

ACTIVE P.T. SOLUTIONS  
...BECAUSE LIFE  
SHOULD BE ACTIVE

# APTS Monthly



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MARCH 2021

## Office Hours:

Monday - 8:00am - 5:30pm

Tuesday - 8:00am - 7:00pm

Wednesday - 8:00am - 6:00pm

Thursday - 8:00am - 7:00pm

Friday - 8:00am - 5:00pm

Saturday - 8:00am - 1:00 pm

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## Top Injuries at the Gym

Many of us make new year resolutions to exercise at indoor facilities like our basement or a local gym such as the Auburn YMCA or equivalent. When this happens, we introduce new exercises or exercise classes, or we change up our current exercise routine. While altering our exercise pattern can be good, it can also expose us to gym related injuries. The good news is that, with a little thought, most of these injuries can be prevented.

First, we need to identify the culprits that usually cause the injuries. We as human beings are at the top of that list! We are often our own worst enemy. If you haven't been in the gym for some time, start easy. Don't get into a competition with your friend or the person next to you. Formulate a plan to get into shape and stick with it! If you need help putting a plan together, recruit help from the staff. Even professional athletes have coaches. The Auburn Y has several personal trainers that can help put a plan together for you.

Warming up before exercising is critical. Take 10-12 minutes to ride an exercise bike, walk on a treadmill, or use the elliptical. This should be done easily and gradually. The idea is that by the time you hit 12 minutes you should just be starting to sweat and your heart rate should be elevated above baseline.

Changing intensity of your exercise before you are ready is one of the more common reasons for injuries. It takes 4 weeks of exercise for your nervous system to learn how to perform the task at hand correctly. Many people confuse this with getting stronger. The human response is to increase the weight or intensity. This will most surely lead to injury. It takes approximately 8 weeks for you to actually build muscle. When train-



ing, think about working in 8 week cycles.

The number one area of the body that gets injured in the gym is the shoulder. Because of its advanced range of motion, it is exposed to many different injuries. The strength requirements for the shoulder are also higher because of its inherent instability. Unfortunately, most of us don't think about strengthening our rotator cuff as we walk into the gym.

Gym activities that put our shoulders at risk include overhead shoulder press, dips, barbell bench press, machine chest press, lat pulls behind the neck, pec deck with too much weight, upright rows, etc.

Avoiding these movements or having your personal trainer modify them for you can greatly reduce the risk of injury. If you are using machines, keep the weight at a level that allows you to perform 12-15 repetitions. Machines direct the force to the joint and over-loading with heavy weight will ultimately damage the shoulder. Keeping the weight below maximum and concentrating on good technique will help you accomplish your goal and preserve the shoulder. If you are using free weights, avoid using a heavy weight that requires the use of momentum and induces poor form. Instead, perform the exercise using a controlled motion and concentrate on good form. Two or three simple rotator cuff exercises performed before your

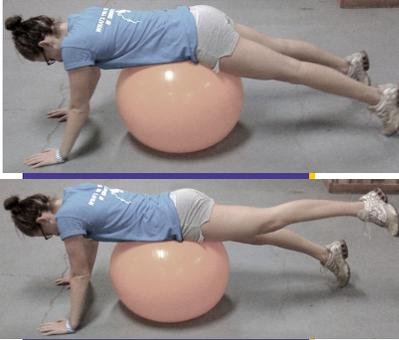
workout (see page 2) can pay a great dividend in injury prevention down the road.

Lower back pain is another frequent complaint at the gym. Injuries can range from muscle strains to more severe injuries such as lumbar disc herniation. The reason this injury is so prevalent is due to the fact that so many exercises can put the lower

back at risk. The second and most prominent reason is that most of us go into the gym with lower back weakness, poor flexibility, and/or some underlying problem (such as pre-existing degenerative disc disease). After all, that's why we are in the gym – to get stronger and more flexible. Some would call this the illusive obvious. Instead of starting your exercise routine with lifting weights, shift the focus to your weaknesses and deficiencies. Build some general flexibility, core strength, and lower back strength. This will give you a better foundation from which to exercise. If you have an existing back issue, you should let your personal trainer know and you should speak to your healthcare provider about any potential risks before undertaking a stressful exercise routine.

The lower back and the shoulders are tied together through their specific muscle attachments. This is why they frequently act up together. It is also why they are the two most common injuries in the gym. Both are affected by inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle. So if you start back to the gym after a long hiatus, start slowly and get some professional advice. Work on your deficiencies first and progress from there. No one gets in shape over night! Be in it for the long haul.

Article by Dale Buchberger, DC,  
PT, CSCS



Hip extension over ball: start position (top), exercise position (bottom)

## Exercise of the Month: Hip Extension Over Ball

When your back hurts, sometimes it means that your back muscles are working overtime for support because your gluteal muscles in the buttocks are weak. When your gluts are strong, it actually takes pressure off of your back. Here is a very basic exercise to start strengthening your buttock muscles without putting too much load on your low back. It requires the use of a large exercise ball, which, for some, takes some practice for bal-

ance. Keep at it; you'll get it!

