



HARBOR PHYSICAL THERAPY WINTER NEWSLETTER

Why do my Joints Ache in Cold Weather?

Many patients come to physical therapy asking 'why'—why they have increased pain when it rains, snows, or just when the weather gets cold.

The main theories are as follows:

1. Change in Barometric Pressure – This theory is based on a study of a balloon in a Barometric Chamber. The Barometric pressure is decreased and the balloon increases in size. Therefore, the drop in pressure can similarly cause tissues around the joints to swell.
2. Psychological – Another theory mentions that people tend to feel pain in their joints during bad weather, rather than preceding bad weather. The theory claims that people are less likely to feel the pain on warm, sunny days. This concept could be due to the increased release of endorphins, with increased sun light and people mentally feel better when it is nicer outside.
3. Humidity – Patient's joints have increased lubrication when there is more humidity in the air. Therefore, when the humidity decreases, there is a decrease in lubrication of our joints, which in turn causes pain. This is why most people with arthritis like to move down south to enjoy year-round warmer weather.

In summary, there is no definitive reason why people report increased pain at their joints when the weather changes. This topic has been researched minimally and considering the amount of patients that report these findings, one would think there would be more research on this topic.

Winter Morning Body Reset

Winter mornings often come with extra stiffness, slower movement, and that "rusty" feeling when getting out of bed. Cold temperatures, less activity, and more time sitting can all contribute to joints and muscles feeling tight first thing in the day.

As a physical therapist, I often remind patients that how you move in the first few minutes of your morning can set the tone for your entire day. A short, gentle movement routine can help wake up your body, improve circulation, and reduce stiffness — without requiring a full workout.

Check out this Winter Morning Body Reset. It is designed to help you move better and feel more comfortable before starting your day.

1. Bridges- laying down, bend your knees and lift your butt up and down. Repeat 10 times
2. Lower Trunk Rotation- laying down, bend your knees and move them as a unit dropping your knees towards the surface and hold for 5 seconds. Perform 10 times.
3. Squat- Stand up and perform 10 squats.
4. Heel Raise- Lift your heels up and down 10 times.
5. March- Perform 10 marches.

Winter Facts- DID YOU KNOW?

Earth is closest to the sun in December.

The average snowflake falls 3 miles per hour.

All snowflakes have six sides.

The word solstice means "sun stands still."

Snowflakes are not white, they are transparent.

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