



MY ELITE MASSAGE

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Off the Table

July 2023



WHAT IF IT'S NOT CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME?



By Kevin Smith, LMT, MMP

The carpal tunnel in your wrist may be where you're feeling the pain, but that doesn't mean it's always what's causing the pain. So before you say yes to a surgery that can potentially leave you worse off than before due to scar tissue, please make sure your wrist pain isn't coming from another location.

Before reaching your wrist, that nerve signal travels from your brain, through your brain stem, and your spinal cord, then branches out through your chest, shoulder joint, upper arm, elbow and forearm. Nerves do not respond well to pressure and that's a lot of places where impingements could be irritating the nerve and referring pain down to your wrist. And there's a fair chance several locations are contributing to the wrist pain.

What If It's NOT Carpal Tunnel Syndrome? (cont.)

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Bones, scar tissue, misaligned tendons or ligaments, inflammation, and tight muscles are just a few of the things that can create nerve impingements. Some common ones I run into when working on clients might include a slight disc misalignment or stuck facets in the neck, tight scalene or pec minor muscles, clavicle dysfunction (it should drop into a notch on your sternum when raising your arms and sometimes doesn't which sends the other end into the brachial plexus [arm nerve cluster]), the humerus too far into the joint capsule (reduces subacromial space where the nerve enters the arm), muscle adhesions in the arm, tight pronator muscles, limited forearm supination (turning it completely palms up), and carpal (wrist) bone misalignment. All of these can refer pain mimicking carpal tunnel syndrome.

From this list just off the top of my head, it's easy to see that your wrist pain could be referred from any one or even several points between your neck and wrist and unless physical assessments have been done along the full length of the nerve and its roots, a carpal tunnel diagnosis may be premature. Before you choose surgery, it's well worth having an orthopedic massage therapist or, if he or she can give you the time during your appointment, your orthopedist clinically assess the entire length of your arm nerves to verify whether or not that's your best option. After all, if you can avoid the trauma to your body that surgery causes and still get the same benefits, why wouldn't you?



5 AGE & FITNESS MYTHS THAT MAY BE KEEPING YOU FROM BETTER HEALTH

By Jake Trione, AS, FAS, MFT

To exercise or not to exercise – that's a good question. Prioritizing your health and fitness can have numerous benefits; but what about the down sides, especially if you're older and exercise has not been a priority before now? Is it too late? Here are five myths about age and fitness you can just forget about.

Myth #1: I waited too long, I am too old, and it's too late to make any significant improvement to my health

While it is crucial to consider your health, medications, and current limitations when starting a new fitness program, it is never too late to begin one, and you can always benefit from exercise regardless of your age. To ensure a safe and effective approach, consult with a fitness professional, such as a functional aging specialist, who is trained to understand the unique needs of older adults, can provide guidance specific to age-related challenges, and can tailor a fitness program suited specifically to your needs and goals.

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“There are some things
in life where it's better to
receive than to give,
and massage is
one of them.”

~ Al Michaels



5 Age & Fitness Myths... (cont.)

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Myth #2: My muscles have gotten so much weaker with age, lifting weights and resistance training are dangerous now

The truth is that lifting weights is a requirement if you want to improve and maintain your strength and capabilities for many years to come. The health benefits of lifting weights include: maintaining muscle tissue & bone tissue, improved circulation, decreased arthritic pain, and a higher level of metabolism which helps you maintain a healthy weight. It is critical to have a well-balanced strength-training program with sufficient knowledge of how to properly perform resistance training exercises. To ensure your safety and maximize the benefits, be sure to seek guidance from a qualified healthcare professional or a fitness trainer certified to work with older adults.

Myth #3: My muscles and joints are already sore and exercise will just make them worse

While initially there may be some post-exercise muscle soreness due to the mild inflammation it can cause, this should be short-lived and infrequent. In fact, exercise has been shown to improve pain caused by arthritis and reduce the likelihood of developing arthritis in other areas when performed consistently.

If you have a specific condition like fibromyalgia or auto immune diseases, it's important to manage your workload wisely and listen to your body. (Consulting with a physical therapist or certified fitness professional, particularly one with expertise in functional aging, can help you develop an exercise plan that takes into account your specific condition and minimizes any potential discomfort.)

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5 Age & Fitness Myths... (cont.)

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Myth #4: The chance of hurting myself is too high to risk doing strenuous exercise

As I've suggested before in this article, you should always consult with a healthcare professional or certified fitness trainer before starting any new exercise routine, but the important thing is to prioritize your health and well-being, especially as you age. Exercise improves all aspects of your physical condition when done properly and within the required parameters. One particular type of exercise known as High Intensity Interval Training or HIIT has been shown to offer many cognitive benefits in addition to its physical ones when performed regularly with minimal risk of injury.

Myth #5: Since my balance will naturally worsen with age and that is crucial to most exercise, a workout is not safe for me to attempt.

This isn't necessarily true with individuals who are working on improving the different elements that affect their balance. Regular

exercise, including activities like walking and participating in fitness classes designed for functional aging, can greatly enhance your balance and overall physical capabilities. Once again, a certified fitness professional can help you develop a personalized exercise plan that focuses on improving balance and coordination.

To exercise or not? All signs point to a massive YES! At the end of the day, these myths are just that – myths. Prioritizing your health and fitness can have numerous benefits as you age and at any age. Don't wait any longer to invest in your well-being and start enjoying the many advantages of an active and healthy lifestyle.

Jake Trione is a certified functional aging specialist and co-owner of TriFitness Gym (specializing in safe and effective fitness programs designed for healthy aging) located in Clear Lake and coming soon to Friendswood. For more information, contact TriFitness Gym at (281) 786-1189 or email Jake@TriFitnessGym.com to learn more about functional aging and how their fitness programs can help you improve balance, increase strength, or simply lead a healthier lifestyle.

FROM TOE TO HEAD What About Bunions?

By Kevin Smith, LMT, MMP

As you likely know, a bunion is a deformity of the joint where the big toe attaches to the foot. As it gradually worsens, it will often bend the big toe towards or under the other toes with the joint turning red and painful. The podiatrists at Gait Happens explain that it is a result of instability in your foot and likely above it as well, and that the "bump" is not some new growth but rather the head of the first metatarsal bone.

So, how do bunions start? The short answer is that it's usually bad footwear. Look at a baby's toes shortly after birth and you will notice what used to be true of your own feet. Their toes point in the same direction as the foot bones. But, after a few months wearing

tight socks, your toes started to point inward. Now add the years of life you have behind you wearing shoes that didn't let your toes spread, or worse, narrowed them further, and you can see why your big toe might begin to sit in its joint incorrectly. Then, your intelligent body will secure it by laying down new tissue, a.k.a. your bunion. And your intelligent body will also remove that tissue if you correct the joint, so surgery should be your last option.

How to correct it? First, let an orthopedic massage therapist painlessly release the muscles holding your toe in that position. Next, work on it at home with a correctly-sized spacer device from "Correct Toes". Also, start wearing shoes with a wide toe box to stop the deformation process. For more detailed info and some very helpful exercises, you can also visit GaitHappens.com and/or browse their many Instagram videos.