

# Excel

PHYSICAL THERAPY

DOCTOR RECOMMENDED, PATIENT  
PREFERRED...YOU HAVE A  
CHOICE!®



*Doctor recommended,  
patient preferred...  
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## Welcome

to Excel Physical Therapy's Quarterly Newsletter. This newsletter is designed to keep our current, past, and future patients informed of what is going on within our company, as well as offer some helpful information related to your health. If at any time you would like more information or have questions, please feel free to contact us at Excel. You can find our [locations](#) and [contact information](#) on our website at [ExcelPT.com](http://ExcelPT.com).

Thank you and Best of Health!

## Did You Know?

### Did you know.....Excel Treats Bicycling Related Injuries

Excel is now offering treatment for bicycling injuries for both the competitive athlete and the recreational rider. Our program includes a musculoskeletal evaluation to identify problem areas in posture, alignment, strength and flexibility plus a comprehensive proper bike fitting. A proper bike fitting can improve both comfort and performance on the bike. After the complete evaluation, the client will receive instruction in a home program to address deficiencies in strength, flexibility or other areas. Contact Excel's Northwest Clinic for more information on this program.

[Northwest Clinic](#)



## Seasonal Tips

### Hiking: A Great Springtime Activity

By Ken Williams, PT

Hiking is a great way to become more physically active and to enjoy the outdoors. Hikes can vary from a short walk on flat terrain to a strenuous hike for several hours on a mountain trail.

Walking/hiking is a relatively inexpensive way to get more exercise. There are many trails and parks in the area and minimal equipment is needed to start.

[Click here to read more on Hiking](#)

## Educational Corner



### Degenerative Disc Disease

By: Zach Girthoffer, PT

What is Degenerative Disc Disease?

Degenerative disc disease (DDD) is a condition where the intervertebral discs change or deteriorate as we all age. Everyone over the age of 18 will be subject to some sort of degenerative changes in their spine. With our discs, these changes are somewhat unique.

[Click here for more information on this condition.](#)



## Choosing the Right Mattress

There are a number of different mattresses on the market today. Choosing a mattress can be difficult but very important if you are a low back pain sufferer. Sleeping on an unsupportive mattress can greatly affect sleep quality and increase pain. Poor sleeping posture can aggravate back muscles and joints by not supporting normal spinal alignment.

If you are waking daily with increased pain or notice that your old mattress is visibly sagging, you should consider a new mattress purchase. Mattress selection is a personal choice for each individual and there is no single mattress that is best for everyone. There simply are no medically proven “best” mattresses. Therefore, comfort, support, and cost are the main factors to consider when choosing a mattress.

[Click here to read more on Choosing a Mattress](#)

## Conditions Commonly Treated With Physical Therapy

### Musculoskeletal

#### Conditions:

Sprains and Strains  
Arthritis  
Neck Pain/Muscular  
Headaches  
Tendonitis/Bursitis  
Degenerative Disk Disease  
Rotator Cuff Injuries  
Post-fracture  
Weakness/Stiffness  
Overuse Injuries  
Pre and Post-Orthopedic  
Surgery  
Low Back Pain  
Whiplash  
Carpal Tunnel  
Tennis Elbow  
Frozen Shoulder  
Sports Injuries  
Patellofemoral Pain

### Other Conditions:

Burns  
Lymphedema  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Pregnancy Related  
Wound Care  
CVA (Stroke)  
Parkinson's Disease

### Special Services Available:

Functional Capacity Evaluations  
Job Site Analysis  
Work Hardening/Work  
Conditioning  
Pre-Placement Screens  
Hand Therapy  
Aquatic Therapy  
Golf Performance Training

If you suffer from any of these conditions, ask your doctor if Physical Therapy could help you. Then choose the best...Excel Physical Therapy!

[excelpt.com](http://www.excelpt.com)

## Thank You

Excel appreciates your continued support. If you know of anyone in need of physical therapy, we hope you will recommend they come and see us at Excel. Please feel free to contact us at any time

with questions or concerns. Visit our website for more information, clinic locations and phone numbers. Thank you again for utilizing our services in the past. Look for the next Excel Newsletter that will be coming out in Summer 2006.

**Remember only a Licensed Physical Therapist can safely offer you "Physical Therapy" services.**

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### Hiking Continued...

