The Importance of Staying in Motion

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One of the secrets to health is to stay in motion. Motion strengthens your muscles to better support your body. It also provides movement to your joints and strengthens your bones. In addition, motion provides a release of hormones that makes you feel good, so it positively affects your mental health.

When your spine is subluxated, the joints of your spine aren’t moving appropriately, which causes pressure on the nerves. The nerves communicate with your muscles and organs when they’re functioning properly. When the nerves are not able to function properly it affects your muscles and organs.

I encourage my patients to stay active and to have their spines adjusted on a regular basis. I find it easier to stay active by participating in several activities. I’m a member at Curves, a woman’s fitness center, where I work out several times a week. I meet with a personal trainer throughout the week to work on cardiovascular fitness along with weight lifting and cross training. I also enjoy doing “dirt therapy,” which is how I refer to planting and tending to the flowers and vegetable gardens at my home.

In addition, my husband and I ride a tandem bicycle and I’m the “stoker,” the term for the person in back. We’ve had many great experiences including bicycle trips to the Canadian Rockies and the Black Hills of South Dakota. We’ve done portions of RAGBRAI for numerous years. One of my fitness goals this year is to complete a “century” ride, which is 100 miles in one day.

I’m also a horseback rider. My horse, Paddy, and I spend a lot of time together practicing to compete in local shows. This year I hope to be competitive in the horsemanship classes. This is where you ride a pattern and the horse and rider are judged on their performance.

I know for our friends and family affected with musculoskeletal diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis (MS), that staying in motion is a challenge. This is particularly true during periods of exacerbation or “flare ups.” Here are some suggestions for these individuals to stay in motion:

**Marching:** While seated in a chair move your legs up and down in a marching motion. This exercise strengthens your thigh, low back and abdominal muscles.

**Arm Circles:** Seated in a chair with good posture, extend your arms above your head and/ or in front of you and keep your elbows slightly bent about six inches apart. Visualizing the face of a clock out in front of you, begin by holding your arms up overhead at 12 o’clock. Circle around to go all the way around the clock in a controlled, fluid motion. Reverse directions and circle the opposite way. Do eight repetitions, rest, and do another set of eight repetitions.
**Tummy twist:** Sit in a chair with good posture, with both hands close to the body, elbows bent and pulled in close to the ribcage. Slowly rotate your torso to the right as far as you comfortably can, being sure to keep the rest of your body still and stable. Rotate back to the center and repeat in the opposite direction. Do this eight times, with two twists counting as a full set. Rest and do another eight sets.

**Shin Strengtheners:** Sitting on the edge of a chair, extend your legs out in front of you, keeping your knees slightly bent and placing your heels on the floor, toes pointed upward. Point the toes downward, then flex them upward. Do 10 to 15 sets of point and flex. Rest. Do another set of 10 to 15 repetitions.

**Neck Stretch:** Seated in a chair with good posture, slowly tilt your head toward your right shoulder. Hold the head in this position, and extend your left arm out to the side and slightly downward so that your hand is at waist level. Release and repeat on the left side. Do two times for each side.

For better health, set your goal to stay in motion and try to vary the types of exercises and activities you do.