

Monthly Calendar

May 8: Live After Five: Hippy Smith Band

May 8: Mother's Day

May 15: Live After Five: Jive Train

May 22: Live After Five: Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys

May 25: Memorial Day

May 29: Live After Five: Animal Crackers

Dear PT...

Since the weather has been so nice, I have started running outside. I go about 4 times a week for about 30-45 minutes. Recently I am feeling pain in the front of my knees and shins that is just getting worse every week. What can I do about this?

Dear Runner,

There are many reasons that can explain the new onset of symptoms. The best method to treat yourself is to address the following checklist and find where you are falling short:

1)Footwear: Make sure your shoes are appropriate for your foot type and your gait pattern with running. Also, a runner should change shoes at least every 6 months because the support breaks down with time.

2)Strength: It takes a lot of strength to running efficiently. Isolate and strengthen all the major muscles in the trunk and legs in the gym to make sure there are no weak links in the chain.

3)Flexibility: Tight calves and hamstrings are the usual suspects with these types of problems. I suggest stretching a few hours before your run and again immediately after.

4)Posture: As you fatigue with running you tend to lean forward. Loss of proper positioning can set you up for many injuries. Focus on staying very erect.

5)Cross Training: Change up the routine. Your body gets tired of doing the same activity over and over again. Try replacing one of your weekly runs with swimming or cycling.

If you have tried all of these with no relief, please see your doctor for further diagnostic testing or you can schedule a free consult with us. Have a great run!

Rachel Ortigo, PT, MS

If you have any questions for the PT that you would like answered, please submit them to amy_dutchpt@bellsouth.net.

Dealing with Sciatica

Many individuals have experienced the painful condition known as sciatica. Sciatica involves pain along the course of the sciatic nerve, which travels from the lower back extending down the back of the leg. Symptoms of sciatica vary widely, from a dull ache to a sharp, burning sensation or excruciating discomfort. This discomfort often radiates from the lower back to the buttock, thigh or calf. Sometimes the pain is accompanied by a "pins and needles" sensation or numbness of the lower leg and foot. Usually, sciatic pain only occurs on one side of the body.

There are many different causes of sciatic pain. The most common cause is due to a herniated disc in the back, compressing a nerve as it exits the spine. Other causes may include tight muscles, arthritis, or abnormal structures that place pressure on the sciatic nerve causing irritation. Risk factors for developing sciatica include: poor posture, slumped sitting and standing, bending forward, lifting, sedentary lifestyle.

Treatment for sciatica focuses on relieving pressure and inflammation of the sciatic nerve. Conservative self-care may include cold packs, stretching, specific exercises

and over-the-counter medications to reduce the pain and inflammation. It is advisable to seek medical attention if the measures fail to ease the symptoms; the pain lasts longer than one week or is severe and becomes progressively worse. A doctor may prescribe medication, administer and epidural steroid injection and order physical therapy. Surgery may be warranted if sciatic pain is not helped by conservative treatment.

Individualized physical therapy intervention for sciatica will include exercises to help correct posture, strengthen the muscles supporting the back and improve flexibility. The only statistically proven and evidence based method of treatment is to centralize the pain. This means to return the pain to the original problem spot. This needs to be the center of your physical therapy approach and home exercise program as prescribed by your physical therapist. Our physical therapists are trained to designing a treatment program to teach you how to treat your own symptoms short long-term and prevent future injury.

Jennifer Daigreont, PT- Dutch PT

