

ACTIVE P.T. SOLUTIONS
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BE ACTIVE

APTS Monthly



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Monday -

8:30am - 5:30pm

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Wednesday -

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8:30am - 5:30pm

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8:30 - 4:00pm

Location:

40 Westlake Ave
Auburn, NY 13021
P: (315) 515-3117

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What's the Best Home Exercise Equipment for You

As the weather gets colder, many of us start to think of how they will continue their outdoor workout through the winter months. A question that often comes up is, "what do you recommend for home exercise equipment?" The other question revolves around cost of the equipment. "Is this piece of equipment worth the money?", etc. I'll start with the second question first. Any piece of home exercise equipment is worth the money if you use it. If you buy a treadmill it is worth the money if you use it. If you don't use it and turn it into a very expensive clothing rack then it's not worth it.

Picking a piece of exercise equipment revolves around several things. First, what is your goal? Are you trying to lose weight? Continue a rehab process from an injury? Just get back some general strength and flexibility that may have been lost from age and inactivity? Perhaps you recently had a surgery or are planning a surgery and want to be able to exercise and rehabilitate more at home?

How much space do you have? Are you living in an apartment? Will you be exercising in the basement? Do you have any limitations? Can you leave the equipment up or do you need to take it down after each use?

It would be nice to be able to tell you that there is one

great piece of equipment in the world that would allow us to exercise every part of our body the right way and allow us to achieve all of our goals in a minimal amount of time each day! Unfortunately, the answer to that question is no. Exercise equipment is as individual as we are.

A treadmill is a great device especially here in central New York. Walking, jogging or running on a treadmill is a great



The Total Gym allows the patient to exercise whether you are a tri-athlete or a patient who has had a total knee replacement.

way to stay active in the winter months and do so safely. Here are a few tips on purchasing a treadmill. Most home-style treadmills are designed to save space by folding up and being able to push close to a wall. If you are a walker then a lower priced model will be fine for you. If you jog or run you need to spend a little more. Look for a motor of a minimum of 2.75HP. The speed should handle 0-15mph. The incline should span 0-10%

grade. Always get the extended warranty on a treadmill! If possible have a separate breaker installed for the electrical outline you plan on using. As the speed goes up they draw more power and will blow a breaker. Holidays are great times to get a good deal on a treadmill. The last thing is to make sure you have it delivered and set up. It's worth the \$50-75 they charge not to deal with the hassle.

There are two pieces of strength equipment that we typically recommend: The Total Gym or a TRX suspension trainer. The total gym is a fairly versatile piece of home exercise equipment. People of varying ages and abilities can work safely and progressively on a total gym. There are a variety of models at prices that range from \$400 to \$2000. Many times they have sales as well and you can get a \$2000 model for less than half the price. The Total Gym allows patients to exercise whether you are a tri-athlete or a patient who has had a total knee replacement. It folds up and is easy to set up. We haven't had any patient complain after we recommended a total gym for home exercise purposes. It is also a great way to introduce adolescent athletes to strength training safely.

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Exercise of the Month - Straight Knee Ball Bridges

The straight knee ball bridge is an excellent exercise to help build your glutes, hamstrings, and of course, as with all exercises featured in APTS monthly, your core muscles. Strengthening these core muscles will help to improve balance and prevent injury.

To perform this exercise

you will need floor space and an exercise ball.

1. Lay on the floor, face up with your knees straight out in front of you. Rest the heels of your feet on the exercise ball. Your arms will be out to the side.
2. Gently push your heels into the ball as you raise your hips off the floor as

you squeeze your bottom and your ab muscles.

3. Hold that position for 2 seconds, then slowly lower back to the start position.
4. Complete 10 repetitions for a total of 2 sets. Progress to 2 sets of 30 repetitions.

Perform the straight knee ball bridges 4-5 days a week for best results.

Home Exercise Equipment Cont'

The TRX suspension system is less expensive than the total gym and does allow for a variety of exercise of the upper body, lower body and CORE. It uses suspension straps and truly strengthens your stability system and challenges your balance. It is great for kids and adolescent athletes. It is particularly safe for this age group since it is based on your body weight. The

draw back is that you need to be able to change positions, get up and down from the floor and have some baseline mobility. The upside to a TRX is that it costs about \$200, can be used from a door way (not the most functional) or from a chin up bar or ceiling hook (more functional but be sure the hook is tested ahead of time for security of your body weight).

