



connections
PHYSICAL THERAPY

**NEURO SPECIALTY
NEWSLETTER**



**STAY SAFE
DURING
THE HOT
SUMMER
MONTHS**

ALSO INSIDE

Heat Intolerance & MS • Staff Spotlight • Current News



HEAT INTOLERANCE AND THE SIGNS

Summer is here, and we have already had some periods of HOT, humid weather. We know that many of you with MS suffer from heat intolerance which can worsen during the warm summer months.

As a reminder, heat sensitivity/intolerance occurs when there are temporary increases in your core body temperature. Even a slight elevation in core body temperature of one-quarter to one-half of a degree can impact your nerves' ability to conduct electrical impulses through your body. With MS, your nerves signals are already disrupted due to the damage of myelin (the protective covering of nerves). When you become overheated, it makes it that much harder for your nerves to send the appropriate signals to different parts of your body, leading to a temporary worsening of your MS symptoms (often referred to as Uhthoff's phenomenon).

Many people think that heat intolerance only occurs from being outside in hot and humid environments. However, because heat intolerance is based on your CORE temperature and not ambient temperature (temperature of air), you can still feel its effects in "cooler" conditions without being directly outdoors in the heat. Common triggers for heat intolerance include exercise (indoors OR outdoors), fever, sunbathing, a sauna, hot (or even warm) baths and showers. The good news is that your symptoms should go away once your core temperature cools back down.

If you are a person who experiences increased fatigue, weakness, pain, and spasticity with heat intolerance, then keep on reading for some tips and tools that may help you through the dog days of summer as well as during other activities that may increase your body temperature.

Some symptoms of heat intolerance can include but are not limited to:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Increased spasticity
- Worsening fatigue
- Blurred vision

Interested in learning more about heat intolerance?
[CLICK HERE](#) for a recent research article



6 WAYS TO COUNTER HEAT INTOLERANCE

1. Keep Hydrated:

Drinking cold fluids can help maintain your core body temperature as well as help you avoid normal heat exhaustion and dehydration. This also helps to fight off some cramping that may happen at night as well.

2. Eat Fluid Filled Foods:

Did you know that foods like watermelon, strawberries, lettuce, cucumbers, and even plain yogurt are not only healthy, but can help to keep you hydrated as well? You could also try fun treats like ice or fruit pops but be careful to introduce TOO much sugar in your diet!

3. Cooling Towels, Vests, and Bands:

These devices are made specifically to help keep you cool! There are cooling vests, wrist bands, head bands, and towels that all work through evaporation to keep your core body temperature down. Most of these are easy to find and not overly expensive. Click on the these links for some ideas (please note, we do not endorse a specific brand)

[Cooling Towels](#)

[Cooling Vest](#)

[Cooling Bands](#)

4. Light Weighted Clothes:

Wearing light weight clothes is an obvious answer. However, wearing light COLOR clothes can also be helpful. Light bounces off of white, therefore the heat from the sun is not absorbed into your lighter color clothes the way it would be with darker clothes.

5. Stay Where It is Cool:

Staying indoors, in the air conditioning is the easiest way to keep cool. However, if you have to be outside, try to stay in the shade, or even in a pool, and use a cooling device.

6. Exercise Safely:

Gradually progress your exercise routine. Take frequent rest breaks as needed to allow your body temperature to cool back down. Frequent breaks will allow you to get more out of your exercise routine. Incorporate the above suggestions into your workout to stay hydrated and cool.

*Just remember, the lower your core body temperature stays, the happier you will be!
We hope you have a **cool** rest of the summer!*

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A POOL THIS SUMMER!

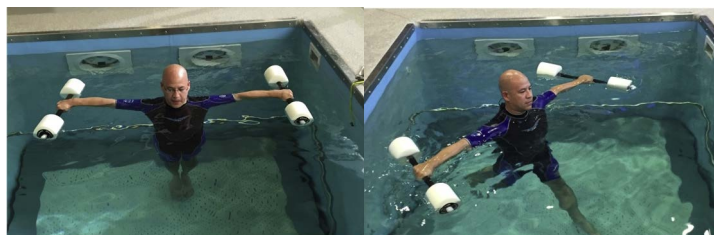
Aquatic exercises are a good choice for people with MS when done in cool (81-84 degree) water. Exercising in the water can help improve coordination, flexibility, balance, muscle strength, endurance, and cardiovascular fitness. Aquatic exercise can improve your functional mobility on land with transfers, walking ability, and stair climbing.

