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### Last week's poll results

How many days a week do you normally workout?

- 47% 3 - 4 Times a week
- 36% Less than 3 times a week
- 17% more than 4 times a week

# Oh, my aching . . .

**By Tom Uhlenbrock**

## Shoulder pain

**Cause:** May result from an injury, excessive use or the natural aging process.

**What happens:** An injury may force the bones in one of the shoulder joints out of their normal position. Excessive use leads to bursitis, the inflammation and swelling of a bursa, a fluid-filled sac around the joint. Natural aging causes arthritis or tendinitis, the splitting and tearing of tendons, most commonly to the rotator cuff.

**Symptoms:** Pain when the shoulder is moved, or all the time. Some people may avoid shoulder movements to lessen the pain, leading to a tightening or stiffening that restricts motion.

**Treatment:** Rest. Medication may reduce pain and inflammation. See a doctor if the pain is severe or persists.

**Rehabilitation:** Physical therapy may improve shoulder strength and flexibility. Recurring dislocation and some rotator cuff tears may require surgery.

**Prevention:** Avoid overexertion or overdoing activities in which you normally don't participate.

## Muscle cramp

**Cause:** Physical activity, usually involving heat and sweating, ends in a "charley horse," or muscle cramp that can last from a few seconds to 15 minutes or longer. Cramps can occur in any muscle, but are most common in the calf, thigh, feet, hands, arms, abdomen and along the rib cage.

**N**o pain, no gain. The phrase means hard work, brings rewards, and it has nothing to do with the nagging injuries that too often accompany working out or playing sports.

Health experts say staying active is important to maintaining a healthy, productive life - no matter what age group. Regular exercise keeps muscles strong and joints limber, decreases your risk of heart attack and stroke, and helps control weight.

But there's a right way, and a wrong way, to push your body. The right way is the closest thing yet to a fountain of youth. The wrong way will put you in a doctor's office.

Bill Droege, an area specialist in sports medicine, says flexibility training is the key to avoiding injury.

(see page 2 TOM)

(Cover story TOM)

“I’ll tell patients in that baby boomer group to go to yoga class first, before weight training, or Pilates, the actual machines, not the one you see on television,” said Droege, who works at Esquire Sports Medicine at 1202 Bellevue Avenue.

“With an aging population, you can stay strong, but if you don’t stay flexible, you can get injured just as easily,” he said. “The trick to the aerobics end of it is to do cross-training, change your workout so you’re doing Stairmaster or running one day, and an aerobics class the next. For older folks, water aerobics is best because you don’t get injured if you fall.”

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons has a Web site - [orthoinfo.aaos.org](http://orthoinfo.aaos.org) - devoted to sports injuries, and how to avoid them, especially as the baby boomers begin to cope with creaking knees and aching elbows and shoulders.

So, on this day when some of you may be feeling pain after the Spirit of St. Louis Marathon, we offer the following list of 10 common sports injuries and how to treat and avoid them. It was compiled from the academy’s Web site. Our list can be found throughout the newsletter, in blue.

**What happens:** Researchers believe inadequate stretching and muscle fatigue lead to abnormalities in mechanisms that control muscle contraction. Other factors may include intense heat, dehydration and depletion of salt and minerals.

**Symptoms:** Varies from a slight tic to agonizing pain. May recur multiple times before it goes away. Muscle may feel hard to the touch and appear visibly distorted or twitch beneath the skin.

**Treatment:** Cramps usually go away on their own. Stop the activity and gently stretch and massage the cramping muscle. Apply heat to tight muscles, or cold to sore muscles.

**Rehabilitation:** Drink water regularly, and more than your thirst requires. Fruit juices or sports beverages are good if working out in heat or sweating for more than an hour.

**Prevention:** People over 40 are more susceptible to muscle cramps due to normal muscle loss, and the body’s loss of its sense of thirst and ability to respond to changes in temperature. If cramps are severe, frequent and not a result of strenuous activity, see a doctor.

## **Hamstring strain**

**Cause:** An exertion of the leg, usually in full stride, causes either a mild tightening or a sharp pain in the back of the thigh.

