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# RHEUMORS

*Practice Newsletter* LATE SUMMER 2014

WELLNESS EDITION

## Tools to Help You Take Control of Your Health and Well Being

BY ANNE WELLINGTON GOLDSMITH, MPT

Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates, P.C. (ARA), is not your typical rheumatology practice. Patients have access not only to the best rheumatologists in Montgomery County and Washington, D.C., but also to services rarely found at most physicians' offices. The Wellness Program at ARA was developed in an effort to partner with some of the best ancillary clinicians from the local community to promote the best overall health and wellness for our patients. Health and wellness require careful continuation of physicians' orders with additional consideration of other factors to maximize well-being; such as nutrition and exercise. This issue of Rheumors is dedicated to education about the value of these ancillary services.

Our Wellness Program continues to develop and grow; therefore, all of our services that you would like to use may not be offered at all locations. Our hope is that you will give your health and wellness the boost they need by traveling to one of our nearby clinics that offers the class or service you need. Participants who have used our services and enrolled in our classes consistently give us a rating of "Excellent" and find them educational, useful and beneficial.

Our Wellness Program offers the following services:

- Dietary and Nutritional Counseling
- Massage Therapy
- Personal Training
- Fibromyalgia Class
- Osteoporosis Class
- Back School
- Open Gym
- Yoga Class
- Pilates Class

We're excited about a new class coming soon for those with knee osteoarthritis, which is based on recently published data showing benefits from combining nutritional counseling and exercise instruction. Please be on the lookout for this helpful class! In addition to reading these articles from some of our Wellness clinicians, we hope you also will take time to visit the "Wellness Program" section of our website, www.washingtonarthritis.com, to learn more about how these services can be valuable for you!

# THE DOMINO EFFECT: Diet, Chronic Illness and Inflammation

MARIETTA AMATANGELO MS, RDN, LDN

Awareness of nutrition in relationship to chronic illnesses is becoming more and more evident through research and practice. Many patients now take more responsibility for their own healthcare and are eager to try nutritional therapies that may increase the effectiveness of their standard treatment. Most nutritional therapies are backed by sound science, and continuing research is constant.

When working with a chronically ill population, diet and lifestyle are extremely important factors in patients' treatment. Healthy diets are a vital component to any therapy for control of inflammation. "Treat the patient, not the disease" is a motto I use. When patients are invested in their health, diet and lifestyle, they ultimately realize better outcomes.

**Inflammation: Good or Bad?**
Inflammation hurts, for instance, when you have the flu. But inflammation is the body's healthy response to injury and infection. It's a way of defending ourselves by sending immune cells and nutrients to the areas that need them the most. Inflammation actually is good when kept under control. It is used by your body to heal injuries and recover from disease. Without the process of inflammation, our lives would be very short indeed. For example, when you cut your finger, it starts to turn al little red and gets swollen. That's inflammation. In this case, it helps to heal your finger. But a small finger cut heals in a short amount of time and is very different from a chronic state of inflammation. Chronic inflammation can be quite dangerous. When the inflammation process never switches off, the constant production of immune cells and inflammatory molecules can lead to greater health concerns.

Chronic low-level inflammation destroys tissues and organs, sometimes rapidly and sometimes over years of slow degeneration. It is the cause of many degenerative diseases, such as cancer, arthritis, diabetes and heart disease, to name just a few. Our diet plays an important role in our body's state of inflammation.

**So what does an inflammatory diet look like?**
Basically, an inflammatory diet is imbalanced in big and little nutrients. The big nutrients are fats, carbohydrates (carbs) and protein. The little ones are vitamins, minerals and amino acids.

One big fuel source of an inflammatory diet is carbohydrates. Not all carbohydrates wreak havoc but certain ones do, and having too many carbs in the diet in general is the problem. Excess carbohydrate consumption makes the body release too much insulin in an attempt to use the glucose that is flooding the blood stream. High insulin levels start what may be considered an inflammatory domino effect and contribute to the production of different kinds of inflammatory and pro-inflammatory molecules by the body.

We live in a society that is addicted to carbs. Breakfast cereals, desserts, pasta, rice, breakfast sandwiches, bagels, fast foods, processed foods, and alcohol are staples of the inflammatory diet. These foods are cheap, readily available, and convenient. They are high in sugar, salt, and calories. They are also low in fiber, vitamins, antioxidants, phytonutrients and minerals.

