



# HAND & ORTHOPEDIC PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATES, P.C.

## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2011

Volume 1, Issue 3

*"If you only do what you  
know you can do - you  
never do very much."*

*- Tom Krause*

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## What is a Herniated Disc?

Intervertebral discs are located in the spinal column, and act as a cushion between the vertebrae (bone) components of the column. The discs have the appearance of a jelly doughnut, with a tough outer layer (annulus fibrosus) and a gel-like center (nucleus pulposus). As you grow older, the discs become weaker and less cushiony. Tears may occur in the outer (annulus) portion of the disc, enabling the inside gel to herniate (bulge) through these weakened sites and press on spinal nerves. Herniated discs are most common in people in their 30's and 40's.

Symptoms of a herniated disc vary, depending upon the size and position of the herniation. Early symptoms of a herniated disc are expressed as a low back ache, which increases with forward trunk bending. If the herniation is pressing on a nerve, symptoms may include tingling (pins-and-needles sensation), numbness and weakness in one or both legs. The pattern of these neurological symptoms reflects the specific areas in which the pinched nerve travels.

Conservative management of herniated discs involve the McKenzie Program of extension exercises and back stabilization. This program involves a series of individualized exercises, with emphasis on active patient involvement. By learning how to self treat the current problem, patients gain an awareness on how to minimize the risk of recurrence, and to rapidly deal with a recurrence of a herniated disc, should it present itself. If you have been experiencing low back pain, contact your physician to rule out other medical conditions and discuss your treatment options to begin your rehabilitation with us.

— Nicholas Matiuck PT, MPT, Ph.D.

## Insurance Updates

We are pleased to announce that we now accept Tri-Care Prime. Attention Medicare Patients: Aetna Medicare has no cap site. You may choose your providers.

## Backpack Safety Tips

### Wear both straps

Use of one strap causes one side of the body to bear the weight of the backpack. By wearing two shoulder straps, the weight of the backpack is better distributed.

### Wear the backpack over the strongest mid-back muscles

Pay close attention to the way the backpack is positioned on the back. It should rest evenly in the middle of the back. Shoulder straps

should be adjusted to allow the child to put on and take off the backpack without difficulty and allow free movement of the arms. Straps should not be too loose, and the backpack should not extend below the low back.

### Lighten the load

Keep the load at 10-15% or less of the child's bodyweight. Carry only those items that are required for the day. Organize the contents of

the backpack by placing the heaviest items closest to the back. Some students have two sets of books so as not to have to carry the heavy books to and from school.

### How a Physical Therapist Can Help

A physical therapist can help you choose a proper backpack and fit it specifically to your child. Children come in all shapes and sizes and some have physical limitations that require special adaptations.

Additionally, a physical therapist can help improve posture problems, correct muscle imbalances, and treat pain that can result from improper backpack use. Physical therapists can also design individualized fitness programs to help children get strong and stay strong — and carry their own loads!

— Courtesy of the  
American Physical Therapy Association

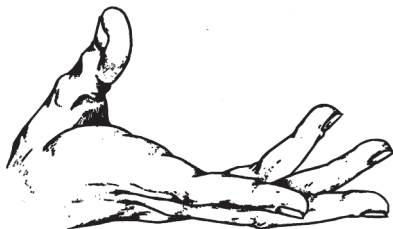
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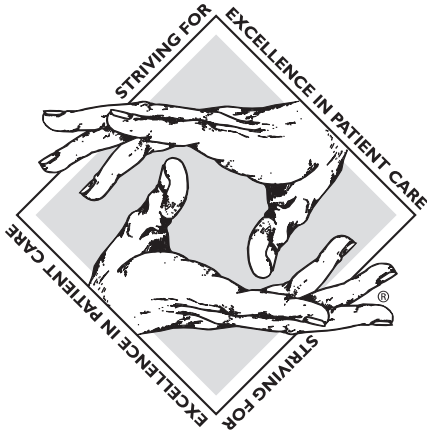
Have something you would like to see in an upcoming issue?  
Give us a call or email us at [handandortho@comcast.net](mailto:handandortho@comcast.net).  
  
We welcome your suggestions and look forward to hearing from you.



The information contained within this newsletter is not to be substituted for medical treatment. If you experience signs or symptoms of an illness contact a health care professional.

## Meet Our Mercerville Office Staff

Our office in Mercerville NJ is located at: Whitehorse Executive Complex  
1245 Whitehorse-Mercerville Road  
Bldg A, Suite 419  
Mercerville, NJ 08619



We offer both early morning and evening appointments. Jill and Irene are the first and last contact for each of our patients. They provide a warm welcome at our front desk and encouragement to our patients in our clinic as an aide.

**Jill Herman** has been with us almost a year and has been providing terrific service. She has 3 sons and enjoys spending time with them and her spouse in her spare time.

**Irene KaKareka** is our newest employee. She enjoys gardening, walking her chocolate lab, and spending time with her family. We look forward to the days ahead and know Irene will be an asset to our company and our patients.

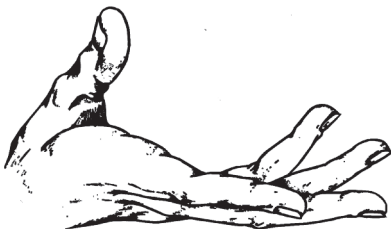
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## October is Physical Therapy Month

We at Hand and Orthopedic Physical Therapy wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that October is National Physical Therapy Month. The focus this year is on sports injury prevention across the lifespan. Feel free to log on to the APTA's ( American Physical Therapy Association) website for more information.

Being active in sports from an early age helps promote a physically active lifestyle. We know that the health benefits are great with sports but there does come the chance for a sports related injury. We can limit these injuries by ensuring the proper participate in a sport.

Contact one of our clinics today so that we can design a treatment plan to aid you in your daily activities and reduce your chance of injury.





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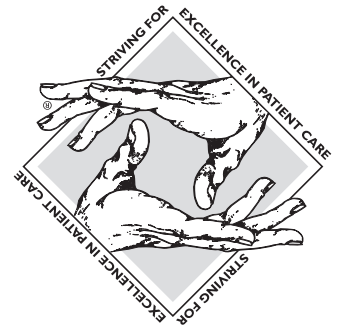
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**Visit Us at Our Five Locations**