



# PT Matters

A 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.**

*“A lot of people  
have gone further  
than they thought  
they could because  
someone else thought  
they could.”*

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

This past summer I went home to Long Island to attend a memorial service and funeral for a former teacher. Many of her students came, as I did, to say goodbye, and it struck me that we shared a common emotion. Mrs. Georgia Ruel was a most significant influence in our lives. We loved this lady, but for me it had not always been so.

Mrs. Ruel was my Advanced Choir Director in high school. I, as well as all nine of my brothers and sisters went to a public high school in Lindenhurst, Long Island. We had 3600 kids in our high school, and from the time I was eight years old, my life was all about playing, reading, and dreaming about football, basketball, and baseball. I lived and breathed sports.

While I was growing up, my Dad, who played the piano and accordion, would play – usually on the weekend, and we would sing together as a family. We even performed in shows until I was about eight. I did love to sing. As the family grew from three to four to five to ten kids, my Dad was forced to work more hours and two jobs. We sang less often and usually saved singing together for Christmas. In other words – singing became a thing of the past, in the McDonald home. This all changed six years later. I was a freshman in high school. My sister Mary was three years older than I, and she always talked about this “advanced choir” and how special it was. I was skeptical, and very happy that I could not try out until I was a sophomore. I was president of my freshman class, quarterback on the football team, high scorer on the basketball team, and second baseman on the baseball team. I had no time or room on my schedule for some “irrelevant” choir.

As she had done at other times throughout my life, Mary changed my way of thinking – in time. When the choir had their Christmas concert, I was forced to go! I complained to my parents, but they did not listen. Didn't they realize I was busy? Didn't they realize I was special and had other interests? Obviously, no one understood or cared enough to listen to this very wise 14 year old!

I had to admit after listening to the Christmas concert and seeing some of the best varsity athletes sing as well as they did, I became more interested. After the performance, my sister introduced me to a soloist and one of the best athletes ever to graduate from our school; he played for the Buffalo Bills for a number of years. I was shocked to hear how much he enjoyed participating in the choir. I was surprised too that he was so nice to me, but I chalked up his behavior to my sister, who every boy in the school wanted to date. I thought he might be trying to “brown her up” by being nice to her younger brother. As a result of seeing and hearing this group perform so well and talking to this great athlete I admired, I decided to try out in the spring. The tryout was extremely challenging. I had not realized the woman running this amazing group was the Vince Lombardi of the choral world! She expected my best every minute I was in her choral room. She discussed her rules and expected everyone to be attentive to her direction and always respectful of one another. This was not optional. She spent one class per year teaching us proper etiquette and manners; just in case we went out to a nice restaurant and, especially, because we had an end of the year choir banquet. In the mind of this 15 year old super star student, politician, and athlete, this lady was not meant to be a part of his life.



The night after tryouts, after hearing her demands and expectations, I informed my parents that I was changing my mind. It was not in my best interest to join this choir. Unfortunately, my parents did not see the tryouts as I did. They said I had already made a commitment by trying out. They thought I should have never wasted Mrs. Ruel's time if I wasn't going to commit to at least one year! Was I upset! I was angry at my parents and my sister for tricking me into trying out. I refused to let into my mind the thought that I chose to go to the tryout and might actually enjoy the group. I even hoped I didn't make it. That would put an end to this crazy choir idea and especially this demanding woman who was so out of touch with 15 year-olds – especially one as special as I!

I did make the choir my sophomore year, and I was challenged to the extreme by Mrs. Ruel. I hated her for the first three quarters of that year. As far as I was concerned, she was mean spirited and hated me! She was always singling me out whenever I made a mistake. It seemed like she 'rode' me everyday! As of February of my sophomore year, I couldn't wait for the year to end so I could get out of this terrible experience.

Fortunately, this woman, who I thought was a tyrant, touched the inner soul of this self-centered 15 year old. One day she took time out of her day to drive me home when I needed a ride. During that ride, she asked me some questions which I needed to think about. She first told me I was blessed with a great family and a gift to sing. She asked me if I ever noticed how often I used the word "I" when I spoke to others. She thought if I could squeeze the word "we" in a few of my sentences, I might start thinking of others more and become an even greater team player on the athletic fields and in choir. I had never thought about my choice of words, and Mrs. Ruel's observations started me thinking.