Exercising in the water gives you extra support to practice standing and balance activities that may be too difficult or unsafe to perform on land. Other benefits of aquatic exercise include: less energy needed for movements, improved strength through water resistance, decreased tone/spasticity due the relaxing effects of buoyancy, and better protection from falls. It can also help you bear more weight through your legs with less pressure on the joints which is helpful with arthritis. Aquatic exercise can improve circulation and offers a cool exercise environment to prevent overheating. Be careful if the water is too warm (above 84 degrees) and take frequent rest/cooling breaks to prevent increased core temperature and heat intolerance.

Here are some Aquatic Exercises to Try:

1. Trunk twists

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, arms extended out to each side at shoulder height. Rotate slowly from one side to the other while looking over each shoulder. Make sure you're twisting at your waist, not just your head and neck.



2. Marching

Lift your leg up to 90 degrees as if you were marching. Lower your leg to the ground and repeat on the opposite leg. Maintain a neutral pelvis and keep your feet under your shoulders.



3. Walking

Walk in the pool focusing on heel-toe foot placement and swinging the opposite arm with the opposite leg.



4. Sidestepping

Walk sideways, keeping your toes pointed forward. Arms move like wings (as the leg moves out to the side the arms move up toward the surface of water then back to sides of body when legs are together).



[Click Here](#) for NMSS Resource on Aquatic Therapy!

What's New in MS Research: Summer 2021

Multiple Sclerosis Association of America provided a summary of recent research. Here are some of the headlines:

- **FDA approves Ponvory for Relapsing MS**
- **Plegridy now approved for intramuscular injections**
- **Biotech company prepares next phase for oral MS therapy**
- **Assessing Ocrevus in older adults with progressive MS**
- **One in five people with MS use opioid medications**

Click below to read the full study:

<https://mymsaa.org/news/whats-new-in-ms-research-march-2021>

Receiving Help to Keep Cool

If you live somewhere without air conditioning and you have MS, you may be able to deduct the cost of your fans and cooling equipment as a medical expense if your doctor has written you a prescription for it. [Contact the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to get further assistance!](#)



Proudly Serving Your Community

NEW THERAPIST SPOTLIGHT:



Dr. Eileen Gardner PT, DPT, LSVT

We are excited to announce our new therapist Eileen Gardner! Eileen recently started working at Connections PT in our Worcester clinic. She received her Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from the George Washington University in 2008 and continued to receive her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from MGH Institute of Health Professions in 2011. Eileen has a background in treating neurologic and orthopedic injuries and her areas of special interest include Parkinson's Disease, stroke, vestibular disorders and amputees. Eileen is also LSVT Big Certified for Parkinson's Disease. Outside of the clinic, Eileen enjoys going on walks with her dog and swimming.

OUR TEAM:



Dr. Alex Warden-Michl
Worcester Clinic



Dr. Amy Roberts
Worcester Clinic



Dr. Jean Feder-Ewell
Wellesley Clinic



Dr. Nicole Simmonds
Worcester Clinic



Dr. Erica Hoffmann
Worcester Clinic



Dr. Eileen Gardner
Worcester Clinic

Real People, Real Results, Real Stories:

“Jean at Connections Physical therapy in Wellesley has been extremely effective in helping to manage my mobility and strength problems resulting from Multiple Sclerosis. I began therapy in February of 2020 and the improvement in my gait, balance and strength is beyond my expectations. Jean has a high level of expertise and understanding of how to lessen physical deficits caused by neurological conditions like MS. She is excellent at identifying the cause of an issue and using appropriate techniques and exercises for improvement. I have a newfound appreciation of simple things that were taken for granted like climbing stairs without trepidation or going for a walk after dinner. The care I have received from Jean and Connections Physical Therapy in Wellesley has improved my quality of life. I am thankful for their care and lucky to have it”

“I’ve been very active all my life. I ran cross country in college, played tennis, and did a lot of hiking with my wife and children. I received a diagnosis of MS in my 30s, but it was “benign”: the exacerbations mainly took the form of vision difficulties, numbness, and other painful sensory experiences. In my 60s I began to have more serious problems connected with a knee replacement that slowed me down followed by increasing motor and balance issues associated with MS. The falls resulted in broken bones, dislocations, and a concussion. I have been doing PT with Connections for about 3 years. The strength I’ve gained has allowed me to “catch” possible falls, walk much better, and lower myself into chairs without knocking them over!”



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