Are You Driving With Your Parking Brakes On??

Ask five different doctors or therapists the reason for your pain and I'm sure you will get five different opinions; unless, of course, you have sustained the injury from a trauma such as a car accident. But what is going on years down the road when that old accident injury starts to hurt? Now we can go back to the five for five differentiating opinions.

The training and specialty of your practitioner will determine the type of treatment recommendation you receive. For instance (and we are being general here), if you go to your family practitioner they are likely to put you on an anti-inflammatory and tell you to rest. When it doesn't get better they may send you to a surgeon who may want to do immediate surgery based on the test results or they may send you for physical therapy first. Traditional physical therapy, especially if you are going through insurance, is limited to work on the site of the pain and usually with electrical stimulation, ultrasound and ice or heat. What's common throughout all of these modalities is that they are treating a symptom rather than looking for the root cause. There are times when each of these modalities may be beneficial or necessary, but doesn't if feel better to have it be your choice rather than feeling like the only way?

Do you have pain? Understand why…

Pain is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong. Sometimes it's obvious, like the car accident mentioned above. Other times it's not as obvious and may only occur during certain movements to start but then over time becomes constant and actually spreads. Either way, it is your body telling you it's not happy with something. Through the years we have seen thousands of people that have "tried everything" to get rid of their pain and, at best, received temporary relief. What we have learned through those years of practice, coupled with the relationships with dozens of health practitioners, is that how you use, or misuse, your body will determine your pain level. When we talk about "use" we are talking about how you think about it, how you feed it and how you use it physically.

The PDF's available along with this document will help ensure that you are using your body correctly. We have laid out stretch and strength work to help the most common pain complaints. If you find that your complaint is not directly referenced; simply pick the body site that is closely related and work on that area. You will find that it will have an affect on your direct issue. Why? Our connective tissue is an endless web which affects every system in our body. That tissue is called ***fascia***.

An endless web…

Fascia starts as a superficial sheet just below the surface of the skin and continues to branch out to form compartments to hold muscle groups, individual muscles, bundles of fibers and even the individual fibers. Off of those branches, new ones are created to house organs; fascia wraps blood vessels and nerves and even forms space around individual cells. When it's healthy, it has a liquid like quality and all the individual compartments can move freely. However, when fascia is misused, it quickly begins to harden and thicken and the compartments can stick together. Once fascia reaches this state, pain begins to appear. Generally speaking, a single movement can no longer be done independently. As these sheets start to harden, they shorten and cause uneven pulls around joints, causing the joints to malfunction and break down. Remember, pain is just an alarm that something is wrong. Find out what is wrong, (in this case tight fascia) and you can eliminate your pain.

The easiest way to determine fascial tightness is to move your body through specific range of motion (ROM). As you do this you will notice that some movements are easy while others are restricted. These restricted movements will be the ones you focus on. Restrictions can be manipulated in numerous ways, including the above noted surgery, but your goal should be to eliminate the restrictions and to restore proper function. When you were young and moving all the time, I would imagine, you had very few restrictions - but as you go through life you pick up more and more restrictive habits.

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THE NATURE OF PERFORMANCE

Are You Driving With Your Parking Brakes On??

Stretch your potential

Stretching is a vital component to any active lifestyle. Most of us think we know how to stretch, but in reality, many people including the most seasoned athlete use incorrect and in some cases dangerous techniques. Done correctly, the benefits of stretching include improved posture, increased circulation, decreased risk of injury, improved strength, faster healing times and enhanced muscle relaxation. In fact, we have been told that after doing this type of stretching that it feels like the "parking brakes" were released! *Are you driving with your parking brake on and you don't even know it?* Imagine the difference you will feel!

When you stretch, use **AIS – Active Isolated Stretching.** This technique has tremendous research supporting its effectiveness and has been used by therapists and athletes for decades. The value you receive is based on three main fundamentals:

Active Your body was meant to move! Stay away from stretching techniques that require another person to *muscle* you into position. A great example of this is when you had someone push on your back for you to touch your toes in a seated position. With AIS, *you* actively move your body in and out of stretch positions. The contraction of one muscle group leads to the relaxation, or stretch, of its opposite.

Isolated There are over 600 muscles in the body. It is silly to think one or two types of stretches will warm you up for an event. Did you know that there are 3 different directional stretches just for the hamstrings? With AIS, isolating muscles individually during stretching can help to identify muscular imbalances and achieve maximal lengthening.

Stretching Did you know that "holding" a stretch for more than a couple seconds can actually signal the muscle to contract instead? AIS utilizes a succession of two-second-long stretches that work with the body's natural laws – not against them – for a safe and effective stretching technique that both reduces the risk of injury and speeds the healing of past injuries. Each two second stretch allows your active functional range of motion to progressively increase as your body warms up the tissue.

Don't "stretch through the pain" caused by improper techniques. Stretch correctly with Active Isolated Stretching. Increasing and maintaining proper functional range of motion of each joint can support muscular strength and improve your performance at any level.

Anyone can do AIS by themselves once they learn how. Windhawk coaches clients one-on-one on how to perform AIS correctly and helps clients to identify structural weaknesses that could result in injures. It's easy to master the technique. Start stretching with AIS today to prepare for your fitness goal – or simply for a lifetime of health.

About Windhawk

Windhawk is the leading edge Arizona wellness center focused on empowering clients to achieve the perfect balance between Right Nutrition, Right Use and Right Mindset. Devoted to health, wellness and athletic performance, Windhawk is the culmination of more than 25 years of research and hands-on experience. Visit www.windhawk.com or call 480-603-1888 for more information.

Please consult your physician before starting any new exercise or lifestyle program.

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