Healthy carbs, like fruits and vegetables, are rich sources of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytonutrients and fiber. Generally, they also are lower in calories. It takes a lot of broccoli to equal the calories in a candy bar.

If the carbs in your diet are mainly low-calorie, high-fiber fruits and vegetables, then you have taken the first step toward reducing inflammation.

**What about fats?**
Just as there are healthy choices and not-so-healthy choices of carbohydrates, the same holds true with fats. Healthy fats, like Omega 3s, can reduce inflammation. Unhealthy fats are found in fried foods, organ meats, fatty red meats, packaged snack foods (like microwave popcorn), stick margarine, vegetable shortening, and candy bars. These are just more fuel for the inflammatory bonfire. These fats also can cause abnormal hormone levels.

If a label lists hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils as an ingredient, that means it also contains trans fats, even if the label shows zero. Leave it on the shelf.

Good fats come from olive oil, sesame oil, avocado, olives, nuts, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, flaxseed (not the oil), and fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, trout, and sardines).

The mix of fats that you eat is very important in your diet. Simply cutting out fat is not the answer. A balance of Omega 6s (known to be inflammatory, except for borage oil) and Omega3s are key to balancing inflammation. An Omega 6 fat, called arachidonic acid, found in egg yolks, fatty red meats, and organ meats, is considered by some scientists to be a "really bad" fat. But a small amount of this fat is needed for certain metabolic functions in the body. The key is to eat more healthy fats and fewer unhealthy ones.

**Putting it all together: Balance**
The human body is an amazing organism. It heals itself when hurt, sick or damaged; it uses nutrients to make energy in each of our cells; and it enables us to enjoy the world we live in. The dietary choices we make can either help or hinder our body's effectiveness in maintaining its many functions. Eating a healthy, anti-inflammatory diet, one that is balanced in big and small nutrients from fruits, vegetables, healthy protein and fats, provides the necessary building blocks for the body to work at its best. These nutrients help us thrive and manage inflammatory processes that can be terribly harmful when out of control.

*If you are interested in finding out how diet and lifestyle can lower your inflammation levels, or if you have nutrition questions regarding your specific situation, email me at info@2Nourish.com or call me at 877-428-0555. Please mention this article.*

# Myofascial Pain Syndrome & Trigger Point Dry Needling

BY POWELL BERNHARDT, PT, DPT, MS, CMTPT

**The International Association for the Study of Pain defines pain as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage." Typically, pain occurs following tissue damage. As the injured tissue heals, the pain decreases and eventually subsides. However, in some cases, pain can continue even after the injured tissue has healed. This is thought to be secondary to the plasticity of the nervous system and is defined as sensitization. It is has been found that myofascial trigger points can initiate, accentuate, or maintain sensitization. As a result, pain can persist for what appears to be eons. An example is mild neck muscle spasm that explodes into severe pain traveling into the shoulder blade and arm.**

**Myofascial pain syndrome is characterized by myofascial trigger points that create a myriad of symptoms including deep aching pain that persists or worsens over time. Pain from this condition may worsen with activity and yet sometimes it may not. A myofascial trigger point is a taut band of skeletal muscle that restricts mobility and strength which impedes function. Trigger points are identified by palpation and have been found to be the source of referred pain, similar to a herniated disc creating pain that travels into the arm or leg. Myofascial trigger points can result from acute and chronic musculoskeletal disorders, like a strained muscle, trochanteric bursitis, and osteoarthritis. They also are present in overuse syndromes, such as carpal tunnel syndrome and lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow), as well as other musculoskeletal disorders.**

**Trigger point dry needling, or intramuscular stimulation, is a treatment approach that utilizes a monofilament needle to reduce or eliminate myofascial trigger points. The needle is inserted into the muscle and moved around to elicit a local twitch response. This causes muscle contraction, which relaxes the muscle and subsequently reduces pain. A physical therapy session that involves trigger point dry needling also includes other physical therapy treatment techniques such as stretching, myofascial release, exercise, and modalities such as heat or electrical stimulaton. Patients are usually sore post-treatment for 24 to 48 hours. Once these trigger points have been reduced or eliminated, symptoms are much improved. Through the reduction or elimination of pain, physical therapists are able to focus on strength, mobility, and other impairments.**

