

# THE PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALTY CENTER NEWSLETTER



The Physical Therapy  
Specialty Center  
*a division of Primary Care Partners*

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## CHRONIC PAIN

This month we are discussing a general overview of chronic pain and a few starting points for symptom management. Chronic pain is a very complex sensation that involves a myriad of neurological changes that influence how we perceive and experience pain. This blog tries to introduce these very complex neurophysiology and biological concepts with just enough information to be helpful but without being overwhelming. Chronic pain is related to the mechanical and structural alignment of the body, but even more so it has to do with how the nervous system is functioning and responding to changes in the internal and external environment. The other truth about chronic pain is that it is a very unique journey for each person. So working one-on-one with a specialist can be very helpful to address the specific components of what each person is experiencing. In addition to reading our introduction about how complex chronic pain is, you may benefit from learning more from two of the leading international experts on this matter (Lorimer Moseley and Adriaan Louw). There are many more resources out there from these and other experts but here are three links to start with:

<https://youtu.be/-3NmTE-fJS0>

*(48 minutes) Lorimer Moseley*

<https://youtu.be/gwd-wLdIHjs>

*(15 minutes) Lorimer Moseley*


<https://youtu.be/LO1hg2ya3Js>

*(3 minutes) Adriaan Louw*

### **Around the clinic:**

Do you feel like you are not as steady as you used to be or are you afraid of falling? This is actually a fairly common thing to occur as we age, but it is not something that we have to accept. September 12-18 is balance awareness week and here at PTSC we have several therapist trained to assist with fall prevention and balance training. If you are feeling unsteady or just want to fine tune your gait and balance, give us a call and see how we can help.

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# Therapy Minutes

This section is to keep you up to date and provide education regarding PT, OT, and Speech Therapy

## Physical Therapy: What is Cupping?

Have you ever heard of cupping? Does anyone remember several years ago, in the Olympics, when Michael Phelps showed up to swim with what looked like giant bruises on his shoulders? These bruises were created by a technique called cupping, which is a form of soft tissue/massage that can assist with the release of tissue tightness, as well as improve blood flow to the area and supply the tissue with important healing factors and cells to speed up recovery from an injury or assist with chronic pain management. Cupping is not a stand-alone treatment, but can be incorporated into a treatment plan as one of our tools to help get you back on track and recover from an injury quicker. On rare occasions you may end up with slight skin discoloration from pulling the blood to the surface of the tissue, but rarely do we impact the tissue enough to create actual bruises, so please don't let that detour you from asking your therapist about it.

## Occupational Therapy: OT vs Chronic Pain

Pain seems to be a part of life for many of us. Depending on your pain tolerance, it can be ignored or debilitating. This can cause us to have difficulty to do our job tasks, interfere with taking care of our family, or missing those events that bring us joy. To dismiss pain often can result in pressure on the upper extremity tendons and nerves, decrease range of motion, and muscle weakness. The treatment protocol for pain is either a prescribed analgesic or over the counter medication. Although it will sometimes relieve the pain, it is short lived and possible side effects from the medication. If your pain is coming from arthritis, injury, disease or overuse of the arms/hands, then Occupational Therapy is an alternative to medication offering different modalities and exercises. These include: Contrast bathes, paraffin treatments, icing, friction massage, stretching, range of motion exercises, splints/braces, light compression gloves, anti-vibration gloves, and instruction in the use of adaptive equipment or modifications to the items you use daily. If pain is interfering in your daily routine, your physician can send a referral for occupational therapy to evaluate your condition and provide ways to either decrease or eliminate the pain you are experiencing.

## Speech Therapy: Supporting Children with Speech and Language Disorders as They Begin the School Year

As students return to school, the following is a general list of recommendations for families of children with speech and language disorders:

- Meet your child's teacher and speech therapist. Be sure to attend the school open house or meet and greet event virtually or in person.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child's teacher and speech therapist. Let the school know in advance, if you have specific concerns about your child (i.e. regression, behavior) so staff can properly support your child. Establish the best modes of communication for further follow up as needed.
- Educate yourself about your child's services. Prepare for possible changes in IEP services or 504 plans. Talk with your child's IEP coordinator or case manager about what services your child is getting and what it will look like during the school day so you know what to expect.
- Most importantly, stay positive about where your child is right now. Stay upbeat about your child's return to school. Their excitement and attitude towards school can impact their overall learning and social success. Celebrate their accomplishments and point out and praise the positive. Students thrive on a positive learning environment.
- Consider supplemental outpatient speech therapy to support your child's academic and social skills. Please contact your primary care physician for a referral to our clinic, if you are interested. PTSC offers outpatient speech therapy for school age children kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

