



# BODY HEALTH

CHIROPRACTIC PHYSIOTHERAPY ACUPUNCTURE ART® MASSAGE ORTHOTICS

## Gardening Tops the List of Warm Weather Back Pain Woes

### Ontario's back care specialists offer preventative tips

A new poll released in mid-May reveals that gardening and yard work are the number one causes of back and/or neck pain in the spring and summer months by a wide margin. Eighty-eight percent of Ontario chiropractors report that working in the yard and garden are the most common sources of back and neck pain they treat during the warm weather season. Golf ranked second at 31 per cent, closely followed by outdoor sports in general at 30 per cent.

The survey, conducted by national research firm Pollara, polled a total of 500 chiropractors throughout the province. The survey is accurate to within plus or minus 4.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

"In Canada, gardening is an estimated \$3.5 billion business and all that digging, lifting, raking, pruning, planting, weeding and watering can cause significant strain to the muscles and back," says Dr. Dennis Mizel, President of the Ontario Chiropractic Association (OCA). "The good news is that it is preventable. Gardening can be a serious workout. That's why we're encouraging people to treat it like any other kind of exercise. Warming-up before digging in, and using the proper techniques and tools can go a long way to letting people enjoy the results of their labour pain-free."



The OCA is launching a public education campaign, "Plant and Rake Without the Ache", to help Ontario's gardening enthusiasts avoid the stiff and sore joints, muscles and back pain that often

accompany a work-out in the yard. Tips sheets on warm-up exercises, proper lifting and a wealth of other simple, easy-to-follow advice can be found on the OCA Web site at [www.chiropractic.on.ca](http://www.chiropractic.on.ca)

The OCA is partnering with the Ontario Horticultural Society, the Garden Clubs of Ontario and Sheridan Nurseries to help get the word out about safe yard work and gardening.

"Thousands of people visit our gardening centres once the warm weather hits," says Mary-Beth Brown, Marketing Coordinator Sheridan Nurseries. "So we're pleased to be able to reach our customers with this public education program. It's a good idea to limber up before you get to the gardening centre and start loading supplies into your car or truck, and we always have someone to help out if a customer needs assistance."

### The OCA offers the following tips for Back Smart Gardening:

**Stretch Before You Start:** Warming-up your muscles with stretches before going out helps to reduce the stress and strain on your joints and muscles, reducing the chance of injury.

**Bend Your Knees to Lift with Ease:** When lifting, keep your back straight and bend your knees. Always carry the load close to your body and avoid twisting.

**The Right Tools, The Right Moves:** Use the right tools and moves for the job. Kneel to plant and change positions frequently when raking, digging, hoeing or pruning. Use ergonomically designed, long handled, lightweight tools.

**Take a Break Before it Aches:** Give yourself and your back a break. As a rule-of-thumb take a brief rest or stretch break at least three times each hour, and drink fluids frequently.

"Done properly, gardening produces more than a beautiful yard, it can help tone and strengthen muscles and burn calories too," adds Dr. Kristina Peterson, chair of the OCA's Public Awareness Programming Committee. "An hour of gardening can easily burn 300-400 calories. Compare that to only 40 calories when just sitting for half an hour."

"Given the late start of spring weather in Ontario this year, we expect that there's a lot of pent-up energy just waiting to get out into the yard. That could lead to a tendency to over do it," cautioned Dr. Mizel. "To avoid ending up with stiff muscles and a sore back, the single best piece of advice I can give this spring is, take it easy."

*Gardening Tops the List of Warm Weather Back Pain Woes was taken from a May 13th, 2003 Ontario Chiropractic Association press release bearing the same title.*

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## From Your Clinic Director

I'm back! After enjoying a six month maternity leave, I am happy to be back in the office. Special thanks to Dr.

Anita Yee for treating my clients, Angela & Liz for managing clinic operations, and to my clients for being so understanding and patient in my absence. I am now working Monday through Thursday taking Fridays off to be with my daughter. Georgia is doing very well and has mastered the art of rolling over, sleeping through the entire night and eating cereal. Today oatmeal, tomorrow she conquers the world!