Notice that I didn't recommend any weight lifting ma-

chines. These are usually cumbersome, over priced, take up the most space, can't be moved easily and give you the best opportunity to get injured. If you live in CNY and want to exercise economically at home, choose the equipment that meets your goals.



APTS Welcomes Carolyn Collier, PTA to the Team

Carolyn is an Auburn native, and graduated from Auburn High School in 1998. She received her Bachelor of Science in Health Science (2002) and her Masters in Physical Therapy (2003) both from Nazareth College of Rochester. She is currently licensed as a Physical Therapist Assistant. Her past clinical experience includes hospital, nursing

home, and outpatient orthopedic settings, so she has seen similar injuries at all three levels of rehabilitation. She enjoys teaching her patients how to improve their physical health, which is why she loves this profession! She is very excited to be the newest member of the APTS team, and is looking forward to learning more about Active Release Techniques®.

In her spare time, Carolyn enjoys some very creative hobbies, including playing the piano, scrapbooking, card-making, and knitting. She loves music of all kinds, so you may catch her singing or dancing around the clinic from time to time!

Please join us in welcoming Carolyn to the staff!

Why it is Pertinent to Forward Medical Records to your Physical Therapist

If you are currently or have ever been a patient at Active P.T. Solutions, you may have been asked to have all diagnostic imaging or office notes from a referring Dr. forwarded to the office prior to your initial evaluation. You may have found yourself asking, "What do they need that for?". The objective here is to explain the importance of this information and how it's relevant to your physical therapy assessment and treatment plan.

During your initial evaluation, a licensed physi-

cal therapist will meet with you one-on-one. Your evaluation will include a thorough history of your injury as well as your past medical history. Having progress notes from a referring physician can help to prepare your therapist so that they may make the best assessment of your injury.

You will then be informed of your functional physical therapy diagnosis, how your medical diagnosis may affect your functional diagnosis and the POC (plan of care) to efficiently treat

your problem. Certain diagnostic findings can indicate whether to focus on or to avoid certain exercises that will be included in your physical therapy treatment plan. Knowing this information at the time of your assessment will make your initial evaluation more efficient.

In essence, having as much medical information prior to your initial evaluation will make your first appointment more efficient and your treatment plan more goal specific so that you can recover from your injury faster.

Heat or Ice?

When to use heat or ice on an injury, ache or pain is as common a question in a healthcare office as you will find. While there are generalities that can be followed it can also be an extremely specific self-treatment. It is very difficult to go wrong with ice. On the contrary if you put heat on an inflamed body part there is potential to worsen a condition. So to start with a general rule of thumb in our office is to recommend ice for 20 minutes to the painful body part with at least 40 minutes off before the next ice application. A thin protective layer should be placed between the ice and the skin such as a paper towel or t-shirt. Always inspect the skin after the application. It should be pink and cool, returning to normal before the next ice application.

The majority of injuries or musculoskeletal ailments will respond to ice. Unfortunately most patients fail to ice frequently enough to be effective. For instance if you have an ankle sprain you may need to apply ice to the ankle four to five times a day for two or three days for the ice to be effective. If any body part swells, becomes discolored or causes a loss of function in this case the inability to bear weight you should see a healthcare provider and most likely have an x-ray to rule out a fracture or additional pathology. Applying ice in this case should be for comfort and swelling control while arranging to see a provider.

The best form of cold therapy is ice itself. Your relatives may recommend frozen peas, corn or other frozen produce. Frozen produce will not supply the same degree of cold as ice itself. Counter irritants such as rubs that pro-

duce a cold sensation do not reduce swelling or inflammation. They are designed to relieve pain by tricking your



brain to focus on the cooling or heating sensation produced by the ingredients in the lotion or cream. This is where the term "counter-irritant" comes from. Remember the acronym PRICE therapy when applying ice: Protect, Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation.

