

Senior Services News

Pain and Movement: If it hurts, try moving it!

I remember sitting on the floor in one of my first fitness classes doing stretch exercises and saying to myself, "I don't think I've been in this position since I was 8 years old!" That got me thinking about how little we move, and how limited a range of motion our joints go through after we become adults and start working for a living.

If you have an office job, and even in retirement, you sit for many hours a day and then stand and walk and lie down at night, and rarely do any of your joints flex beyond a ninety-degree angle. Rarely do you sit or lie on the floor. As a result, flexibility decreases, fitness is lost, weight is gained, and muscles atrophy. The muscle weakness leads to inadequate support for the joints and back, so that they are subject to injury. Our reaction to the pain of these injuries is often to move less, which results in further muscle atrophy, inadequate support for the joints, abnormal alignment, and chronic pain.

The pain might be addressed with analgesic medicine, like acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, and sometimes narcotics, but the pain has a high chance of becoming chronic if the fundamental problem is not addressed, which is muscle weakness and abnormal motion at the joint.

We may tend to think of our joints in terms of the bone structure and not so much in terms of the supporting muscle structure. We may think of the pain in terms of damage and worry that more motion may cause more pain and more damage. If there is a recent (acute) injury, then a period of rest might make sense, but if the pain is prolonged then it may represent a signal that movement at the joint is abnormal and that the solution may be physical rather than chemical - the solution may demand more movement, not less.

I think that many, perhaps most of my patients who have persistent joint or back pain deserve a trial of a course of physical therapy. I see the physical therapist as a "movement expert". He/she can examine a patient and determine the right type of exercises that

would help the joint or back move better, and diagnose the muscles that are tender or weak that need to be stretched or strengthened.

Is physical therapy painful? Yes, sometimes, but what does the pain MEAN? Does it mean you should try doing the exercise in a different position, for example lying down rather than standing? Or maybe starting out with less resistance? Does the pain really mean that you are overstressing or damaging the joint? Continued work with the therapist can help you sort that out.

I didn't learn every important thing about medicine in medical school, and one of the best classes I ever took was a stretching class at a spa. It got me in touch with my joints, tendons, and muscles and reminded me how little I had moved them over the years and how much further potential for movement there was. It taught me that stretch was one of the best pain relievers for a sore muscle or joint, and that pain may be a reflection of weakness rather than damage.

Are drugs helpful? I still prescribe drugs for acute musculoskeletal pain, but they have less value in chronic pain. I prescribe movement as soon as practicable after an injury in order that the pain does not become chronic.

If you have a painful joint or back, try moving it. Find out exactly what movements in what directions hurt. Then determine what movements do not hurt.

Discuss these observations with your doctor or physical therapist and see if you can get a "movement prescription" for your pain.

Lawren Hicks, MD
Medical Director
Senior Services



Educational Opportunities

There is no charge to attend our health education events unless otherwise noted. **Registration is required.** Register early- class size is limited. Register on line at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

JANUARY — MARCH 2017

Managing the Impacts of Stress on Your Health – Shell Portner, RN, BSN

January 5 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Learn how practicing basic mindfulness techniques can help reduce stress and manage some of our most common illnesses and symptoms such as chronic pain and gastrointestinal difficulties.

Sugar Shock – Kathy Napoli, MA, RD

January 20 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

March 2 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Americans eat an average of 22 teaspoons of added sugar per person per day. Our high sugar intake is contributing to bigger waistlines, higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, and spikes/drops in energy levels. Learn why sugar may be addictive for some people, and how to free your mind and body from the tyranny of sugar, eliminate food cravings, build energy, and enhance mental focus.

Eating for Optimal Brain Function – Kathy Napoli, MA, RD

February 2 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Research is showing that you can increase your chances of maintaining a healthy brain as you age by adding specific “smart foods” to your daily diet. Find out how your nutrition and lifestyle choices can help you achieve a focused and happy brain.

Understanding the Neuroscience of Pain – Lori Sweet, PT

February 16 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | 1656 N. California Blvd., Walnut Creek

Research proves that learning how the brain processes pain actually helps people with pain reduce their symptoms. This class will give you a chance to understand how your body processes pain, so that you can help control the symptoms.

Aging With Asthma and Seasonal Allergies – Meena Rijhwani, MD

March 3 | 1:30 – 3 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Pleasanton

Many people live long, healthy lives with asthma and seasonal allergies. But, some medicines (for example beta-blockers or aspirin) used to treat age-related health issues can interfere with your asthma treatment, learn options for self-care.

Pain and Movement: If it hurts, try moving it! – Lawren Hicks, MD

March 16 | 2:30 – 4 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | 1656 N. California Blvd., Walnut Creek

Dr. Hicks will discuss the connection between pain management and movement. How the two are connected and the impact of movement on relieving pain and discomfort.

Put Yourself in the Driver's Seat – Steve Molinari, OTR/L, CDRS

March 17 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Learn exercises to improve your ability to operate your vehicle. We will cover tips to set up your car for safe driving, as well as behind-the-wheel strategies to improve your driving skills.

