

# HEALTH & HEALING



A Publication of  
**NORTHERN MICHIGAN**

**SPORTS MEDICINE CENTER**

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## Physical Therapist's Guide to Fall Prevention

By: Mary Sullivan, PT



It seems that we always want to move faster than our bodies will let us. As people age, the difference between the speed *we can* move and the speed *we want* to move seems to grow larger. Along with this widening gap, we also see an increase in a person's fear of falling. When these changes become significant, people tend to stop moving around as much, becoming more sedentary. The fact of the matter is, the less we do, the weaker we get. And the weaker we get, the more likely we are to fall.

Another factor which contributes to movement and balance is our posture. For example, I am sure you have seen people leaning forward, looking down at their feet as they walk. If someone is moving too fast when they start to walk and is already leaning forward, there is only one way to go, and that's on your nose. Fortunately, there is something we can all do about this!

### 3 Ways To Optimize Your Balance

1) **Keep Moving!** – The more you can move, the stronger you will be. Some easy ways to move throughout the day: walk up and down the hallway for a few minutes, walk around the block, climb some stairs for a few minutes, stand up and sit down in your chair until your legs feel tired. It's that easy!

2) **Sit and Stand Tall!** – All those reminders from your Mom and Grandma really were important. If you stay up tall you will have less back and neck pain along with feeling more stable. You need to keep your body over your base of support (feet), not in front of it. An easy way to remember to sit up tall is to set your rear view mirror of your car at the beginning of the week in the morning, and then don't adjust it. If you are looking at the ceiling when you check your mirror you know you need to sit up.

3) **Go at YOUR Speed!** – Rushing to get somewhere fast can only lead to problems, especially with all the ice and snow we've



Bill Benoit, working with Mollie Coe, AT

seen recently. The store or doctor will always be there if you are a little late. The more momentum you build up, the less control you have and the more likely you are to fall.

### How Can a Physical Therapist Help?

Physical therapists can help you reduce your risk of falling by:

- Assessing your risk of falling
- Helping you make your home as safe as possible
- Educating you about the medical risk factors linked to falls
- Designing individualized exercises and balance training

If your speed and balance haven't been what they used to be, call us to schedule a free consultation.

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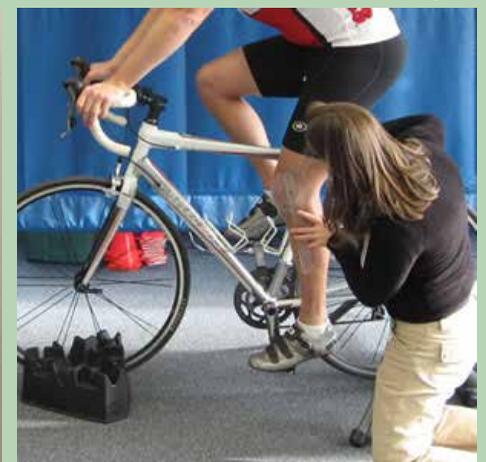
6 Injury Prevention  
Tips for Cyclists

## 6 Injury Prevention Tips for Cyclists

Bicycling is an exciting sport that carries a certain amount of risk of injury. By understanding the effects of stress on the upper extremities and the prevention of stress related injuries, riders can ensure their biking adventures are safe, fun, and injury free.

- 1) Make sure your hands are warmed up by stretching them. Spread your fingers wide then make a fist. Rotate wrist each direction. Repeat 5 repetitions each.
- 2) Make sure your bicycle is adjusted to fit you. The potential for stress injuries to your hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders are exacerbated when using equipment that does not fit well.
- 3) Proper fit with your bike is imperative for good riding posture. It is wise to have your local bicycle dealer assess your bike's fit prior to taking a long journey.
- 4) Protect your hands. Bike gloves are designed to absorb compression to the hand and wrist much like shocks on your car. They are imperative for safe riding as they

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# Spring Training and Shin Splints

By Stacey Ostrowski MS, AT, PTA and Emily Mahoney, AT

Spring has sprung, and you know what that means... Time to dust off those running shoes and hit the pavement and trails in Northern Michigan.