**What happens:** The “hamstring” actually is a group of three muscles at the back of the thigh. They help extend the leg at the hip and flex the leg at the knee, and work in conjunction with the quadriceps muscles in the front of the leg. When the stronger quadriceps contract, they may strain or tear the fatigued hamstring.

**Symptoms:** More severe injuries may leave you unable to stand or walk. The muscle may be tender, and it may be painful to stretch your leg. Bruising behind the leg and below the knee may appear after a few days.

**Treatment:** RICE - rest, ice, compress and elevate. Ultrasound sometimes helps repair a tear.

**Rehabilitation:** If the muscle is completely torn, surgery may be necessary. All treatments should include rehabilitation to strengthen and stretch the muscle.

**Prevention:** Stretch before and after an activity. Weak or tight hamstrings can contribute to low-back pain.

## There's a rising tide of enhanced waters

By Carol Ness

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What's in it for you? All enhanced waters have water as the main ingredient. The subcategories vary more in marketing styles than in substance.

Most are lightly fruity and sweet - either from sugar (Glaceau) or from a combination of sugar and the no-calorie sugar derivative sucralose (Propel, Hansen's). Some actually taste pretty much like water (Reebok). A few are superoxygenated.

Doses of vitamins and other additives go from low (25 percent of daily requirements for C, some of the Bs, E in Glaceau) to minuscule.

Botanical, herbal and other ingredients are added in various amounts. Inositol, taurine, carnitine, ginseng, guarana, glucosamine, ginkgo all crop up.

New bottled waters contain vitamins and minerals, but are they any better than what comes out of the faucet?

The names burst with the promise of health: Vitamin water. Enhanced water. Fitness water. Energy water.

Pretty or muscular, fruity or sweet - new bottled waters are full of vitamins and minerals, caffeine and St. John's wort, chromium and selenium, fruit and vegetable flavors and colors. Even sugar -

## Chronic knee pain

**Cause:** Sports, jogging or other high-impact activities that repeatedly pound, twist and turn the knees can stress aging joints, or those damaged by previous injury.

**What happens:** Unlike severe pain that comes from an injury, which often means the ligaments that hold the knee together may be strained or torn, nagging pain most often occurs when the cartilage lining on the ends of bones tears or gradually wears away, meaning there no longer is a cushion between the bones.

**Symptoms:** The knee may buckle and give way, lock in place, or become stiff and swollen.

**Treatment:** Ice relieves swelling and inflammation. Rest until the tissues heal.

**Rehabilitation:** See your doctor for diagnosis and treatment. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications may help. Injections can relieve pain and swelling for awhile. A therapy program can improve flexibility and reduce pain.

**Prevention:** A doctor may recommend low-impact activities that can delay or eliminate the need for surgery. Stretching, swimming, cycling and walking are better than running, tennis, racquetball and basketball.

## Stress fractures

**Cause:** Increased workouts cause pain and swelling, usually in the weight-bearing bones of the lower leg and the foot. Female athletes are more likely to get stress fractures, because of declines in bone mass. Associated with running, tennis, gymnastics and basketball.

**What happens:** Muscles become fatigued and are unable to absorb added shock. Eventually, the muscle transfers the overload of stress to the bone, causing a tiny crack called a stress fracture.

**Symptoms:** Persistent pain in the leg or foot. May include swelling.

**Treatment:** Rest from the activity associated with the pain. If pain continues for several days, see an orthopedic surgeon.

**Rehabilitation:** Stress fractures need six to eight weeks to fully heal. If the activity that caused the fracture is resumed too quickly, larger, harder-to-heal stress fractures can develop and lead to chronic problems. If treated properly, you can return to the activity without any restrictions.

