

SPORT CENTER

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The Personal Touch — August 2008

Inpatient Physical Therapy—You don't think about it until you need it

by Laurel Grady, P.T., M.S. & Inpatient Rehab Supervisor

When people have an injury or pain, they sometimes go to a physical therapist in an outpatient clinic for help.

What a lot of people don't know is that physical therapists are also found in hospitals. Someone might be in the hospital for elective surgery, such as a total joint replacement, or emergency surgery, such as a gallbladder removal. Others just become sick and need to be in the hospital for special care. Physical therapists in the hospital help all of these people.

Some folks need help with the simple act of getting out of bed & getting to the bathroom. Others need help learning how to walk using crutches or a walker after an injury. Some people need help to get stronger so they can return home to their gardening or housework. Being in the hospital can be worrisome & the loss of independence is upsetting. For me, helping people regain their independence & feel better is very rewarding.

The hospital presents special challenges in physical therapy because a patient's medical condition can complicate his or her ability to get better, & a patient's status can change on an hourly basis. As a P.T. in the hospital, I have to be aware of a patient's medications & other medical/psychological needs at all times.

Another part of my job is helping people go home safely. I work closely with the nursing staff & discharge planner to insure that people are going home to a safe environ-

ment. Sometimes people have to go to a nursing home or a rehab facility for additional care before they can go home. We also work closely with families and caregivers to determine the best discharge plan for each patient.

As an inpatient physical therapist I also do wound care. This is a subspecialty of physical therapy that is not well known but very important. As part of the North Valley



Hospital wound care team, I use various methods to help people heal their wounds. For example, I do debridement (removal of non-living tissue), apply special dressings, & use devices that provide an optimal healing environment. I like wound care because the techniques are simple but each person is different & their medical status can affect how they heal.

Working in a hospital setting involves teamwork. I work with our occupational therapist, speech pathologist, nurses, nursing assistants, doctors & respiratory therapists, to name a few. Everyone works together to help patients get better so they can go home as soon as possible. Occasionally I am called in to the Emergency Room to assess a patient who has hurt their back or needs training for walking with crutches. I also have the opportunity to communicate with WFPT about patients who have left the hospital & have transitioned to an outpatient clinic. This really improves the quality of care, giving patients the best chance for recovery. I like working in a hospital because and it is a very dynamic environment in which changes occur quickly. Flexibility is key!

College student health insurance—What about the big expenses?

Students are rarely sick and basic college health insurance is usually enough, but basic student insurance won't cover big expenses.

Typically student insurance covers to \$30,000. Some plans cover less than that amount, according to the US General Accounting Office, and many have further limits.

Some students have health insurance under a parent's employer. But with rising insurance costs, some parents have opted to use the school's coverage, which is not always a good idea. A college plan can cost \$1,000 and have limited coverage. With only a college plan, students and parents are vulnerable for huge costs in the case of a serious illness or accident.

At Rutgers University, the maximum was raised from \$50,000 to at least \$100,000 after finding that several

students exceeded the old maximum each year.

Representatives for the plan say it is enough for most student illnesses, but not enough for all illnesses or injuries.

When considering a student health plan, parents should read the terms of coverage carefully. A student at Ross University was on the university's \$100,000 maximum plan. But the per-day cap for hospital room, board and miscellaneous expense was only \$2,500 per day.

That turned out to be much less than the \$24,098 the student was charged for a 48-hour hospital stay and treatment.

Colleges and universities look for plans that are affordable. Buying their health insurance, however, is a big gamble for the student and the student's family.

Exercise of the Month: Lat Pull-Down

This month's exercise is for the climbers of the group.

Having trouble making that reach while climbing? Feel like your arms are doing all the work?

Try using the lat pull-down while at the gym to make your rock climbing easier and more enjoyable.

First, grab the bar with a wide grip (your hands should be very close to the end of the bar).

Next, sit down and lean back slightly. From there you are going to pull the bar towards your chest, focusing on squeezing with your shoulder blades.

Think about pulling your elbows towards your hips. Be careful that you are not doing all the work with your arms. Focusing on squeezing with your shoulder blades should help.

Save yourself from shoulder problems by pulling the bar towards your chest and avoiding pulling behind your head. You also want to be in control of the weight at all times, pulling it down slowly and then letting it up slowly.

Try 2-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions while at the gym. It wouldn't hurt to try this exercise a couple times per week.



"My condition improved dramatically over time due to Gloria's exercise & treatment. She inspired me to continue seeking improvement & working at home" - Renee Gnam, Whitefish

Stretch of the Month: Lats

Do the sides of your back or your armpits ever feel sore after climbing?

This may be due to tightness in your Lats (that muscle that helps pull your arms down).

To stretch this muscle find a flat place to lie down on your back (a table or floor work just fine).

First, tighten up your stomach to prevent your lower back from arching during this stretch.

Point your thumbs toward the ceiling and bring your arms up over your head (your thumbs will end up pointing towards the floor).

Let the weight of your arms and gravity do the stretch for you!



If you find you need a more intense stretch, move to the corner of the bed or table so that your arms can fall past the level of your head.

Don't forget to hold this stretch for 30-60 seconds and repeat 2-3 times.

One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

Andre Gide

If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. Guess what they have planned for you? Not much.

Jim Rohn



"No, it's not water. You seem to be retaining food."

Getting Lost in Whitefish? It's not you... We've moved!

We're proud and thrilled to announce that we've moved into our new home...

The S.P.O.R.T. Center

Stop in and check out our new building and facilities on the North Valley Hospital South Campus, just south of the hospital.

SPORTCENTER

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711 East 13th Street, Whitefish, MT 59937

Call us at 406-862-WFPT (9378) or 862-8250.

Join us on Sept 6 for the Whitefish Friends & Family Fun Run!

The Family Fun Run benefits the Child Development Center and Shepherds Hand Clinic and begins @ 9:30 am on September 6.

Race forms can be downloaded at WFPT.org

See you there!

Inside this month: Working your Lats, research from UCLA & inpatient PT

Meet Laurel Grady

Though not a true Montana native, I moved here in 1981 with my family & graduated from Whitefish High a year later. My entire immediate family lives here & I consider Whitefish home. I have left Flathead Valley a few times &

always return as it is a wonderful place to live & work.

I attended the U of Montana early in my college career, working towards a degree in English.

While there, I lived in France for a semester & studied all things French, including the language. Shortly thereafter, I transferred to the U of Minnesota where I completed my B.A. in English & then returned to Europe for a 3-month bike tour with my brother through France & Italy, as well as spending some time on the beaches of Greece.

I was living in Seattle in 1996 & working behind a desk, when I decided to go back to school to become a physical therapist. I had my "city fix" and decided to return to Montana for P.T. school. I somehow managed to attend school full-time & work while enjoying my favorite outdoor activities such as skiing, mountain biking & hiking.

Since graduating from Montana with my MS in Physical Therapy in 2001, I've worked at various outpatient orthopedic clinics in the Flathead. Since Sept 2005, I have worked at WFPT (now SPORT center) as an inpatient physical therapist & Rehab Supervisor at North Valley Hospital.

I realize how blessed I am to be able to live in such an amazing place & enjoy work that is truly rewarding. I love working in the new North Valley Hospital & am excited about the opening of the new S.P.O.R.T. center close by.