To perform the exercise, lie over the ball face down with the ball under your hips. Support your upper body with extended elbows and your toes gripping the floor. Lift one leg at a time by squeezing the buttock, keeping knees fully extended as you lift. It helps to flex your foot towards you as well. Only lift leg to the height of your body, not beyond. Hold your leg in the air for 2 seconds and slowly

lower. Alternate right and left leg with each lift. If you count one repetition on each leg, start with 10 repetitions twice a day. If you count one repetition with each lift, do 20 repetitions twice a day. (It's the same, no matter how you count!)

If you don't have an exercise ball, we sell them here at APTS for \$20. We can size it appropriately to your height and even inflate it for you!

## March is MS Awareness Month

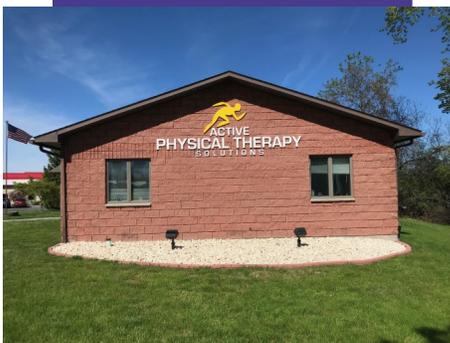
Multiple sclerosis, or MS, is central nervous system disorder in which damage to the myelin (the fatty substance that surrounds and insulates nerve fibers) and the nerve fibers themselves interferes with the transmission of nerve signals between the brain and spinal cord and other parts of the body. It is considered an immune-mediated disease in which the body's immune system attacks the myelin. The disease is thought to be triggered in a genetically sus-

ceptible individual by a combination of one or more environmental factors.

The result of nerve impulses being distorted or interrupted causes a wide array of symptoms, including, but not limited to, fatigue, walking difficulty, spasticity, numbness or tingling, weakness, vision problems, dizziness or vertigo, and pain. Symptoms are variable and unpredictable, and no two people have exactly the same symptoms.

If symptoms begin to interfere

with daily activities, physical therapy can help an individual with MS feel and function at his or her best, staying mobile, active, and safe. Some things a physical therapist will work on are walking, mobility, strength, balance, posture, fatigue, and pain. This will include an exercise program, gait training, and training in the use of an assistive device (such as a cane, walker, or wheelchair). To learn more about MS visit [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org)



## Active PT Solutions is 12 Years Old!

On Tuesday, March 23, 2021, Active Physical Therapy Solutions turns 12 years old! APTS opened its doors in 2009 with two full-time employees—Dr. Dale Buchberger, physical therapist and chiropractor. Four months later, Maggie Whitehouse joined the team as Dale's assistant. Six months after that, Tom

Zirilli, PT, came on board. One year later, Linda Schattinger was hired to help at the front desk, and 9 months after Linda, Carolyn Collier, PTA, joined the provider team to assist Tom. In the summer of 2018, Sue Fiermonte joined the APTS family to work at the front desk. And most recently, in

January 2020, Claire Sargent, DPT, joined the clinical team.

Thanks to all of you, our patients, who have remained loyal to us all these years. We truly appreciate your business and referrals, and we look forward to continuing to work in this community for years to come.



# Sprains vs. Strains



Sprains and strains are common injuries that share similar signs and symptoms. A *sprain* is a

stretching or tearing of a ligament. Ligaments are thick bands of fibrous tissue that connect bone to bone. A *strain* is a stretching or tearing of muscle or tendon. A tendon is a fibrous cord of tissue that connects muscles to bones.

Sprains and strains are graded as first, second, and third degree.

**First-degree strains and sprains** cause very little actual tissue damage, so detecting whether the injury occurred to a tendon or ligament comes down to whether pain is elicited with the contraction of the muscle or not. Generally, the pain will subside in both first-degree sprains and strains in a matter of days. Gradual return to activity is usually possible after a few days with complete return to activity in 1-3 weeks, depending on the area of the body injured and the activity performed.

**Second-degree strains** can be quite painful if located in the muscle. Pain is often felt with mild contractions of the strained muscle and occasionally at rest. Strains to tendons may not be painful until the muscle contracts forcefully. Second-degree strains in muscles might require professional treatment (such as physical therapy) to reduce scar tissue formation and assist return of normal function. Second-degree strains to tendons may also require treatment to restore function and prevent progression into a case of tendinitis.

**Second-degree sprains** may result in laxity or looseness of the joint that the ligament supports. Since the ligament is partially torn in a second-degree sprain, the ligament will be unable to resist large amounts of tension. The partial tearing results in bruising, swelling, and pain that are usually best treated with rest, ice, and compression followed by gradual return to activity. Consultation with a healthcare professional should be obtained to determine whether the amount of ligament damage would slow the recovery. It can take 6-12 weeks for a second-degree sprain to fully heal.

**Third degree strains** of muscles and tendons are generally a very serious issue and often require surgery. The muscle or tendon ruptures completely. This usually occurs at one end. The end that is torn will retract away from the original attachment site. Some even occur with no pain at all, especially in the case of tendon ruptures. Surgical reattachment of a ruptured or avulsed tendon should occur within 14-21 days of the injury. Therefore, seeking medical attention is imperative to a good long-term outcome.