For many of us, the winter tends to be a time of less physical activity than we would like. Unfortunately, this inactivity is met with some less than desirable injuries and pain in our lower legs. Injuries such as shin splints are the most common and difficult to resolve. Let us help you with some helpful tips on how to prevent shin splints from occurring and help treat them if it does occur.

Shin splints can be considered an overuse injury or an acute (fresh) injury from trauma to the shin bones that are in your lower leg. Going from less activity and little or no impact to starting to run or jog places a lot of stress on our leg bones. Each step in ambulation places 3-4x your body weight on one leg during a normal stride. That body weight goes up 6-8x when a person is running.

Shin splints is a term used to describe pain that runs along the anterior part of your shin bone. There are two bones in your lower leg. The Tibia (the shin bone) and the smaller bone called the Fibula that runs on the outside of your leg. Connecting these two bones together is a large piece of fascia (white connective tissue) that holds these two bones in place.

High impact sports such as jogging, running, jumping or quick stopping and starting such as track, basketball, soccer or tennis, place excessive forces that can cause that fascia to get micro-tears. Excessive tears result in an instability in the two bones thus causing increased pain up the shin. Other factors that can contribute to shin splints are improper shoe wear, tight calves, overtraining, training too hard and fast, fallen arches and being overweight.

Choosing the proper fit and type of shoe for activities, having a good arch support, increased flexibility in your feet with proper training, diet and nutrition will

significantly reduce your chances of getting shin splints this spring.

If you do get shin splints, the following outline will help you manage your pain.

**Rest** – The 4 letter word that no athlete wants to hear! Resting by avoiding activities that cause your pain, swelling, and discomfort will help. Do not misunderstand though, this does not mean sit on the couch all day. Low impact activities such as biking and swimming will help keep your cardio and save your legs until you can slowly start to EASE back into activity.

**Ice** – Icing the affected area will help reduce swelling which in turn will reduce pain. Apply an ice pack on the area for 10-15 minutes to help alleviate pain.

**Stretch** – Stretching is very important to prevent sprains and strains in the lower leg. Simple calf stretches, hamstring and piriformis stretches will help keep you flexible. Hold each stretch 30-45 seconds and rotate through each leg 3x.

**Form and shoes** – Good running form will help when miles start adding up. Good shoe wear will help control and stabilize your foot when you hit the trails or pavement. Correct alignment helps in preventing a lot of injuries.

Northern Michigan Sports Medicine offers running clinics at certain locations, as well as running video analysis that can be viewed and discussed with a therapist to discuss how your running biomechanics can be adjusted to help prevent injuries.

All locations have free consultations to assess your need for physical therapy and to treat your condition. If you have any questions, please call one of our offices and set up a free consult or schedule a video running analysis today. Our goal is to get you back in action, safely, quickly and effectively!

## COMMON STRETCHES FOR THE LOWER LEG



NATIONAL  
**ATHLETIC  
TRAINING**  
MONTH

WE'VE GOT  
YOUR BACK

MARCH 2014

**April is National Occupational Therapy Month**

Living Life To Its Fullest®  
O C C U P A T I O N A L T H E R A P Y

# Testimonials.

## Indian River Clinic

“Earlier in 2013, I was suffering from horrible back pain and numbness in my left leg. I was literally unable to move without pain and could not sleep for more than a few minutes at a time. A MRI showed that I had a ruptured disc and a 13mm long protrusion in the shape of a hook. This hook was rubbing the root of my sciatic nerve, thus causing the leg numbness.

A neurosurgeon reviewed this MRI and placed me in the ‘expedited’ surgery category. I considered this surgery but discovered that ‘expedited’ still meant about a one month wait for an appointment.

Having had success a few years ago with Physical Therapy after a shoulder surgery, I made an appointment with Tanya Ruddy at IRSM. This decision turned out to be one of the smartest decisions I have ever made.