Ongoing Classes

AARP Driver Safety Program

Jan 21 | 1 - day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Feb 7 & 9 | 2 - day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Feb 11 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Mar 7 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Mar 18 | 1 - day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

This Smart Driver classroom course, designed for motorists over age 50, helps drivers refine existing skills and develop safe, defensive driving techniques. Offered in an eight hour or four-and-a-half hour refresher course for those who meet the criteria for renewal. There is a charge for this class. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

Advance Health Care Directives - Suzanne Leib, LMFT

Jan 17 | 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Feb 7 | 1 - 3 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Pleasanton

Mar 7 | 2 - 4 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

All adults, regardless of age, need to understand how they can have control over their own life and death decisions. Learn the choices you or your family may face due to an accident or serious illness. This is an opportunity to clarify your choices and make sure they will be carried out should you become unable to make your own health care decisions. Required documents will be provided.

Catch Yourself - Fall Prevention to Maintain Your Independence

Jan 30, Feb 3, 6, 10 | 1 - 2:30 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Mar 22, 24, 29, 31 | 1 - 2:30 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

This four-session class series raises awareness about falls by practicing techniques in class. Learn how to improve your strength and balance, simplify your environment, and identify fall risks. Classes will cover home safety strategies, exercise techniques, medication management, and other ways to decrease your risk of falling. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Plan to attend all four classes. If you have taken this class in the past 12 months, and feel you still need fall prevention information, we ask you to follow up with your primary care doctor or call Wellness Services 941-7900 option 1.

Welcome to Medicare - Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program

Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 8 | 7 - 9:30 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

This course is for those new to Medicare, or soon to enroll, who want to understand the many benefits available. Learn about health benefits, drug coverage and how to supplement your coverage. HICAP does not sell or endorse insurance products. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

Memory Screening - What's Your Memory Fitness?

Jan 17, Feb 14, Mar 14 | morning appointments | 947-3300

Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 15 | afternoon appointments | 947-3300

Outpatient Centers: Brentwood | Pleasanton | Tice Valley/Rossmoor | Walnut Creek

Many people notice changes in their memory as they grow older. If you are 65 or older and have a John Muir Health primary care physician, Senior Services, in partnership with John Muir Health Neurosciences Institute, offers a free individual memory screening to help determine if your memory is functioning at a level that is typical for a person your age. This is a screening and not a diagnostic exam. Screenings are offered on the specific dates and times at the four locations listed. Call for a 30 minute appointment



Senior Services
 1450 Treat Blvd
 Walnut Creek, CA 94597

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Change in information? If you have a change in address or wish to be removed from our mailing list, please notify us at (925) 947-3300 or seniorservices@johnmuirhealth.com

John Muir Health Senior Services

Senior Services offers a wide range of services for John Muir Health seniors including resources, information, assessment services, and educational programs. We help older adults, their families, and those who care for them. Our goal is to help older adults keep their independence and enjoy the best possible quality of life. **(925) 947-3300**

Outpatient Center, Brentwood
 2400 Balfour Road, Suite 201
 Brentwood

Outpatient Center, Pleasanton
 5860 Owens Drive, 2nd Floor
 Pleasanton

Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor
 1220 Rossmoor Parkway, Suite 100
 Walnut Creek

Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek
 1450 Treat Boulevard, 2nd Floor
 Walnut Creek

What's New?

Senior Services News Goes Electronic!

You will now be able to receive the Senior Services News via email, beginning with the April - June issue. We will continue to mail the newsletter but have had many requests to send it electronically too. Emails will be sent from the secure John Muir Health server and you can unsubscribe at any time. Your email address will not be shared with anyone either inside or outside of John Muir Health. Go to the John Muir Health / Senior Services website to complete the form. www.johnmuirhealth/seniorservices.com

Senior Services Caregiving Packet

Are you helping an aging, disabled, or ill friend or family member with the challenges of everyday life? If so, you are a caregiver. And if you are like most caregivers, you need all the help you can get. Providing care can be stressful, emotionally draining work. The challenges can increase as your loved one's condition changes. The Caregiving Packet can provide you with helpful information and connect you to other caregivers and resources. It is available electronically or by mail. Go to the John Muir Health/Senior Services website to download the document. Or call our office at (925) 947-3300 to request one by mail. www.johnmuirhealth/seniorservices.com

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

Outpatient Center, Brentwood
 2400 Balfour Rd., Brentwood
 (925) 308-8100

Outpatient Center, Pleasanton
 5860 Owens Dr., Pleasanton
 (925) 224-0800

Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor
 1220 Rossmoor Pkwy., Walnut Creek
 (925) 939-1220

Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek
 1450 Treat Blvd., Walnut Creek

1656 N. California Blvd., Ste 100
 Walnut Creek
 (925) 941-7900 option 1

John Muir Medical Center, Concord
 2540 East St., Concord
 (925) 682-8200

John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek
 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek
 (925) 939-3000