



Monday through Friday

8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Saturdays & Holidays

9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Sundays & Christmas

Noon to 4:00 P.M.

IT'S ABOUT PAIN

A monthly Service of Kirkpatrick Family Care

Volume 2 number 10, May 2018

EXERCISE

These days, it seems as if the entire world is condemning doctors who prescribe opioids and patients who need them in order to enjoy a (near) normal life. The cacophony of words has drowned out any and all discussion of specific things that may help. This newsletter has discussed a great many alternatives to opioids, but a topic not yet covered is EXERCISE.

When a person exercises, several good things happen. First, brain hormones called endorphins and enkephalins increase; they help us to tolerate the pain or notice it less. Popular articles of the 80s and 90s talked about the "Runner's High" in discussing why millions of Americans took to the streets to run on a daily basis. Well,, this brain physiology can help with pain control, too.

Secondly, exercise helps to reduce depression, and surely most patients who suffer chronic pain also are depressed because of the limits of their illness or injury, lost wages, side effects of pain relievers, etc.

Exercise also can help at the site of pain. First, stretching exercises can increase range of motion, and allow more natural walking or use of damaged limbs etc. In fact, one major cause of impairment is the body's inclination to protect injured tissues by reducing movement of bones, muscles and tendons around them....this temporary benefit actually tends to cause more trouble in nearby and even remote regions of the body. For example, spasm of muscles around a broken sprained ankle can cause abnormal walking patterns and gait, resulting in low back pain.

In addition to the above benefits, exercise can strengthen literally anybody part, and provide greater stability to the area of injury, and help prevent further injuries. For example a victim of a broken leg can benefit from developing strong core muscles and upper body so that he/she can catch himself/herself when stumbling, rather than to fall to the ground.

Probably the best way to get into exercise is to go to a physical therapist to learn what to do for your specific injury or painful area. Most PT clinics have extensive repertoire of machines that are safer than dumbbells and barbells. Once you know what to do, you can join a gym like that at the YMCA, Mint Valley Racquet Club, SNAP fitness, Planet Fitness, Forever Fit, and others that have many options in terms of equipment.

Try to make working out a daily habit—no excuses, no misses. But alter your routine to avoid boredom and overtraining certain groups. One popular routine looks like this:

Day 1 Chest and triceps

Day 2 Back and biceps

Day 3 abdominals

Day 4 shoulders and neck

5 bicycling

Day 6 treadmill/elliptical

Day 7 legs

Many health insurance policies will help pay for gym memberships, which can cost anywhere between \$10 and \$40 per month. I recommend you check your policy to see if this is a benefit.