

evolve

The Body Dynamics Quarterly Newsletter

Weeding Out Garden-Variety Back Pain

Tips for How To Keep Your Back Injury-Free While Working in Your Yard or Garden

While digging in the dirt can be a relaxing way to spend a sunny spring day, it can also be a pain in the back.

Gardening is, in fact, a major cause of back pain. A recent study of nearly 2,000 people showed that nearly 40 percent of those surveyed complained of back problems. Out of this, nearly 45 percent identified gardening as the cause of their pain. The number was even higher (55 percent) among those over 35 years old.

Taking a few precautions and paying a little extra attention to your body mechanics can

help you steer clear of the slippery slope of low back pain.

First and foremost, the basic rules of good body mechanics apply to all yard activities:



The basic rules of body mechanics apply to gardening activities.

Keep your abdominal muscles engaged. Keep your spine straight. Bend at your hips and knees, not your spine.

Additional tips for specific gardening activities follow.

DIGGING IN THE DIRT

When shoveling dirt, use your body weight to leverage the load by leaning into the shovel.

Keep your spine straight and your hip bones square

to the shovel blade. To lift the load bend your knees and lift with your legs, and when dumping dirt from the shovel turn your whole body rather than rotating just through the spine.

Keep your abdominals engaged, your spine straight, and bend at your hips.

PAIN-FREE WEEDING

For extended weeding sessions, sit on a bucket or stool. Establish a wide base of support by firmly planting your "sits" bones on the stool and taking a wide stance with your legs. This allows your arms to move more freely. Hinge from the hips as you work, rather than flexing the spine, and place a forearm on your thighs to decrease the load on your spine.

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1st Annual Fitness Drive a Success

It's a fact: Exercise reduces your risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. But if exercise is medicine, what's your prescription? On a Saturday in April, 38 men and women visited Body Dynamics to learn just that.

The BDI annual fitness physical included seven stations measuring:

- ▶ Posture and alignment
- ▶ Upper and lower body strength
- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Core control
- ▶ Functional abilities

- ▶ Height, weight, and blood pressure
- ▶ Cardiovascular endurance

Upon completing the screening, participants were given a computerized summary of their fitness findings and a personalized exercise prescription, which they reviewed individually with a BDI physical therapist. Additional therapists and trainers were on hand to show participants how to perform exercises and to answer their questions.

The next fitness screening day will be held this fall. Call 703.527.9557 for information. ■

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From the Body Dynamics Director



Welcome to the 7th annual spring edition of BDI's EVOLVE! Although it's hard to know that it's spring—we seem to be vacillating between fall and summer weather. Hopefully, we will have a moment to appreciate sunny skies and cool breezes before we hit the 90s.

Spring is the perfect time to renew commitments to health and wellness, as so many people did this April by participating in BDI's first annual fitness physical drive (see the article on the front page for details). If you weren't able to participate, just give the front desk a call. They'll be happy to schedule a physical for you with one of our therapists, who can help you set goals to meet your health and wellness targets for 2009.

Also in the spirit of spring, we are renewing efforts to go "green" by moving to electronic distribution of our newsletter, although we will still keep some hard copies on hand. Let us know which you prefer. Do you really open and read electronic newsletters? Here's a test: The first 10 folks to give us feedback on electronic versus hardcopy newsletters will get a free BDI water bottle!

No new babies or weddings to announce at BDI this spring, but happy 1st birthday to Elizabeth, Cooper, Jackson, and Tyler. And we are welcoming a new therapist, Lauren Proctor, DPT, who graduated from GW's Program in Physical Therapy. We are also seeking a few more folks to round out our team, so you may see additional new faces over the summer.

Looking forward to seeing you at BDI—your "cool spot" to work out this summer!

Respectfully,
Jennifer M. Gamboa, DPT, OCS, MTC

Body Dynamics, Inc.

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Body Dynamics, Inc. (BDI)

is a comprehensive center for orthopaedic and manual physical therapy and a leader in training elite athletes and performing artists. BDI's highly evolved programs address musculoskeletal needs through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates rehabilitation with Pilates-evolved fitness programs and massage therapy.

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Weeding Out Back Pain

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LIFTING WISELY

To safely lift a large plant or other heavy object, first get as close to it as you can. Take a wide stance and bend your knees, keeping your spine straight. Keep the load close to your torso as you lift using the strength in your legs, which are stronger and better able to support a heavy load than your back. And again, engage your abdominals to support your spine.

Other suggestions for protecting your back while tending to your garden are to warm up prior to heading out and to change positions frequently. Gardening can certainly be a workout and should be approached as such. Take time to warm up with a quick walk or some stretches before you begin your gardening activities. Any prolonged static position can be taxing to your body, so shift positions or activities regularly—for instance, weed for 10 minutes, then rake for 10 minutes, then mow before returning again to weeding.

Last and most important, listen to your body. At the first twinge or sign of discomfort, change your activity or put the shovel aside for another sunny day. ■



Are You Ready for Summer?

Get in shape for swimsuit season by signing up for a fitness class today!

Pilates ♦ Mindful Movement
Gravity Training ♦ Yoga ♦ Ballet
Exercise Ball ♦ Stretch

Call 703.527.9557 to register.

Bringing “Music and Motion” to Young Dancers With Disabilities

More than 1,500 dancers, young and old, walk through the doors of Maryland Youth Ballet (MYB) in Silver Spring, Maryland, every year. Among them is a unique group of young dancers. Like the other budding ballerinas, these too practice their pliés in pink leotards. But they face a special challenge: The 28 students of MYB’s “Music and Motion” program have physical disabilities including cerebral palsy.