It is also common for patients to bring up the old adage of ice for the first 24-72 hours and then apply heat. This is a poor rule to follow because it negates the presence of pain and loss of function. If the condition is actively swelling or limiting function (weight bearing, sleep, work, etc.) it is appropriate to apply ice more than 72 hours after the onset of pain or injury. Living in central New York I have come to think it is a natural reaction to prefer heat instead of ice. In general heat usually feels nice and comforting. Unfortunately, it is not the right thing to do more times than not when it comes to an injury or painful musculoskeletal condition. If you do apply heat it should be moist in nature. A hot

shower or hot bath are good forms of home heat application. There are special heating pads available that are made with a moist sponge or there are also several microwavable devices available in your local pharmaceutical retailer. One thing that I would absolutely recommend you not use is a dry heating pad. As I tell my patients "if you own a dry heating pad give it to someone you don't like". Dry heat applications usually make the problem worse by creating local dehydration, edema and inflammation.

So when is heat the treatment of choice? Moist heat is very helpful when you have a chronic degenerative condition such as a non-inflammatory arthropathy such as degenerative joint disease of the knee or back. Unfortunately these conditions usually are associated with some level of pain. In this case using "contrast therapy" may alleviate the stiffness and the pain.

Applying moist heat for 15-20 minutes followed by and ice application for 15-20 minutes and then gentle movement such as walking is a form of contrast therapy that works well for patients with arthritis of a non-inflammatory type.

Never go to bed with an ice pack or heating device applied to a body part. There is a risk of falling asleep with the ice or heat in place and this can result in worsening of the condition or causing further injury or tissue damage. There are areas of the body where certain nerves are very superficial and at risk of injury from prolonged ice or heat application. The more common areas are the outside of the knee, inside of the elbow, the groin and lower



**Active
Physical Therapy
Solutions**

**40 Westlake Avenue
Auburn, NY 13021**

Phone: 315-515-3117

Fax: 315-515-3121

E-mail: cara@activeptsolutions.com

website: www.activeptsolutions.com

Get Well...Get Active...Be Active!

**At Active Physical Therapy Solutions, we
utilize the most cutting edge treatment
and management techniques available.**

**Our goal is to deliver the best possible
healthcare in a friendly, caring and well-
organized environment. Our staff is here
to provide active solutions to achieving
your functional goals!**

...Because Life Should Be

ACTIVE!

Ergonomics - 101: 7 Steps to Better Driving Posture

A common complaint of patients with neck and back pain is that they have increased symptoms while driving. Although seat design can play a role in poor sitting posture, many symptoms can be improved with proper seat adjustment. Do you really know how to position your seat correctly? Hopefully, this article will give you a few tips to make you more comfortable while driving.

Before you even start thinking about moving the seat, make sure to remove the items from your back pockets, such as a wallet or keys. These items may increase pressure on the soft tissue and nerve structures. It will be helpful to start out with the seat adjustment in a "starting position" and then work from there. Start by pushing your seat back all the way and as low to the floor as possible. Recline the back between 30-40 degrees. Ergonomics Simplified, LLC offers this progression to get your seat adjusted properly:

1. Adjust the height of your seat so that you can comfortably see the height of the road and driving panel. Your hips should be as high as your knees.
2. Bring the seat forward so you are able to reach and depress both pedals without feeling like you need to scoot forward in your seat to do so.
3. Move the back part of your seat until you are at a 100-110 degree angle. The headrest should rest comfortably on the middle part of your head.
4. If your car has a lumbar support, adjust this feature so it feels even across the back. A lumbar cushion may be helpful if your car doesn't allow you to adjust the lumbar region.
5. Tilt the seat pan to allow the knees to be slightly lower than the hips.
6. Once these adjustments are made, you can adjust the mirrors to properly see around you. If you begin to slouch while driving, the mirrors will feel they need to be adjusted and should cue you to correct your posture.
7. Hold the steering wheel in the 9 and 3 o'clock position while driving.



Take the time to correctly adjust your seat and this could save you a great deal of discomfort while driving. Remember to take frequent breaks while on long trips to get out of the car to stretch. Fine tune your adjustments as needed.