

Why Does Everything Hurt?

As we age, it seems like every day we discover a new ache or a pain in our body that never bothered us before. Many of us are plagued by chronic pain, and we do not know how to alleviate it. Part of the issue is that we are constantly doing things during the day which exacerbate our symptoms and we don't even realize it. Additionally, as we get older we often forget that our bodies are not quite as resilient, and after a week of sedentary behavior we will hit the gym or play sports full force on the weekend and wind up injuring ourselves.

One of the most common complaints is lower back pain. This often results from sitting for too long, and from sitting incorrectly. Sometimes lower back pain can be a result of a disc injury or arthritis, but for most of us, it is just the result of not moving enough. First, position your desk so you are sitting with proper posture. It is also important to get up for frequent breaks and to stretch and move around. Outside the office, lower back can be exacerbated while exercising. It is imperative to make sure you are not using your lower back during weight lifting or other exercises. Instead, focus on activating the hips and glutes to protect your lower back during your workouts. Additionally, strengthen your core muscles to stabilize your trunk, which will also decrease the load on your back.

Another common malady is neck pain and stiffness. This can result from sitting improperly, walking incorrectly, driving with your head jutting forward, or from sleeping with your neck turned. Also, stress and tension play a significant role in neck pain and stiffness as well. Neck pain can increase outside during exercise as well. Often, while performing exercises, we lead with our chin and put extra pressure and strain on our necks without realizing it. Proper form and activation is key to keep the neck pain free. Meditation, stretching and other stress relief techniques are also helpful for decreasing neck pain.

Other common ailments are knee pain, joint pains, muscle strains, and carpal tunnel syndrome. If symptoms are severe and you do not see improvement, you should visit a doctor to rule out a major injury. Assuming there is no disc issue or major tear, sprain or break, most of these problems are caused by our activities of daily living and improper form during therapeutic and strength exercises. How we sit, walk, talk on the phone, sleep, and exercise all impact how our body moves and feels. Form during exercise is extremely important, and many clients don't realize their positioning is off and might be affecting their mobility, flexibility, cardio endurance, and strength.

Most people will feel better by engaging in a routine that includes stretching to improve joint mobility. It is helpful to use tools like a foam roller or baseball to alleviate knots and to help stretching. Secondly, weight loss often helps with daily aches and pains. Extra weight can put pressure on the joints and cause pain and discomfort. A healthy diet and cardiovascular

exercise can help decrease weight and issues with pain. Lastly, strength training, especially core training, helps decrease muscle pain because the muscles stabilize the joints.

It seems like the answer to feeling better and decreasing pain is to engage in physical activity with proper form. As the New Year approaches, make your body a priority, and meet with a trainer to ensure you are performing exercises correctly and to make sure you are utilizing exercises to help with your individual issues.

Happy Holidays!