I had always thought I was all about team! But she was right. As I started listening to myself, I was all about "I." I was taken aback by her awareness. Why? I have no idea, but I guess I was ready to hear it, and Mrs. Ruel saw it, reached out, and changed my life. She helped change my thought processes and the way I addressed others. I did start thinking of "we" more. I purposely tried to substitute "we" for "I" when I spoke. Somehow in doing that I became more sensitive and open to others. This little suggestion actually made a big impact on my life, and the thought of her brings tears to my eyes. Why this memory would have such a powerful affect on me 38 years later, I cannot explain, but it does.

For the record, I stayed in choir for all three years. I performed a few solos and was elected president of our choir senior year. During those three years I struggled with Mrs. Ruel's demands. I struggled with what she demanded of me as a student, singer, and as a person. She always seemed to want more than I thought I had. I resisted her demands many times, but eventually, because of her belief in me, I accomplished every one of them.

I am so thankful to have had Mrs. Ruel as one of the great influences in my life. She taught me to include others at a time I didn't realize I wasn't. She showed me I had more talents than I knew. She taught me to respect others, especially when I didn't agree with what they were saying. And if all that was not enough, she brought music back into my life, and her music restored some special memories of my family and the special times we had singing when my dad had the time to play for us.

I hope and pray if you are 14 to 18, you might examine more deeply some of the teachers who challenge you to work harder than you might want. Remember, we often don't appreciate those who are sent into our lives to help us. I think we actually try to avoid them! As for me, I am so thankful that Mrs. Ruel knew somehow I was missing her message, and that she found the time to take me for a drive that touched my life in a more powerful way than she ever could have imagined!

Mrs. Ruel ended every concert with the song, "The Lord Bless You and Keep You." I know she is in heaven, and I know that the Lord is blessing her. I hope he blesses you as well.

*Francis McDonald PT*



## ANNUAL BIKE FITTING



Whether you are a bike riding enthusiast who rides year around, or you simply enjoy riding your bike around your neighborhood, it is important that you take time to fit your bicycle at the beginning of each season. It is worthy of note that when it comes to "fitting" a bicycle to your needs one size does not fit all.

An improper bike fit can cause serious discomfort - including things such as a numb buttocks, burning feet, stabbing knee or back pain, sore hands, achy shoulders, and a stiff neck. We highly recommend that you take the time and money to have your bike professionally fit. In the long run, the extra expense may possibly save you from pain and injury. You can have your bike fit at a reputable bike shop; however, not all bike shops offer the same degree of expertise when it comes to bike fit. Ask your dealer or bike shop what they offer in "fitting" your bike.

A good bike store will check and adjust all the important areas of your bike, but use the following as a minimal guide to check up points that may need adjustment.

- 1) Seat Angle
- 2) Seat Height
- 3) Pedal/Shoe Adjustments
- 4) Seat Fore/Aft Position
- 5) Reach to the Handlebars
- 6) Handlebar Height

## ON-CAMPUS PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES

*McDonald Physical Therapy is now available at The University of Notre Dame*

*Faculty, staff, and students who are undergoing physical therapy with a well-known local firm now have a chance to get their therapy taken care of on campus.*

McDonald Physical Therapy and Sports Rehabilitation Center has opened a new second-floor satellite therapy center in St. Liam Hall, the recently renovated health services building. Services will be available both for workers' compensation cases and staffers or students who have been referred by a doctor and whose therapy is covered by insurance.

The center is open from noon to 5 PM Monday through Friday. Appointments are scheduled through McDonald's main facility on Hickory Road by calling 233-5754. Employees already in therapy at McDonalds can arrange to have their program transferred to the on-campus location.

"Athletic trainers provide care for athletes, notes Bob Zerr, director of risk management and safety. "But we've always used outside offices (for workers; compensation cases.) It will be nice to have the convenience and the quality of care. It's a unique partnership we hope will benefit both Notre Dame and McDonald's."