The program was started by MYB teacher Jennifer Cox, whose granddaughter Mary has cerebral palsy. Cox created “Music and Motion” so that Mary and a group of other children with special needs could experience the joy of dance.

Initially, teenage MYB dancers supported the students, helping them move their arms and legs as they leaped and spun to live music. Then in 2006, a grant from an anonymous donor allowed MYB to install a partial weight-bearing system, conceived by physical therapist Rebecca Leonard, that supports the

young dancers using canvas harnesses. Today, each of the young ballerinas, ages 4 to 14, is suspended from a track system on the ceiling in spring-loaded straps that allow them to be upright and move freely.

Cerebral palsy is caused by damage to the motor control centers of the developing brain. It can cause stiffness, loss of depth perception and balance, and uncontrolled or involuntary movements. Physical therapy is crucial for those with cerebral palsy to maintain muscle tone, bone structure, and prevent dislocation of the joints. Traditional therapy programs are designed to encourage the patient to build a strength base for improved gait and volitional movement, together with stretching programs to limit contractures. The MYB program is unique in that it involves complex movement patterns while challenging the students to coordinate movement with music. In addition, the experience offers social



BDI physical therapist Jessica Lassiter (center) with students from Maryland Youth Ballet’s “Music and Motion” program.

and psychological benefits to children who otherwise struggle to fit in with their peers.

BDI physical therapist Jessica Lassiter, who studied in MYB’s advanced program for many years, now teaches the classes. She helps also with corrections and encourages the young dancers. “It’s an amazing experience to see the students’ faces light up as they discover new possibilities for movement,” she says. ■

Portion Control at Your Fingertips For Guidance on Healthy Eating, Look No Further Than Your Own Hands

Portion control, while key to weight management, can be baffling. The USDA food pyramid

recommends that adults consume about 6 ounces of grains, 2 cups of veggies, 2 cups of fruit, 3 cups of milk, 5 ounces of meat or beans, and 5 teaspoons of oil daily.* But how do you determine what constitutes an ounce of meat or a cup of fruit without hauling around your collection of measuring utensils and scales?

The answer is simple: Use your hands! The images below will help you “eyeball” standard portion sizes when dining out or dishing up and thereby achieve or maintain your optimal weight. ■

* Visit mypyramid.gov for more specific guidance based on age, sex, and physical activity level.



Your palm =
3 oz serving of meat



Your cupped hand =
1 oz of nuts



Your fist =
1 measuring cup



Your thumb =
1 oz of cheese



Top half of your thumb =
1 measuring teaspoon

News and Announcements Summer 2009

- ▶ Body Dynamics welcomes Lauren Proctor, who holds a doctorate in physical therapy from George Washington University and a B.S. in exercise science from the University of Tennessee. Lauren played Division I volleyball at the University of Tennessee and was a student-athletic trainer working with women's sports, predominantly softball. She completed a 3-month residency at Body Dynamics this winter as part of her doctorate program prior to joining our team.
- ▶ Massage therapist Kim Fischer-Key completed coursework in visceral massage and temporomandibular joint disorder toward a master's degree in neuromuscular reprogramming (NMR).
- ▶ Congratulations to movement therapist Andrea Watkins, who successfully completed a Stott Pilates mat certification program in Richmond, Virginia, in March.
- ▶ Massage therapist Amy Iadarola completed level 1 Rolf training in Boulder, Colorado, and will attend a 2-month Rolf training program this summer. She expects to be certified in Rolfing by summer 2010.
- ▶ In February, senior trainer Sonia Cronmiller attended a GTS master's symposium in San Diego, California, and Sonia, Andrea Watkins, and Suzanne Koucheravy attended a workshop on shoulder function taught by neuromuscular educator Irene Dowd.

Hoop Dreams: The 50s Craze Updated

Hula-hooping is back in a big way! The craze that began in the 1950s is now spreading across the nation as one of the newest ways to work up a sweat, tone your core, and most important have fun!

"Hooping" or "Hoop Dance" is not the kids' pastime you may remember. As a fitness tool, hoops are larger and weighted, providing toning resistance and a workout that can burn up to 600 calories an hour.

Haven't hooped since you were a kid? Couldn't keep it spinning even then? No problem!

Classes will begin with basic waist hooping, progressing to shoulder, chest, and even leg hooping, to ensure a full-body workout like no other. Any ability level can learn—all you need is a good attitude and the desire to add a fun new *spin* to your workout routine!

For more information on hooping at Body Dynamics, including schedule and fees, please contact our front desk at 703.527.9557. ■

Calendar

Breath Rx	5.9
Early Registration Deadline	5.12
Summer Classes Begin	5.25
No Classes: Memorial Day	5.25
No Classes: Fourth of July	7.4
Summer Classes End	8.29



Coming Soon to BDI: Stott Pilates Certification

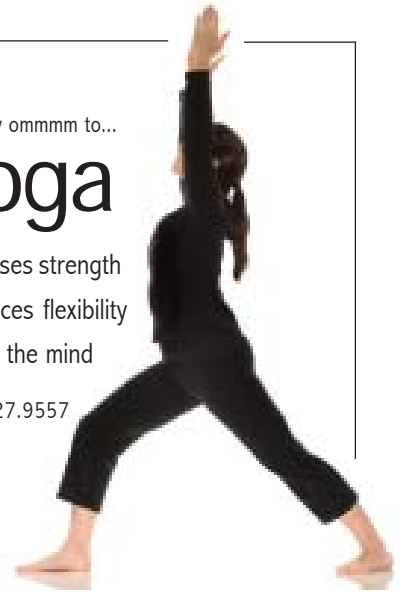
Contact Sonia if you are interested in becoming certified

just say ommm to...

yoga

increases strength
enhances flexibility
quiets the mind

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