Prepare for each walk/hike with a good pair of shoes, comfortable clothing that offers protection from the sun, sunscreen, plenty of water and snacks if needed. It is also a good idea to walk with a friend and take a cell phone in case of emergency.

If you have been inactive, are overweight, or have any health problems such as asthma or heart disease you should check with your doctor before beginning a walking/hiking program. Be sure you are prepared for the hike you choose. If you are just starting out begin with short walks and progress according to your capabilities and as you get more fit increase the difficulty with more hills, longer walks or increased pace.

It is important to walk at an appropriate pace for your personal level of fitness. You should be able to talk comfortably. If it is difficult to carry on a conversation, slow down the pace until you can carry on a conversation.

After your walk, end with a few stretches (see photos below.) If you have any questions about the appropriate stretches and how to perform them, contact a physical therapist at a nearby Excel Physical Therapy location.



#### **Calf Stretch:**

Place right foot back with leg straight. Bend the left knee until you feel a gentle stretch in the right calf. Be sure to keep the right heel on the floor and right foot pointing straight ahead. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Place left foot back and right foot forward and repeat. Repeat 3 times with each leg.



#### **Quadriceps Stretch:**

Stand erect. Bend knee of leg you are going to stretch and grasp ankle with hand. Maintain erect posture and pull heel to buttocks until you feel a gentle stretch down your anterior thigh. Hold 20-30 seconds. Repeat 3 times with each leg.



#### **Hamstring Stretch:**

Place foot on a box or step approximately 12 inches tall. Keep your back straight. Lean forward at your hips until you feel a gentle stretch down the posterior thigh. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat 3 times with each leg.

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### Degenerative Disc Disease Continued...

First it is important to understand what the disc is and what it does. Our intervertebral discs are located between each vertebra throughout our back. They provide shock absorption and greater mobility of the spine. Discs are made up of a gel-like nucleus (nucleus pulposus) in the middle, and a strong outer layer (annulus fibrosus) that contains the nucleus, like a jelly donut. The discs start out at about 80% water when we are young. Since the disc is flexible, like a tough water balloon, it allows movement throughout the spine, cushion, and spacing between each vertebra. However, as we age, these discs lose their hydration; making them less flexible, less tolerant to motion, and decreased in height. All of these changes make the back more susceptible to injury or painful conditions.



Even though the discs degenerate as we age, when DDD is the cause of pain, it frequently occurs when we are younger, between the ages of 30 and 55. Once we are older, after 55, the discs lose their hydration and become more rigid and tough. The reduced height of the discs can lead to compression of spinal joints and symptoms associated with this. Certain risk factors can increase your chance of developing this condition. These include smoking and obesity. Activities such as aerobic exercise and flexibility training can help to reduce the progress of disc degeneration. Degenerative disc disease is frequently the cause of low back pain.

#### **What can you do?**

If you experience symptoms from degenerative disc disease, there may be some benefit found through physical therapy. Therapists utilize many manual techniques, exercises, and modalities for pain relief. Walking, swimming and bicycling are great ways to exercise if this condition affects you. Depending on what your symptoms are, specific exercise programs can be established to help you limit pain and return to work or the hobbies you like to do in your free time.



The web address below gives a good illustration of what DDD is. Simply click on the spine button, and then select degenerative disc disease and the animation will show you the progression of the condition.

[http://www.understandspinesurgery.com/understand\\_problem.asp](http://www.understandspinesurgery.com/understand_problem.asp)

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### **Choosing a Mattress...**

Generally, a mattress provides support via the inner springs and coils inside the mattress. The mattress should be able to support the spine's natural curves and not allow excessive sagging of the hips. The padding or pillow top features provide added comfort and do come in various thicknesses. The padding is designed to support the small curves along your spine. Sleeping on too firm of a mattress may cause pressure point pain at the hips, shoulders and heels. Memory Foam mattresses are a growing alternative to innerspring mattresses. The foam density provides the support and in general, the more dense the foam is, the more support it will provide. Less dense foam mattresses will eventually develop a body impression over time.

Costs of mattresses usually increase with more coils and padding. Before purchasing a more expensive model, you should lie on the mattress in the store for a trial run. Test as many mattresses as you can. A slightly less expensive model may feel and support equally as well as the more expensive model. Consider however the amount of time you spend in your bed per day to evaluate the cost investment you place in your mattress.

Once you purchase a new mattress, make sure to rotate and flip the mattress periodically to prolong the life of the mattress and to even out the wear on the mattress.

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