



connections
PHYSICAL THERAPY

NEWSLETTER



Avoid Back Pain!

IMPROVE YOUR
**SPINE
HEALTH**

ALSO INSIDE

How Can I Improve the Health of My Spine?
Simple Tasty Chili Recipe



*You don't have
to live in pain!*

HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR SPINE?



Are you living with back pain? You may notice that your pain worsens each morning when you wake up, when you have to stand for more than 10 minutes, or when you have to walk long distances. The severity of back pain can range from minor dull aches to sharp stabbing pains. Pain that radiates from the spine down to the buttocks and legs is typically a sign of sciatica. However, your back pain can be avoided and resolved by improving your spinal health. Contact Connections Physical Therapy today to find out how.

You may be wondering, "What does this mean? How can I tell if my spine is healthy?" When we think of health, we typically focus on nutrition, exercise, and heart health – but spine health is incredibly important, as well. Your spine does a lot for your body – it protects your spinal cord, allows you to breathe properly, and it is what allows your body to move. In

fact, almost every function in your body is directly connected to the health of your spine.

This is why spine health is so important. If you are living with back pain, you know how limiting it can be. In order to make sure your spine is at its optimum health, you must achieve the following:

- Good posture and spinal curves.
- Strong abdominal and core muscles.
- Strong spinal and gluteus muscles.
- Good flexibility and balance with side-bending and rotation.
- Good nutrition and rest at night.sequences, such as poor posture, fatigue, inflammation, or pain.

COME BACK IN FOR PT!

HOW CAN I IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF MY SPINE?



1. Practice proper nutrition. Nutrition is a critical part of all health, whether you are focusing on your heart, joints, or spine – whatever you do, it is always important to eat right. Healthy fruits and vegetables contain the vitamins and antioxidants that make up a healthy spine function. They help to rebuild the bone, muscle, and connective tissues that are constantly being used throughout the day.

2. Get some sleep. Throughout the day, your spine is compressed with standing, sitting, and bending. Did you know that it is actually possible to lose about ½ an inch over the course of a day? Adequate rest in a good position while sleeping helps you maintain a healthy spine. It is ideal to start off lying in bed for the first 10 minutes on your side with your knees curled up, as this allows the discs in your spine to rehydrate. Afterwards, continue sleeping on your side with a pillow between your legs or roll onto your back with a pillow under your knees. Avoid sleeping on your stomach.

3. Give up cigarettes. Many studies show that nicotine in cigarettes directly accelerates the breakdown of the discs

in the spine and destroys connective tissues that keep the joints moving properly. In addition, nicotine increases the inflammatory response in the body, disrupting the body's natural ability to repair itself.

4. Work on the flexibility and strength of your spine. Your body is meant to move – this is the most important purpose of the spine. You can make sure your spine remains flexible by stretching for 10 minutes every day. It is also important to make time to move around when possible at work. Stretch your spine out by reaching overhead and leaning over to one side, then the other. You can also focus on gently twisting at the waist and stretching your hamstrings. Spend 3-4 days a week working on your core strength with abdominal muscle exercises, so you can keep your spine and core muscles strong. A strong spine and core allows you to move without stressing the discs or nerves in your back.

5. Maintain proper posture and balance. If you sit at a desk during the day, make sure you are sitting in a straight-backed chair and your feet flat on the

floor. Avoid sitting on very soft couches for prolonged periods of time, as this keeps your spine in a flexed position. When lifting, make sure you keep your spine straight, lift with your legs, and avoid twisting. Proper balance is important for both the small muscles of your spine and your nervous system. You can enhance your balance by standing on one leg at a time for 10 seconds 3-4 times a week.

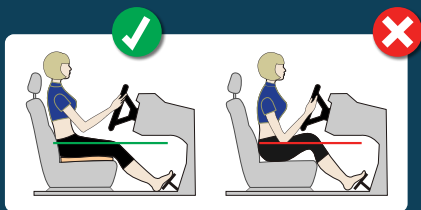
6. Go to a physical therapist for spine check-ups. Your physical therapist can check your spine alignment to check for areas that could be improved. It is wise to have your spine checked every 6 months, in order to ensure your back is moving how it should. At Connections Physical Therapy, our physical therapists are experts in the field of spine health who can help your back operate as it should.

If you have been living with back pain, or you'd like to avoid potential back pain, don't hesitate to contact Connections Physical Therapy today. By catching back pain early, we can resolve the issue so it doesn't progress. **Don't live with the limits of back pain – improve your spine health with us today!**

PROPER DRIVING POSTURE

Try this if you're experiencing pain from poor posture behind the wheel.

When traveling, be sure to adjust your driver seat to ensure that your hips are just above your knees. This not only allows for better blood circulation, but can ease the strain on your lower back.



WE'RE STAYING SAFE!

The staff at Connections Physical Therapy is focused on keeping you healthy and our equipment and facilities clean. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, we are taking these precautions:



ONE PATIENT TO
ONE THERAPIST
ONLY IN THE
CLINIC



NO DOUBLE
BOOKING
OR PATIENT
OVERLAP



THERAPISTS
PROVIDED TIME
TO CLEAN ALL
SURFACES AND
EQUIPMENT
BETWEEN PATIENTS.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT



CAROLYN BROOKS PT

Carolyn received her Bachelor's of Science in Physical Therapy from UMass Lowell. She started her career as an acute rehab therapist and has worked short-term in acute care and home care before transitioning to outpatient/sports for the majority of her career. Carolyn started working with Connections Physical Therapy in 2009 in our Holliston and Medway clinics.

Carolyn treats patients ranging from ages 5-90+ and her favorite injury to treat are shoulders. Her focus is looking at the patient as a whole and using manual skills and functional strengthening to help get people back to doing what they love. She enjoys learning from other clinicians on new techniques and updates that are happening in the physical therapy field.

Carolyn's outside hobbies are exercise including Pilates, TRX, weight training and walking. She enjoys spending time with my family-husband and 3 grown boys who have all been patient with Connections at one time or another and watching sports, especially baseball.

HEALTHY RECIPE

SIMPLE TASTY CHILI

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 lbs lean ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 small green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (16-oz) cans red kidney beans, rinsed & drained
- 2 (14-1/2-oz) cans diced tomatoes
- 2 to 3 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp ground cumin

DIRECTIONS:

Cook first 4 ingredients in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring until beef crumbles and is no longer pink; drain. Place mixture in 5-quart slow cooker; stir in beans and remaining ingredients. Cook at HIGH 3 to 4 hours or at LOW 5 to 6 hours.



MONICA BRUM PT, DPT

Monica received her BS in Kinesiology from Gordon College and went on to receive her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Rhode Island. She has spent her clinical career in the outpatient orthopedic setting. Monica joined the Connections team in 2018 working in our Holliston clinic. She enjoys treating shoulders and her focus for each patient is to restore proper mechanical alignment and strength to improve mobility and function. Outside of work she likes to spend time with her husband and two daughters, strength training and running with friends.



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