

Bodywork for Wellness

Manual Physical Therapy & Therapeutic Massage, PLLC
Services Provided by Jennifer Catino-St. Denis, MPT, LMT
Loudon Plaza, 350 Northern Blvd, Suite 305, Albany, NY 12204 (518)424-6487

Late Winter '11 Newsletter

New Year, New Awareness: We are two full months into 2011, and many people take the beginning of a new year as a time to set goals or resolutions for the coming year. Most people have a hard time maintaining the changes for a significant period of time. Did you make a resolution or goal? If yes have you been able to keep it? If yes, congrats! If not, don't worry there are many more days in this year. Are you still trying to figure out what new part of your health you would like to make changes in? Why not consider increasing your awareness? This is a simple activity that can be done anytime, anywhere and can assist you in learning more about yourself, your body, and your health.

The average person has somewhere around 50,000 thoughts per day. That's about a 1.2 thoughts per minute and 2083 thoughts per hour. These numbers made me pause because that is a lot of thinking. Thinking can be great- it helps us solve problems and get our work done, but thinking can quickly lead to worry for many of us. It puts our focus either in the future or the past and that is not a helpful mindset for anyone. Awareness is different from thinking. It is about the present, the right now!

According to the wikipedia definition, **Awareness** is the state or ability to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, objects or sensory patterns. Awareness allows us to consciously check in with ourselves or our environment. When we want to check in with our body we need to quite our thinking, slow down, and breathe so we can *feel* what is happening in our bodies and take note of what we feel.

Increased awareness can help us recognize what changes stress produces in our bodies, do we tighten up muscles or hold ourselves in certain ways? Do we stop breathing? Are we pushing too hard and is our body breaking down? Awareness helps us know what positions make us comfortable or uncomfortable, what increases or decreases our symptoms. Awareness can help us realize what we enjoy or feels good, and what we don't like or doesn't feel good in our body, our day, or our life.

Awareness brings us out of our busy minds and into our entire body. Once we have awareness we have an opportunity to take some action, or make a change. Not all things in our lives are easy to change but we can often do something good for ourselves that allows us to feel better. When we have awareness that pain is creeping up we can change positions, stretch, do a self treatment activity, take some deep breaths and check our posture, take a short break, or if possible change to a different task for a while. Increased awareness also helps us realize when we are improving our health. Maybe we can perform an activity more times or longer with less pain or we can do something new we didn't think we could or hadn't been able to in the past do to pain or restriction. Awareness helps us know when to make changes and allows us to realize that changes have and can continue to happen. So for the rest of 2011, I encourage you to make it a year of increasing awareness to learn more about how your body responds so you can take the best care of yourself possible.

Winter Wellness: I know we are all ready for the seasons to shift, but Mother Nature still seems to still have snow in mind. Please try to use the awareness mentioned above while you are shoveling. Is that mound of snow on the shovel too heavy? Are you lifting with your legs? Here's a tip- try to throw the snow forward instead of off to your side- that minimizes twisting in your back. I know you might have to move the snow twice, but the bend, lift, twist, pitch of shoveling is the most common way to get hurt. So watch your posture, bring your awareness with you, and if you do strain yourself and you don't feel much better in about 3 days your body will naturally start to adapt. With time, you may feel like your pain gets better but that adaptation can set the stage for challenges elsewhere in your body, so get treated if needed!

If you have a comment or question, or to learn more about Bodywork for Wellness please call or email:

518-424-6487

Bodyworkforwellness@yahoo.com

*If you would rather not receive emails from Bodywork for Wellness please send a request for removal from our mailing list to Bodyworkforwellness@yahoo.com