**Physical therapists seek to improve their patients' functions and disabilities through a variety of treatment techniques aimed at improving mobility, strength, and other musculoskeletal impairments. Skilled therapeutic services, such as manual therapy and therapeutic exercise, have been shown to be effective in numerous studies. In addition, some newer techniques also appear to be just as promising at increasing the quality of life of our patients. Currently, trigger point dry needling is available only in our Chevy Chase location with plans to offer this service in all of our offices in the near future.**

RECIPE:

# Watermelon Salad with Feta, Basil, and Mint

BY POWELL BERNHARDT, PT, DPT, MS, CMTPT

In keeping with the summertime theme of light and refreshing eats, the recipe below was inspired by the chilled watermelon I devoured at a restaurant in Miami.

**THE INPUT**

*3 cups of cubed watermelon*
*1 cup of arugula*
*1/2 cup of sliced almonds (plain or honey roasted)*
*3 tablespoons of grapefruit juice*
*1 tablespoons of grape seed oil*
*2 tablespoons of chopped fresh basil*
*2 tablespoons of fresh mint*
*Crumbled feta or goat cheese to taste*
*A dash of salt & pepper*

THE OUTPUT

**ALGORITHM**

Combine and gently mix watermelon, arugula, almonds, feta, mint, basil, and salt and pepper to taste. Next, make a light, zesty dressing by combining the grapefruit juice, oil, salt, and pepper. Add more oil if the dressing is too sweet for your taste. Lastly, add to the salad to taste and enjoy!

RHEUMINATIONS:

# Fibromyalgia and Massage Therapy

BY ROBIN RICHMOND, LMT

Fibromyalgia is a chronic syndrome characterized by generalized pain, joint stiffness, intense fatigue, headaches, irritable bowel syndrome, and numbness in the upper and lower body, anxiety and depression. No one knows for sure what causes fibromyalgia but experts say that nerve cells may be too sensitive; chemicals in the brain (neurotransmitters) may play a part as well. Fibromyalgia has been linked to stressful or traumatic events, such as car accidents, repetitive injuries, genetics and illness.

A survey (Fibromyalgia Network Journal July 2004) of over one thousand fibromyalgia (FM) patients revealed that people coping with this painful and fatiguing condition prefer massage therapy over other non-drug therapies.

FM patients usually begin with light touch, stroking and "Swedish" type massage techniques. After a few massage sessions, patients can tolerate a greater application of pressure and this leads to a longer lasting effect.

**Robin Richmond is a licensed Massage Therapist for ARA in the Wheaton, Maryland office.** She is skilled in different forms of massage and she should be able to provide you with the therapy most suited to your needs. If you are in severe or persistent pain, it is important to consult your primary care provider. Along with regular massage therapy, FM patients still may have to continue taking medications for their condition.

FM patients often complain of low back pain and muscle tension in the neck, shoulders and upper back which can lead to severe chronic tension headaches. Massaging the muscles in these regions for thirty minutes twice weekly for one month has been proven to reduce both the frequency and duration of pain in these areas.

As a Massage Therapist and Yoga Instructor for nearly 30 years, Robin recommends other supportive measures including rest, exercise, good nutrition, relaxation and stress reduction techniques such as meditation and yoga which can also bring relief and help you feel better!

# Pilates for Arthritis

BY ELISABETH M.C. LUTANIE, PhD, CPT

**PILATES OFFERS GREAT BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING FROM ARTHRITIS**

Osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and other associated conditions can make it difficult for individuals to perform some of the most basic movements and daily activities. Arthritis patients often suffer from fatigue, decreased range of motion and chronic pain due to inflammation of the joints. Pilates provides many great benefits to people suffering from arthritis. It reduces joint pain and stiffness by increasing flexibility and lubricating the joints. It improves balance, posture, and overall body mechanics. Pilates builds lean muscle mass and strength while keeping weight under control, especially when combined with aerobic and/or endurance exercises. Keeping control of weight is important to avoid extra pressure on the joints. Last but not least, Pilates brings a feeling of greater confidence to individuals whose emotional well-being often is diminished because they cannot easily perform simple tasks in their daily routines.

