the emergency room. • You receive a call at work that one of your children was injured at school and has been taken to the hospital. • An elderly family member has suffered a fall, and you accompany her/him to the hospital. • You have taken a new job, moved your family and are finding physicians in your new location..

While the scenarios are different, each presents a potential problem that many of us are not prepared for. Most families maintain medical records. The question is: how **accessible** are your records.

The medical community suggest extensive files be kept on each member of the family, and the files should be stored in a safe place. Paper files, record forms/books, computerized files, computer programs, network sites – all of these are available for comprehensive record keeping. Providers suggest records ranging from official documents (birth certificates, immunization records), names of all healthcare providers (including addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses), pharmacy phone numbers, test results, past and present prescriptions, even vital statistics (like blood pressure readings) should all be available at home. For emergency situations and ease of access, it is also recommended that each member of the family have her / his own file.

For those circumstances when time is of the essence the medical community suggests a condensed medical record be carried by each family member. A single sheet of paper with emergency information carried in a purse, wallet, organizer, even simply in a pocket can save time.

If you have elderly relatives, particularly those who live alone, it is important that you have access to or knowledge of how to gain access to their medical records.

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