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When a new patient is referred, the staff will assess the person's restrictions and pain patterns, then create a therapy plan. The plan may include joint mobilization and exercise, as well as education. Educating patients on how to prevent the injury from re-occurring is crucial, owner Fran McDonald notes.

McDonald says he treats a large number of members from the Notre Dame community who will now benefit from the convenient location. The on-campus site will also be more convenient for students, some who have had problems arranging transportation to and from off-campus appointments.



Text and photo courtesy of ND Works – Carol Bradley

## Exercising with osteoarthritis

### Key points

- Exercise may make you feel better, reduce your joint pain, and improve your ability to do daily activities.
- For many people with osteoarthritis, a common symptom is pain after activity, which may make you reluctant to exercise. However, you can take steps to help relieve pain (such as heat and cold therapy or taking pain relievers) and make it easier to exercise and stay active.
- Exercise should be balanced with rest and joint care. If your joints hurt or you notice redness or swelling, rest your joints, then try a little exercise. Also, consider using assistive devices, such as splints or braces, for short periods of time to protect your joints.
- Sharp or unusual pain may be a sign of injury. Talk to your health professional if you have new or more intense pain.
- Ice after exercise can ease joint pain and swelling.
- Always check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Joints and muscles need to be exercised to prevent stiffness and weakness. Also, exercise will make you feel better and help you maintain a healthy weight. Excess body weight places extra force and pressure on arthritic joints and causes osteoarthritis to progress more rapidly.

**Without exercise.** . . your osteoarthritis will progress faster. Exercising will not "wear out" a damaged joint. However, research suggests that if your joint is unusually loose or does not line up normally, some exercises may not be as effective or may even increase the progression of osteoarthritis. Your health professional can help you determine what exercise is best for you.

Stretching exercises will help prevent the stiffness associated with osteoarthritis and help prevent injury. Strengthening exercises will help

strengthen the muscles and ligaments surrounding a joint, which in turn will protect and reduce stress on the joint. For example, stronger thigh muscles take some of the stress off of weight-bearing joints such as the knees and hips.

### Exercise for people with osteoarthritis can help to:

- Improve hip and knee joint function and movement.
- Improve function in a person with knee osteoarthritis, and perhaps delay or prevent the need for surgery.
- Improve posture and balance in older adults with osteoarthritis, thus reducing the chance of falls.

### Motivation to exercise:

Exercise with a friend, or join a support group. Also, people with osteoarthritis who attend classes or support groups have less pain, less depression, and better joint activity.

- Try a class at your local health club or with your local arthritis chapter that is specifically designed for people with arthritis. People who participate in an exercise class in addition to their home exercise program have shown added improvement in function, and they are more likely to stick with their exercise after the class ends.
- You can exercise without spending a lot of money at a health club or on equipment. You can do many exercises, such as walking, almost anywhere at no cost. At a local health club such as the YMCA, you can enroll in a class that is inexpensive and designed specifically for people with arthritis.
- Record your efforts. Some people are motivated by seeing their progress written down.
- Reward your yourself. When you reach a step toward your goal, reward yourself by doing a special activity or buying something.

## MAP YOUR WALK WITH GOOGLE ([www.mapmyrun.com](http://www.mapmyrun.com))

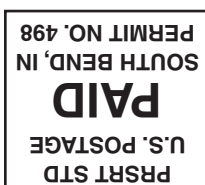
If the smell of spring in the air has whetted your appetite for getting outside with your workout program – whether you walk, run, or cycle, the program from Google called “Map My Run” may interest you. You must have “Google Earth” downloaded on your computer



“Map My Run” allows you to identify a specific address from which your workout begins and by ‘clicking’ on various points along your workout route, the program identifies mileage for the workout. By entering information (age, sex, height, weight, and the time of your workout) the program will calculate the averages for your pace, speed, and calories burned.

You can save your workouts and build a training log that contributes to scheduling future workouts. The program is not limited to local geographies. It allows you to calculate distances almost anywhere in the world you choose to exercise.

Case managers are invited to sign up for our 2nd annual hand therapy seminar on June 22, 2007. Free CEU's are available. Call McDonald Physical Therapy for details.



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