This edition of Body Health is a smorgasbord of relevant health issues ranging from golf and gardening tips to abdominal strengthening. A little something for everyone!

We are constantly trying to improve our office to meet your needs. If you have any ideas or concerns please share them with our staff. We are here to help you!

I hope everyone has a terrific summer. Enjoy your holidays.

Cheers,

Dr. Shannon Dales



*This is my little girl, Georgia, enjoying a day at the park and putting her feet up.*



## Golf Injuries

Dr. Anita B. Yee

Golf has the deceptive image of being a leisurely social game that does not need physical fitness and training. However, the amount of physical exertion in golf can be as much as sports like hockey or football. Like any sport, preparation through sport specific conditioning, proper warm up and expert instruction to improve technique can minimize the chances of developing a sport-related injury. The most common golf injuries affect the back and shoulder followed by elbow and wrists. Most often, golf injuries occur because of altered movement patterns and subsequently repetitive strain due to dysfunction of a joint, poor posture, lack of flexibility and/or being out of shape.

Due to our wonderful snowy winters, most golfers have a hiatus of a few months from golfing and most other physical activities. As spring approaches, golfers have to dust off their clubs, work out their creaky joints and rusty golf swings! It is important to spend those winter months maintaining overall physical conditioning in preparation for golf. Good cardio respiratory fitness provides the stamina to walk and play eighteen holes. Strength training allows the golfer to hit with consistent control and accuracy, to generate maximum swing power and thus, increases the distance of the drive. Overall physical conditioning results in better health as well as a better golf game!

Golfing without a warm-up increases the likelihood of injury. When the muscle is inactive and not warmed up, it is less flexible and more prone to being strained. A proper warm-up consists of a minimum ten to fifteen minutes of activity that increases heart rate and warms up the muscles (such as a brisk walk, jog, or stationary bike ride). This should be followed by a thorough gentle, slow and smooth stretch of all major muscle groups involved from head to toe. During the stretch, do not bounce or jerk the muscles into position. Next is swing practice. Do not start with the driver. Ease your way up to the driver by starting with the woods and irons. Swing practice also gears the muscle up for a consistent and accurate swing. Now, you are ready to start your game!

Golfing is a one-sided sport with the same action being carried out repeatedly, so most injuries occur because of overuse (repetitive strain) with poor technique. The key to the golf swing is good posture and a full range of motion of all involved joints and muscles. The golf swing is a coordinated and smooth transfer of force from joints and muscles in the proper sequence. Poor posture, lack of flexibility, inadequate warm-up, poor technique and pre-existing injuries (low back, knees, hips, shoulders, elbow, etc.) can all interrupt the smooth movement of the golf swing and decrease the effectiveness of the swing. It can also subject the body to abnormal stresses as one compensates for the less than optimal function of the compromised muscles and joints. This inefficient swing increases the risk of developing an injury.

It is important to have a chiropractor or physiotherapist assess your movement patterns if you have an acute, recurrent or chronic injury. This person can provide treatment and give you exercises to help restore normal function. It is also important to periodically review your golf swing with a golf pro to refine your technique and prevent injuries.

Golf, like all other sports, requires an overall good fitness level, a warm-up and proper technique to prevent injury. See you on the back nine.





# The Only Sit-Up You Should Ever Do

Dr. Susan D. DeWolfe

One of the most important abdominal muscles of the body's "core" is the rectus abdominus. Dr. Stewart McGill PhD., a professor of spinal biomechanics at the University of Waterloo has recognized that strong abdominals, as well as several other core muscles stabilize your spine and protect your back from stress and strain. Strength is not only measured in terms of power but also endurance. If the abdominal muscles have good endurance they will not fail when you need them.

Many of us have tried a variety of sit-ups for our abdominals only to find that:

1. We hate them and they are hard to do
2. They cause us low back pain

### How to do "The Sit-Up"

Lie on your back with your left leg straight and on the floor. Your right knee should be bent and your right foot placed flat on the floor. Place one or both hands palm side down on the floor underneath the natural arch in your back; do not flatten your back. Slowly raise your head and shoulders off the floor without moving your low back. Hold for up to 7 or 8 seconds, breathing the entire time. That is one repetition, repeat 4 more reps then switch your legs so that your right leg is straight and your left leg is bent. Repeat 5 times then switch legs again.

