

THE PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALTY CENTER NEWSLETTER



The Physical Therapy
Specialty Center
a division of Primary Care Partners

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RETURN TO SKI AND SNOWBOARD SEASON

November is here and it is time to dust off the skis and snowboards in preparation for the slopes. We are hoping for lots of snow this year and plenty of powder days. Speaking of powder days, most experienced skiers and snowboarders understand the different types and styles of riding as well as the type of equipment associated with such, but for other this can be confusing and troublesome. Winter sports are no exception when it comes to extremes of biomechanics and thus improper equipment usually leads to injury. This month's blog will help you with various questions such as "Is my board too big?", "Should I have longer ski poles?", or "Could this pain I've been having be related to my gear?" Regardless of your experience level it is always good to check your gear to assure a fun and safe winter.

Ask PTSC: What is your favorite run at Powderhorn?

Jake – Mad Dog Glade

Brad - Bearclaw

Tara- Snowcloud

Dorian – Racers Edge

Tyler – Sven's Bend

Karen - Sven's Bend

Kari – Red Eye

Around the clinic: Caregiver Awareness month is November and we would like to extend a great big hug to all the caregivers out there who are just trying to keep all the balls in the air. We also want to remind all these caregivers that occasionally you may require some focused treatment for yourself. We offer all avenues of therapy; whether it be physical therapy for your aches and pains, occupational therapy for your adaptive equipment and assistance with daily activity needs, or speech therapy to help you communicate better with your loved ones. Whatever it is we are here for you and just want to let you know **YOU ARE DOING A GREAT JOB!** Thanks for all you do!

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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: Body Mechanics for Winter Festivities

Winter is a time for fun and celebrating, however the activities leading up to these celebrations can be quite straining on our bodies. Here are some quick tips for proper body mechanics when prepping for your Festivities:

- When lifting those heavy boxes of decorations be sure that you bend your hips and knees, keeping your back straight. DO NOT bend forward at the waist to lift even the lightest of boxes or items
- When decorating be sure to use a good sturdy ladder that has enough height to get you where you need. Standing on unstable items, such as a chair or using a shorter step ladder and reaching beyond your ability can lead to a bad situation that may end with an injury
- When shopping be sure that you use a cart when maneuvering a lot of items, and also distribute packages evenly when carrying to avoid one side of the body being more stressed than the other
- When returning to winter sports be sure that you ease back into the sports and recognize that your current abilities may not be where you were at the end of last season

For more tips and tricks, check out our blog in the middle of the month about winter injury preventions!

Occupational Therapy: Winter injuries

Winter is right around the corner. Downhill, cross country and Nordic skiing (to name a few), snowboarding, snowmobiling, tubing, or enjoying a walk in the snow - all of these activities are lots of fun although they can also result in an F.O.O.S.H! That stands for falling on outstretched hands, and hopefully it will be a soft landing because these falls can result in a wrist fracture or sprain. One advantage is that you readily have cold available to minimize the pain and swelling. If you have wrist weakness or previous injuries, there are several types of wrist wraps to provide support and still allow movement. If you have hand weakness or joint stiffness from arthritis or other conditions, it may be beneficial to use foam tubing or specially designed larger handles to create a softer and larger surface to hold. This will also decrease the pressure on the thumb and finger joints. When joints are cold there is more stiffness, less range of motion and slower to react. Keeping your wrists and hands warm with mittens/gloves improves the circulation and flexibility.

Speech Therapy: Attention and Skiing

Alertness is defined as a state of pronounced sensory awareness coupled with readiness to act quickly based on our perceptions. Did you know that skiing is cognitively stimulating, in addition to being an excellent source of physical activity? Skiing is considered a continuous performance task that challenges the brain to use several types of attention. Attention is a complex process we use in all of our tasks of daily life. There are several different types of attention listed as follows:

- * Arousal- our activation level and level of alertness, whether we are tired or energized
- * Focused Attention- our ability to focus attention on a stimulus
- * Sustained Attention- the ability to attend to a stimulus or activity over a long period of time
- * Selective Attention- the ability to attend to a specific stimulus or activity in the presence of other distractions
- * Alternating Attention- the ability to change focused attention between two or more stimuli
- * Divided Attention- the ability to attend to different stimuli at the same time

When you ski, your brain must mentally recruit several types of attention at different times during your ski run. For instance, you must use focused, selective, and divided attention when you are getting off the ski lift in order to avoid falling or running into other skiers. When you are on the ski run, you are using several types of attention at various times to safely ski down the hill, avoid hitting obstacles, and avoid going the wrong way or on the wrong trail. Your brain automatically recruits the specific type of attention necessary for each task. As you ski down the hill, you alternate your attention to notice important signs such as "Trail Closed". Olympic skiers use focused and selective attention to filter out all unnecessary distractions and focus solely on their ski run to lower their times. Sometimes people unnecessarily divide their attention while skiing, for instance, by texting, which can unfortunately result in accidents. Remember, regardless of how well you ski, your mental focus and attention are key to having a safe and injury free skiing experience!