Tanya was absolutely relentless in her pursuit of helping me. Within a few sessions, the pain started to go away. Tanya continued her work and helped me to strengthen the muscles in my back and core to help protect my back. And throughout every session, no matter how I responded, Tanya always had a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eyes.

Tanya’s knowledge of the back, neck and spine—and how to help them—is incredibly impressive. I later found out from several ‘spine doctors’ that they regularly refer their toughest cases to this amazing Physical Therapist.

As the weeks progressed, so did my recovery. I found myself slowly returning to my normal pursuits. I was cutting the grass, raking leaves, walking, even playing golf. A subsequent MRI showed that my progress was so great that I was no longer a surgery candidate! No one needed to cut into my back...and that’s a good thing.

I no longer need P-T but continue to exercise at Indian River Sport Medicine. It is extremely reassuring to know that Tanya, and the entire staff, keep an eye on former patients and willingly assist with exercise corrections and review. They simply are not going to let me get hurt again!!!

My limited vocabulary is about the only thing that keeps me from assigning proper words to describe Tanya Ruddy and her impressive knowledge and skill set. Tanya is an amazing asset to our community and I would highly recommend anyone needing physical therapy to call upon this amazing young woman.”

– Gary Freismuth



## Harbor Springs Clinic

“I showed up after a month of recovery to Northern Michigan Sports Medicine Center for a posterior hip dislocation during my senior year of football. The injury cut my season short, and things weren’t looking to well for basketball either. I was supposed to miss a minimum of the first month of basketball season. After just a few weeks at NMSMC I was making huge improvements, and thanks to the staff, I was up and running during practice and even games a month ahead of schedule. They made it possible for me to get back to basketball weeks before I had even hoped to be healed.

I would like to thank the whole staff at NMSMC for all their help, especially Jen, Hannah, and Julie, who were working with me the most on my way to recovery. Not only did they get me healed ahead of schedule, somehow they made a lot of hard work fun. Even though sometimes I didn’t want to be doing the work from soreness or pain, the staff helped me through it and some part of me always looked forward to the next visit.”

– Aaron Burdick



## Cheboygan Clinic

“When I began therapy I couldn’t walk because of a staph infection in my knee. Now, I no longer have pain and my knee has loosened up and strengthened up. I am very happy and highly recommend Cheboygan Physical Therapy to everyone.”

– Duane Swan with Stacey Ostrowski MS, AT, PTA



## Cycling Injury Clinic – January at High Gear Sports

“This clinic was a great opportunity to ask questions of multiple disciplines in a casual environment. As an avid biker, this is a great way to fine-tune both my body and my technique.”

– Jay Olson



## Petoskey West Clinic

“I’m thankful for Patty teaching me how to use my muscles in a manner that avoids putting additional stress on areas that have caused me chronic pain.”

– Tammy Wylie



## Hand Therapy

“I suffered severe trauma to my wrist and hand. I wasn’t able to perform the simplest of daily tasks. Hand therapy has helped me so much. I can move my wrist-hand so much better. I can now grasp objects—swelling is down and improving every day.”

– Sue Wix

## Charlevoix Clinic

After tearing my ACL in 3 on 3 basketball, my orthopedic surgeon recommended a pre surgery rehab and highly suggested NMSMC to me. Rehab there consisted of stretches and strengthening the whole lower body as well as the injured knee. It went very well and prepared me for surgery both physically and with more knowledge of what would go on; from Joel and Joelle of NMSMC.

Joel was very upfront and worked closely with my orthopedic surgeon for my best interests. Surgery went well and very soon I was in rehab which started out slow but deliberately with the doctor’s orders and soon I progressed to a more strength based program.

As my knee got better, Joelle and Erika took over my program. They firmly but safely pushed me to do as much as I was capable of but not exceeding my surgeons orders and in a very reasonable timeframe.