### Remember:

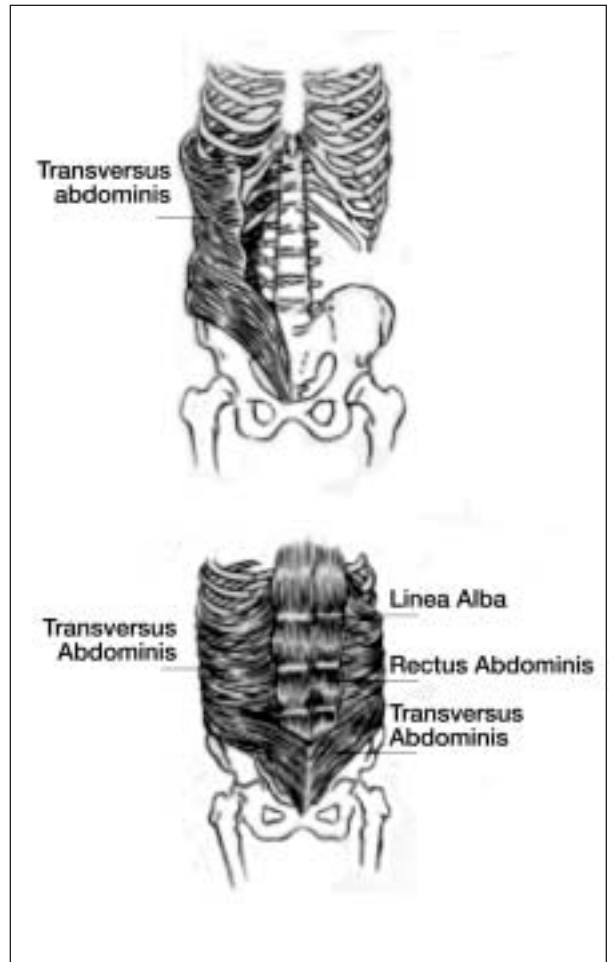
- Do not flatten or arch your back at any point during the sit-up
- Do not let your pelvis curl up or your legs lift off the floor
- Do not look at your knees, keep looking towards the ceiling, this will ensure your neck is comfortable and protected
- Do not continue sit-ups if they cause low back pain, shortness of breath or discomfort. To further avoid neck discomfort, place your tongue on the roof of your mouth, behind your front teeth. This helps stabilize your neck.
- DO ENJOY!

Low back pain usually occurs because our abdominal muscles are weak, consequently during a sit-up they stop working and we switch over to our hip flexor muscles (psoas). This muscle runs from the inside of our thigh bone up to the vertebrae below our ribcage at about a 45 degree angle. When the hip flexor contracts during sit-ups we actually arch our low back and jam our vertebrae together. Ouch!

Dr. McGill has done scientific research into the sit-up. Surprisingly, few studies have actually been done on this activity. By placing sophisticated measurement devices into the muscles of live subjects (those poor student volunteers!) he was able to measure the actual amount of muscular contraction during a variety of sit-ups. Dr. McGill concluded that most sit-ups do not contract abdominal muscles as well as was originally thought.

Using the results of this research, Dr. McGill developed a sit-up that maximizes the entire abdominal complex contraction, but maintains the low back in a neutral position (i.e. no arching or flattening out). This means you can do a sit-up and your low back stays pain free as you build the endurance in the abdominal muscle.

To review, the abdominals run from approximately your pubic bone to the bottom of your ribs (see picture). To strengthen this muscle complex, one simply approximates the ribs toward the pubic bone without moving the lower back or causing a pelvic tilt.



## Full-Time Massage Therapy Now Available

We are pleased to now offer full-time massage therapy services. Julianna Fernades, a registered massage therapist, has joined our Health Centre team. She is experienced in sport injuries, car/accident related injuries, pregnancy issues and of course, relaxation massage. Please help us welcome Julianna.

