



Harbor Physical Therapy's Winter Newsletter

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Why Do My Joints Ache When the Weather Gets Cold? Many patients come to physical therapy asking 'why' – why they have increased pain when it rains, snows, or just when the weather gets cold. Considering the amount of patients that report these findings, one would think there would be more research on this topic.

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. Because a drop in barometric pressure precedes a storm, patients can 'predict' when a storm front is approaching. Typically, patients with arthritis or a previous joint injury are the patients that report these weather-related findings.
- 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** – This is my personal theory. I believe patient's joints have increased lubrication when there is more humidity in the air. Just like a hinge requiring lubrication to move in a fluid motion. Our joints require constant lubrication to move without restriction and pain. 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. It is surprising how little research is done on this topic. I believe there is truth in the connection of feeling the change in weather in your joints; however, there does not seem to be a clear reason why it is experienced.

When should I see a Physical Therapist? If you have had discomfort at a joint or muscle for more than three days without any decrease in your symptoms. With most health insurances, you can schedule an appointment with a physical therapist right away. At your first physical therapy session, we will determine if you would benefit from additional consultation with a physician.

Fun Indoor Physical Activities

When it is cold outside, the last thing you want to do is leave your home to workout. Well, you don't have to! There are many different forms of exercise you can do without leaving your home.

Circuit Training: Start by creating different resistance, callisthenic, and cardiovascular stations. This gives you the ability to work your heart and muscles. Create a resistance workout using dumbbells, resistance bands, cans of food, or shampoos bottles. The *resistance stations* can consist of bicep curls, squats, lunges, chest presses, rows, and lateral raises. The *callisthenic stations* can consist of jump rope, sit-ups, push-ups, chin-ups, kicking, and punching. The *cardiovascular stations* can consist of running in place, running up and down stairs, step aerobics, and jumping jacks.

Pilates / Yoga: Pilates focus on improving your core strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination. Yoga works to improve overall flexibility. It is often used as a

form of meditation and relaxation. To perform both Pilates and Yoga, you will only need a mat. There are many Pilates and Yoga videos; they can either be purchased or found through your cable provider.

Video Games: Several gaming systems offers fitness games that allow you to obtain a cardiovascular workout. The fitness games offer dance, sports, and aerobic exercise. Nintendo Wii has a system called Wii Fit. Wii Fit provides structured exercise programs and the ability to keep track of your overall improvement.

If you are interested in a home exercise program catered specifically to your needs, please call us today at 443-524-0442 to schedule an appointment!



Groundhog Says, "Six More Weeks of Winter"

What patients are saying... "I enjoyed every visit, I am 100% better now!"
~ Anonymous

Healthy Snack Recipe!

Honey Oatmeal Muffins... A tasty healthy winter-time snack! These hearty handhelds are made with the wholesome goodness of rolled oats, buttermilk, honey and wheat. Chewy and full of flavor, they're great warm with melted butter or as smart snacks for kids on the go.

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Cooking Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Combine buttermilk and oats in a small saucepan; heat just until warm; set aside. Grease muffin cups or line with paper muffin liners.

In a large bowl, combine honey and vegetable oil with oat mixture. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; stir into wet mixture. Pour batter into prepared muffin cups.

Bake in preheated oven until lightly browned, about 30 minutes. Serve warm.

Nutrition Facts

- Servings per Recipe: 8
- Amount Per Serving
- calories: 155cal
- total fat: 4.8g
- cholesterol: 2mg
- sodium: 232mg
- carbs: 24.3g
- fiber: 2.9g
- protein: 5.2g

This is from the "Low Cholesterol Kitchen Cookbook"

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