When Pilates exercises are done with 'props' such as rings, resistance bands or small weights, they can rapidly build strength in the muscles around the joints often weakened by arthritis. Correct breathing while performing exercises is also an important element of a Pilates routine. Deep breathing moves oxygen and nutrients to cells and promotes joint health. The Pilates emphasis on the core and on proper alignment helps individuals find a greater body awareness and also improves their posture.

**SHOULD I START A PILATES EXERCISE PROGRAM?**

If you have a chronic medical condition, check with your doctor before beginning a Pilates program. If you see a physical therapist for arthritis, talk to him or her as well. It is very likely that both will recommend you start a Pilates exercise routine with a certified instructor who has experience working with special populations and performing therapeutic exercises.

# Yoga for Arthritis

MARGY SMARIGA, MA, E-RYT 500

Are you looking for a safe and effective way to exercise that won't stress your joints or cause pain? Yoga may be just what the doctor ordered to help relieve some of your symptoms and improve the quality of your life! Yoga is a system of physical and mental practices that originated in ancient India. Its purpose is to help each of us achieve our highest potential and to experience health and well-being. The word yoga means "yoke" or "union," and yoga teaches us to integrate or unify the body and mind in order to be in harmony with ourselves and our surroundings. This is done through a combination of physical postures, breathing exercises, and relaxation and meditation techniques.

**THE BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS**

A growing body of evidence suggests that regular yoga practice can provide important health benefits for people with arthritis and related musculoskeletal conditions. Because yoga is a holistic system that involves body, mind, and spirit, it benefits us on multiple levels and provides physical, physiological, and psychological benefits.

***Physical Benefits.*** A regular yoga practice can reduce pain and improve function in people with arthritis. Many yoga postures help build muscle strength, and strong muscles provide better joint support, contribute to better function, and help reduce bone loss related to inactivity or the use of certain medications. Yoga postures include range-of-motion exercises and gentle stretching, which help maintain or improve flexibility in affected joints and surrounding muscles. In addition, practicing yoga can help improve posture, balance, body awareness, and coordination - all of which reduce the risk of injury.

***Physiological Benefits.*** One of the most profound effects of yoga is its effect on our autonomic nervous system, which is the part of our nervous system that controls involuntary physiological functions such as circulation, digestion, and gland secretion. Yoga helps turn off the body's "fight-or-flight" response (our body's response to stress) and activate the relaxation response. When we are in a relaxed state, the heart rate slows, blood pressure drops, stress hormone levels drop, blood sugar levels fall, digestion improves, the immune system is more efficient, and our bodies are better able to heal. In addition, yoga can improve sleep quality, increase vitality and energy, and increase blood flow and lymph circulation.

***Psychological Benefits.*** Yoga promotes physical and mental relaxation, quiets the mind, and leaves you feeling calmer and more centered. It can boost your mood and help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. In addition, it gives a sense of self-empowerment; when you practice yoga, you are doing something for yourself.. And yoga helps you connect with your inner resources so you can experience greater overall well-being.

**IS YOGA RIGHT FOR YOU?**

You don't have to be able to contort your body into a pretzel pose to do yoga. There is a yoga practice for every body, every age, and every condition. If you can breathe, you can do yoga! Arthritis patients interested in exploring yoga should start slowly. After getting your physician's approval to exercise, look for a gentle yoga class, chair yoga, or a class designed especially for arthritis. The Wellness Program at Arthritis & Rehabilitation Therapy Services currently offers group yoga classes at the Wheaton and Shady Grove offices. It's important to find a qualified yoga teacher and to let him or her know about any physical limitations you have that may affect your practice.

So, if you are exploring wellness strategies to help manage your arthritis symptoms, I invite you to give yoga a try! Although it is not a cure for arthritis, yoga can enhance your physical and emotional well-being and help you live with more ease.