Remember, most health benefit plans cover massage therapy. Check your plan today!



## Golfing Mechanics Come from the Core How to Protect Your Back and Improve Your Game

Scott Allen, Physiotherapist



There has been a lot of talk lately regarding the importance of the abdominal core muscles. This article will review golf as related to these core muscles.

In working with golfers it is clear that swing path variability is the enemy of developing a more conscious and consistent game. It is very important to consider where the foundation for a standardized swing arises. This comes from a proper set-up having the shoulders, spine and hips aligned around a central axis of motion throughout the swing phase. Deviation of spinal alignment into the back swing is a very common problem that dramatically diminishes any chance for a good outcome at the point of impact. With the assumption

that the appropriate range of movement is available in the aforementioned areas (and in most clients over 40 years of age this is not so), we can look at how to move around a defined axis of movement at the spine with control. With education in how to utilize the appropriate muscles to achieve and identify (internally) neutral spine there is greater power, decreased risk of injury, a reduction of potential points of compensation at the hips and shoulders, as well as a more linear path of the club head toward the ball.

Research has shown, in cases of injury, the deepest layers of abdominal musculature are deactivated and allow for a larger translation of the spinal segments. This places significantly larger stress on the passive tissues, increasing the risk for acute and chronic disorders at the ligaments, cartilage, and discs. Also there is evidence that this lack of control allows for more variability regarding movement which is directly related to inconsistent and hard to diagnose golfing mechanics.

## Lunch and Learn Session

On February 19, 2003, our Commerce Court Health Centre team conducted a seminar for the Commerce Court towers. Our very own Dr. Anita Yee and Dr. Susan DeWolfe presented the seminar entitled "Increase Your Vitality". This lunchtime learning opportunity focused on strategies to increase energy through postural balance, mobility and strength training. The seminar wrapped up with an interesting and informative Q&A session and a take home survey developed to rate everyone's overall vitality level.

If your company is interested in providing an "in-house" seminar for your employees, please contact us anytime!

## Boca Sandal

Finally a woman's sandal that is both supportive and looks good! The Boca Sandal is our newest ladies sandal that houses a customized shoe bed in an attractive outer shell. It is available in both black and brown.



## From the Front Desk

By Angela Sofroniou & Liz Syrmopoulos

### Dear Patients:

When you are not feeling well and are finding yourself in an emergency situation, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Also, please remember to let us know of any changes to:

- your address (including e-mail)
- phone number (work or home)
- Health card number

Thank you very much for your cooperation



## BODY HEALTH

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Body Health is brought to you by The Commerce Court Health Centre and is dedicated to providing accurate, timely chiropractic, acupuncture, active release therapy, orthotic therapy, massage therapy and reflexology information representing the current state of knowledge. Keep in mind that research on these matters continues daily and is subject to change. The information presented is not intended as a substitute for medical treatment. It is intended to provide ongoing support of your healthy lifestyle practices.

Body Health is circulated to our clients as a complimentary service. For more information, contact Dr. Shannon Dales at:

The Commerce Court Health Centre  
30 Wellington Street West  
Commerce Court Postal Station, P.O. Box 28  
Toronto, Ontario M5L 1A1 Canada  
Tel: 416.214.0100 Fax: 416.214.0113

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### Services:

- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture
- Active Release Therapy
- Orthotic Therapy
- Massage Therapy
- Reflexology
- Physiotherapy

### Hours:

Monday to Thursday 7am to 6 pm  
Friday 7am to 3 pm

**TTC Directions:** Leave the King Street Platform (Yonge Line) at the Melinda Street Exit. Follow the signs for Commerce Court in the underground PATH system. Look for the Commerce Court South directions (we are on the ground level, court side) which will take you straight through the food court, turn left, at the South Tower doors, take the escalator up, then take the stairs up on your left, and finally walk through two set of doors into our office.

**Parking:** There is underground parking in Commerce Court and BCE Place both accessible off Wellington Street.