**Third degree sprains** vary greatly, often depending on which ligament is involved. Pain, swelling and bruising are usually severe with a complete ligament rupture. While the majority of grade three ligament ruptures require surgical reconstruction, there are occasional cases that can be rehabilitated without surgery. Your healthcare provider can let you know if you are a candidate for nonsurgical rehabilitation or if surgery is required. Third degree sprains should also be evaluated by a healthcare professional to give you the best opportunity for an excellent long-term recovery.

Remember you should see a doctor if you can't walk more than four steps without significant pain, you can't move the affected joint without pain, you have numbness in any part of the injured area, or if the injury is preventing you from getting to sleep or wakes you from a sound sleep.

It is difficult to predict if and when you will incur a sprain or a strain, but we do know that your risk is higher if any of the following factors come into play:

- You are poorly conditioned. Lack of conditioning can leave your muscles weak, inflexible, and more likely to sustain injury.
- Participating through fatigue. Fatigued muscles are less likely to provide adequate support for your joints. When you're tired, you are also less likely to withstand high forces during athletic activities.
- Failing to warm-up properly. Appropriate warm-up before a vigorous physical activity takes longer than you think. For example, proper warm-up for a 5k road race can take 60-90 minutes. The warm-up loosens your muscles, increases joint range of motion, and improves muscle and tendon elasticity making the muscles less prone to trauma and tears.

If rest, ice, compression, and elevation do not resolve your pain and restore function within 10-14 days, more time is not the answer. Call a healthcare provider you trust and have your injury evaluated.

Article by Dale Buchberger, DC, PT, CSCS

*Understanding the difference between a minor injury that is treatable at home and a more severe injury that needs professional medical attention can save time, money, and pain.*

## APTS Recipe Box: Irish Dublin Coddle

This St. Patrick's Day recipe can be served for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

**Ingredients:** 1 lb sausage (pork, turkey, or chicken); 3/4 lb bacon; 1 cup low-sodium beef broth; 1 garlic clove, minced; 2 small onions, chopped into large chunks; 1 lb white potatoes, red potatoes, or sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into large

chunks; 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish); salt and pepper to taste.

**Instructions:** Cook bacon and sausage over medium heat until fully browned. Drain any grease. Add all ingredients to a slow cooker. Stir until well combined. Cook on high 2-3 hours or low 4-6 hours.

If you don't have a slow cooker you can make this on the stovetop as the sausage and bacon get cooked ahead of time. You can also add carrots if you'd like. If you like your bacon crispy, add it at the end just before serving.

Source: [fitslowcookerqueen.com/slow-cooker-irish-dublin-coddle/](https://fitslowcookerqueen.com/slow-cooker-irish-dublin-coddle/)



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

Newsletter Edited by Carolyn B. Collier, PTA

**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 personal goals!**

**...BECAUSE LIFE SHOULD BE**

**ACTIVE!**

## Nutrition 101: Cut Sugar From Your Diet



The adverse effects that sugar has on your health are numerous, including weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease. Here are a few tips to help you cut the sugar from your diet:

1. Get rid of the high sugar foods in the house. It's a lot easier to avoid the sweet treats when they are not in the house where your sugar craving starts. Yes, that means get rid of the cookies, cakes, and candy! Make it a little easier on yourself to start.
2. Eat regularly. The goal here is to maintain your blood sugar levels. When feeling hungry, you are more likely to crave sugary snacks which are readily available. Try 3 meals a day with two snacks

built in or 5 smaller meals throughout the day.

3. Start off with a healthy breakfast. The first meal of the day is notorious for being loaded with high carbohydrate foods. Try adding a healthy protein and fats into the mix, such as smoothies with flax or chia seeds. There are a number of protein powders that will help too. Find one that you tolerate the best.
4. Choose whole foods for your meals. Try to eat foods that are closest to their original form. This means cutting many of the boxed, convenience foods that are often overly processed. Increasing the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables is an easy way to include whole foods in the diet. Substitute a piece of fruit when you want something sweet. Once you cut down on sugary foods, a piece of fruit may be enough to satisfy your craving.
5. Identify any emotional triggers for sugar cravings. Are you eating because you're stressed or bored? Work on finding other ways to avoid these triggers.
6. Read food labels to identify high sugar foods. Foods like salad dressing, ketchup,

and even so called "healthy" snack bars can have high levels of sugar.

7. Drink plenty of water. Sugar cravings may be a sign that you need to increase fluids. Flavored seltzer water may help decrease your sugar craving.
8. Distract yourself when you get a sugar craving. Most cravings last from 10-20 minutes so it may be helpful to try to keep yourself busy with something else and see if it goes away.
9. Avoid alcoholic drinks as this can cause a drop in blood sugar, which leads to craving sweets.
10. Get moving! Regular exercise or physical activity can help increase energy levels, help balance sugar levels, and keep stress levels down.

Start with one or two of these tips and gradually add another. Before you know it, cutting sugar from your diet will become second nature and will no longer seem like a chore! You can do it!

**Article by Tom Zirilli, PT**