I am now moving very well and working towards my goal of racing up the Empire State building in February of 2015. I will continue on with my strong backing and help from Joelle, Erika and all of the FINE FOLKS at Charlevoix NMSMC to help me fulfill that goal! Thanks for believing and helping me.

– Mark Greyerbiehl



*6 Injury Prevention Tips for Cyclists continued from Page 1*

minimize risk of carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, and other nerve / vascular compressions at your wrist.

- 5) Positioning of your hands is important. Ideally, your wrists should be kept in neutral (in line with your forearm). Another way to take pressure off your hands and wrists is to install aerobars, available at your local bicycle shop.
- 6) Keeping your hands in one position for an extended time (more than 3-5 minutes) can cause several problems like eventual or flare-up of osteoarthritis, tendonitis, nerve and vascular problems causing pain and numbness in hands.

The key to minimizing the risk of any hand condition/ injury while cycling is movement. Maintaining proper posture, using proper gear, changing hand positions regularly, and performing stretches before you ride and during water breaks, are essential to having healthy, happy hands.

Rae Bontekoe, Occupational Therapist/ Certified Hand Therapist, would be happy to show you these stretches and provide further information on any upper extremity conditions or injuries that you may have. Please call her in Cheboygan at 627-7201; or in Indian River at 238- 4880 to schedule your FREE 15 minute consultation!

*Recommendations provided by the American Society of Hand Therapists.*

# Lunch'n Learns!

Join us for a free lunch and presentations featuring our expert staff. Our professional staff will be available for one-on-one consultations after each presentation.

## HARBOR SPRINGS CLINIC: CALL 348-7002 TO REGISTER

### Tuesday, March 4th | "Jump Into Spring: The Right Way."

Helpful tips for staying injury free with spring cleaning yard work and planting your garden. Presented by Julie Slifka, Athletic Trainer

### Thursday, March 13th | Preventing Low Back Pain. The 4 most common causes and how you can prevent it.

If you've been sidelined by a sore back, you're not alone. Four out of five people experience back pain at some point, making it the fifth most common reason for visiting the doctor. Presented by Hannah Zowada, Physical Therapist Assistant

### Thursday, March 20th | Good Posture...just how important is it? Ways to improve your posture throughout the day.

Posture ranks right up at the top of the list when you are talking about good health. Presented by Stephanie Kanine, Athletic Trainer

## INDIAN RIVER CLINIC – CALL 238-4880 TO REGISTER

### Tuesday, May 13th - 6PM | Injection Intervention: Not-surgical options to treat low back pain.

Discover your options so you can choose the recovery path that is right for you! Presented by Dr. Eugene Wang, from Harborside Spine & Sport Center

### Tuesday, May 20th | Pain & Posture: the Basics

Discover the relationship between improved posture and relieving your pain. Presented by Suzy Howard, Physical Therapist

### Tuesday, May 27th | The 4 corners of Golf – Posture, Balance, Flexibility & Strength

Addressing the key factors to improve your game and stay injury free. Presented by Tanya Ruddy, Physical Therapist

## CHEBOYGAN CLINIC – CALL 627-7201 TO REGISTER

### Thursday, May 8th | Common Golf Injuries and Tips to Prevent Them

Although golf isn't a contact sport, it puts significant demands on your body. Follow these tips to stay in shape on the course. Presented by Becky Bailey, Physical Therapist, DPT

### Thursday, May 15th | Walking 101: 10 tips to help you enjoy your walking activities.

Discover the benefits of walking for fun and fitness! Presented by Toyo Ebato, Physical Therapist, Athletic Trainer

### Thursday, May 22nd | Hip Pain: Causes, Symptoms, Treatment

Are your hips hurting? Learn the many common conditions that can cause different types of hip pain. Presented by Maria Scheele, Physical Therapist Assistant

### Thursday, May 29th | Adaptive Techniques and equipment to increase your independence at home.

Tips and tools that will help make daily chores easier and improve your independence. Presented by Rae Bontekoe, Occupational Therapist, Certified Hand Therapist