# ***Stretching could be the difference***

## **Factors that affect flexibility**

- \* Age: As we age, our joints lose some of their flexibility. We can expect to lose about 40 percent our flexibility between the ages of 20 and 70.***
- \* Inactivity: This causes joints to lose their flexibility because connective tissue shortens.***
- \* Gender: Women tend to be more flexible than men. (Many experts believe that women are genetically designed with a greater range of flexibility for childbearing purposes.)***
- \* Body type: Flexibility is specific to each individual because everyone has a different muscle structure, joint structure and genetic composition.***
- \* Muscle density: Thicker people have broader muscle fiber, which is harder to stretch.***
- \* Exposure: If you are exposed to flexible sports (such as gymnastics) early in life, you can carry that flexibility longer in life.***
- \* Injury: Whether it's because of damage to the tissue, scarring or lack of use, injury can affect flexibility.***

## **Common stretching mistakes**

- \* Not holding the stretch long enough.***
- \* Not warming up first.***
- \* Stretching too hard.***
- \* Holding past the point of pain; when a stretch becomes painful, stop.***
- \* Not stretching all the muscles used in your sport.***
- \* Bouncing the stretch.***
- \* Doing the wrong stretches or doing them incorrectly.***
- \* Not stretching at all, or not making enough time for it.***

sometimes almost half as much as in soda - or the artificial sweetener sucralose appear.

We're sucking them down as if they spring from the fountain of eternal life.

"They make you feel good about what you drink," says Rohan Oza, marketing manager for Glaceau Vitaminwater.

But some nutritionists and health experts are asking: Should they?

They worry that enhanced waters (as they're called collectively) risk blurring the line between water and soda, and people will wind up drinking more sugar calories as a result.

They also question whether the tantalizing extras - the vitamins, minerals and botanicals - do any good or could even cause harm.

"I don't know why people would want all those things in their water," says Joanne Ikeda, co-director of the Center for Weight and Health at the University of California at Berkeley.

But they seem to. Even as Americans are guzzling bottled water as never before, including at restaurants, these enhanced waters are the fastest-growing part of that market - to the tune of \$245 million wholesale last year, up from just \$20 million when they debuted in 2000, according to research by Beverage Marketing Corp. in New York. And those who are their biggest fans are health-conscious young adults and baby boomers in trendy urban areas, analysts say.

Propel, a fitness water from the makers of Gatorade, is the best-selling enhanced water, a low-calorie option to sports drinks.

Energy Brands' Glaceau Vitaminwater is scoring in the hipness market, with a dozen drinks in a rainbow of colors, each with a name that promises more than thirst relief - "determination," "focus" and "rescue," to name three.

The beverages are so hot that Coke and Pepsi have followed the trend and added sugar, fruit flavors and vitamins to make enhanced versions of their Dasani and Aquafina waters.

Even beer giant Anheuser-Busch is considering jumping in. The company has applied to register a trademark for "180 Sport," described as an "enhanced water beverage" in the filing with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. But A-B has not made any announcements regarding its plans for the product.

The new water trend is a logical progression from Americans' obsession with the plastic water bottle as a go-everywhere accessory. Americans are spending \$7.7 billion a year to hydrate; that's 21 gallons per person last year.

Whether humans really need 8 glasses of water a day (on top of the water they get from food and other drinks) is in dispute. Some doctors and the bottled water industry say so, but other doctors disagree. The National Academies of Science will deliver its opinion later this year.

People believe it, though, and by the end of this year are expected to be drinking more bottled water than coffee, beer or milk - although water won't outrank soda.

Enhanced waters appeal to the core American desire for something "more," according to Tom Pirko, president of BevMark, food and beverage consultants in Santa Barbara, Calif. Americans turned to bottled water "not because we don't think our tap water is safe - it has more to do with what else you can get," he says. Now it's enhanced waters.

Oza says people don't drink enough water because they get bored - but they'll drink more if it's fun and flavored.

"People today are making purposeful choices about how they live and what they put in their body," he says. "They're fundamentally seeking a healthy lifestyle but not at the cost of giving up taste and variety."

Pirko takes a more critical view. "These waters are marketed to the vulnerable, the naive, the great mass of the population that lives with certain anxieties, a certain lack of confidence, a certain set of dreams and ideals that (if they just drink this) they can be healthy or Arnold Schwarzenegger or Dubya - that this will enhance their lives," Pirko says.

People who buy enhanced waters want to think they take a serious interest in their health when they don't, Pirko says. "If they did, they'd be eating their fruits and vegetables and drinking a lot of good water every day."

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