# Wellness Classes:

## WHEATON

### MASSAGE THERAPY
Tuesdays 12:00pm – 4:30pm
Aug. 12, 26, Sept. 9, 23, Oct. 7, 21, & Nov. 4, 18

### YOGA CLASS
Mondays 6:00pm ***(5 part series)***
Aug. 25 & Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29

Mondays 6:00pm ***(5 part series)***
Oct. 27 & Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24

### OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS
**Meeks Osteoporosis Exercise Review**
Thursdays 6:00pm ***(5 part series)***
Oct. 16, 23 & Nov. 6, 13, 20

## ROCKVILLE

### MASSAGE THERAPY
Wednesdays 10:00am – 4:00pm
Sept. 24, Oct. 22, Nov. 19, & Dec. 17

### YOGA CLASS
Mondays 5:00pm ***(5 part series)***
Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29 & Oct. 6

### YOGA CLASS cont.
Thursdays 5:00pm ***(5 part series)***
Sept. 11, 18, 25, & Oct. 2, 9

### OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS
Tuesdays 6:00pm ***(5 part series)***
Aug. 26, & Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23

### FIBROMYALGIA CLASS
Wednesdays 6:00pm ***(3 part series)***
Oct. 8, 15, 22

### BACK SCHOOL
Tuesdays 5:00pm ***(2 part series)***
Oct. 14 & 28

## CHEVY CHASE

### BACK SCHOOL
Sept. 23 & 25 at 5:30 pm

### MASSAGE THERAPY
Wednesdays
Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov. 12, & Dec. 10

## WASHINGTON D.C.

### MASSAGE THERAPY
Wednesdays 10:00am – 4:00pm
Sept. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 5, & Dec. 3

# RHEUMORS

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RHEUMORS

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## Osteoarthritis

BY KEVIN ALEXANDER HARDY, PT, DPT

One in five American adults is diagnosed with arthritis, which is the leading cause of chronic disability in the United States. There are more than one hundred different types of arthritis but the most common type is osteoarthritis (OA) or degenerative joint disease. Despite these profound statistics, many Americans suffering from osteoarthritis know little about their condition or how to manage their symptoms. Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates, PC is dedicated to educating the community about causes, treatment, and the mechanics of OA. Please read on for a brief introduction of osteoarthritis.

The human body is an amazing machine designed - down to the last cell - to move. The surfaces of the ends of our bones are covered with a slick material called cartilage that allows smooth, pain-free motion. Cartilage is actually three times more slick than ice! When cartilage becomes damaged, the movement at the joint becomes compromised, which in turn causes pain. There is less blood flow to cartilage in comparison to other parts of the body, rendering this tissue more susceptible to injury and increasing healing time. Since cartilage doesn't have the blood flow available to deliver nutrients, other means are necessary. Your body is designed so that nutrients are "pumped" into your joint space through the mechanical motion of your joint. That's right, every time you bend your knee or raise your arm you literally are feeding nutrients to that joint! This concept is pivotal to understanding the value of maintaining your range of motion for adequate joint health. Just remember: motion is lotion! It is motion that provides nutrients, prevents osteoarthritis, and keeps your joints healthy.

*Another important part in understanding arthritis is appreciating its causes.*
**Myth:** Arthritis is caused by aging.
**Fact:** You are more likely to have OA as you age due to an acquired injured or unhealthy joint as you've aged, not because you've aged.

The most inevitable way to damage our joints is through obesity. Excessive weight results in compression on your joints which prevents the aforementioned pumping action to feed the joint. The issue of weight and its effect on osteoarthritis is a necessary topic to explore. The Research has shown that for a woman of average height every 11 pounds lost reduced the risk of knee OA by 50%. Moreover, joint compression isn't just about how much you weigh, it also matters where the weight is located. For example, abdominal fat and excessive fat around the hips can dramatically increase the compression placed on you hips, knees, and back. A recent study of more than 400 obese adults performed by Wake Forest University showed that through weight loss and exercise knee pain decreased, swelling reduced, and function significantly improved.

Poor body mechanics are another major cause of osteoarthritis. Your joints could be moving abnormally due to muscle tightness or lack of muscle strength which produce inflammation and damage. Furthermore, overuse from your occupation or hobby can result in damaged cartilage. Improper squatting, lifting, or compensation during tasks such as climbing stairs can lead to osteoarthritis as well. Therefore, knowledge of correct form when performing exercises and lifting can prevent or significantly improve existing arthritis.

If you are interested in learning more about osteoarthritis, Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates will be hosting a knee and hip arthritis course providing education on body mechanics, exercises, and diet. Now that warmer weather is here, get outside and feed your joints! Just remember, *motion is lotion!*