



ACTION

PHYSICAL THERAPY & SPORTS MEDICINE



GET BACK INTO
ACTION THIS SPRING
COVER



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STRESS AWARENESS
MONTH
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CONGRATS TO OUR
GRADS THIS MONTH
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Staying fit during travel season

As the Louisiana weather heats up, and Spring & Summer break approaches, many are eager to travel. Most have already booked a flight, planned a road trip, or figured out how to arrive at their intended destinations, but Action PT wishes to provide you some valid education on how to avoid challenges when traveling. Here's how to minimize the onset of pain, dehydration, illness, and jet lag affiliated with prolonged bouts of travel from your expert PT team:

Preparation is Key: First things first, preparation for the days of travel will set you up for success. To minimize stress, arrive early at the airport (especially for international flights) to be flexible and allow for adaptations to unwanted events. Equally important - invest in quality footwear. This allows for comfortable weight-bearing for long periods. Our licensed physical therapists can recommend a shoe for you. Whether you're hiking, standing, biking or cruising the seas, whatever your travel plans demand - plan for proper footwear.

The Flight: Atmosphere within an uncomfortable plane seat can be the difference between a stiff or mobile spine. Personal items such as cervical pillows can help keep your neck in a neutral position when sleeping. A lumbar roll promotes proper alignment of the back. Use the armrests for elbows and position your feet flat on the floor. Modern seats provide a place to hold a tablet or phone at eye level which avoids forward-bending position if watching a movie. When boarding, do not hesitate to gain help lifting carry-on bags into the overhead bin.

Movement During the Day: Exercises and stretches can be performed during travel minimizing the onset of illness or pain caused from prolonged sitting. Lower extremity and neck stretches will help keep muscles in the spine relaxed and can easily be performed at your seat. For the neck: gently bringing one's ear to the same shoulder, then the same on the other side. Use a towel to wrap around the back of your head to ensure active rotation. When experiencing tightness in your lower back, a seated hamstring stretch can help. Do this by extending the knee and hinge it forward at the hip to generate the pull along the back of the thigh. Then repeat this stretch on the other side.

You can also place one foot on the opposite knee, sit up tall, and push the crossed leg to the floor for a nice stretch. A “knee hug” can elongate glute fibers and take stress off of the back. Try and hold a stretch for :30 seconds to gain any benefit. Additionally, you can implement the following, simple exercises at your seat: 1. pumping the ankles, 2. clenching your butt muscles, 3. squeezing shoulder blades and 4. chin tucks. Action PT recommends holding each repetition for :05 seconds and do 10-20 repetitions. Lastly, perform a posterior pelvic tilt in a seated position. This engages muscles to help facilitate proper positioning of the spine.

Other Travel Tips: Other tips that can help avoid strains and pain include: Every 2 hours (on a long flight) stand up from your seat and walk the aisle. This enhances blood flow and will improve digestion. Pack an empty water bottle in your carry-on (because airlines won't allow you through security with large containers of liquids) or purchase a bottle following your pass through security for the flight for hydration. It's possible that fifty percent of the air that circulates in the plane's cabin comes from outside. And at high altitudes, that air is almost completely absent of moisture. Lack of hydration may cause the throat, nose or skin to feel dry. Long story, short - keep handy and sip water, water, water during any flight!

Sleep Tips for Travel: Jet lag seems unavoidable, but adjusting one's rhythm before travel may minimize fatigue, lethargy, and stomach issues. Preparing to travel should begin days before when adjusting one's sleep schedule. Allow for the time zones you might be crossing and hours you will lose (or gain). Sunlight exposure can also be managed depending on flying west or east to calibrate one's internal clock. Avoid alcohol consumption and caffeine intake 6 hours before bedtime. This avoids jet lag symptoms. Be sure and practice sanitization while traveling. For example, wipe down tray tables and armrests, use hand sanitizer, and wear a mask if you are feeling unwell to minimize germ transmission in the crowded plane.

Utilizing some or all these recommendations will assist you in avoiding pain, aches, jet lag, and the spread of disease this travel season.

If you are experiencing a specific problem, or when pain persists, give us a call at Action Physical Therapy. Let us provide you with a personalized program.



Did you know? Physical Therapy can address and help reduce stress. By implementing techniques that target both mind and body, you can manage stress and anxiety, foster resilience and enhance your overall health. As we honor the significance of April being Stress Awareness month, we offer you ways that physical therapy can be a vital towards a healthy lifestyle, balance and wellness.

Your Parasympathetic Nervous System

Everybody knows the sensations felt when in “fight or flight” mode: heavy breathing, heart racing, sweaty palms. Caused by the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, it’s a crucial survival mechanism that we use in dangerous situations. However, with the many stressors we deal with on a daily basis, sometimes our sympathetic nervous system is at too high a level and for too long. So, what can you do?

That’s where the parasympathetic nervous system comes into play. Also known as the “rest and digest” system, the parasympathetic nervous system counteracts the sympathetic nervous system. When it’s “on”, our breathing is slow and deep, our heart rate is at a comfortable pace, and our digestive system is working smoothly, feeling a sense of calm.

Activating Your Parasympathetic Nervous System

The vagus nerve reaches many parts of the body, from our brains to our gut. Because of its wide reach, there are multiple ways to stimulate this nerve and activate your body’s natural relaxation response. By engaging the vagus nerve, you can quickly calm your nervous system and ease stress. These simple techniques just take a few moments and require no special equipment. You can practice them anytime or anywhere.

Lateral eye gaze. With just your eyes look all the way to the right, then all the way to the left, and repeat. The tension on our eye muscles activates the vagus nerve through the oculocardiac reflex, decreasing our heart rate and increasing calmness.

Salivating. You read that right. Increasing saliva in the mouth and swallowing it actually activates the vagus nerve supply the palate. Here’s how: think of a juicy lemon, allow the saliva to gather in your mouth.....now, swallow. Easy peasy, lemon squeezey!

Deep breathing. Exhaling is the parasympathetic nervous system’s role in breathing, so deep breathing with an extended exhale increases our “rest and digest” activation. Breathe in for a count of 4, and slowly breathe out for a count of 8.

Ear massage. The most superficial branch of the vagus nerve supplies the skin in and around your ear. Massaging the ear activates the nerve. Using one or two fingers, gently massage in a circular motion the skin behind the ear or in the entrance to the ear canal.

Humming. The vagus nerve supplies the vocal cords, and humming sends vibrations through the vocal cords; thus stimulating the vagus nerve. Take a deep breath in, and on the exhale slowly hum the sound “ohm” or “hum”.

Cold water on the face. Have you ever seen a character in a tense part of a movie run into the bathroom to splash water on their face? It turns out they aren’t only doing that for dramatic effect; cold water on the face activates the human dive reflex, a reflex that causes an increase in vagus nerve activation and a decrease in heart rate.

Gargling. Maybe not the best technique to use in public but gargling combines activation of the vagus nerve as water hits your palate and as the sound we make vibrates the vocal cords. This one’s a “win-win”!



What to Expect

When doing the techniques listed, you may notice yourself yawning, sighing, salivating more, or swallowing; these are all actually signs that your vagus nerve is being stimulated. Don’t worry if you don’t experience any of these responses as it doesn’t mean the stimulation isn’t working. Even without the signs, you will likely still feel a sense of calmness and a decrease in anxiety from the parasympathetic nervous system taking over.

Next time you’re stuck in traffic, on hold with customer service, or apprehensive about that speech you have to give, try some of these techniques and give your body some well-deserved rest and relaxation.



SPEAKING OF STRESS.....

Are you always putting others first....but your headaches are putting you last?

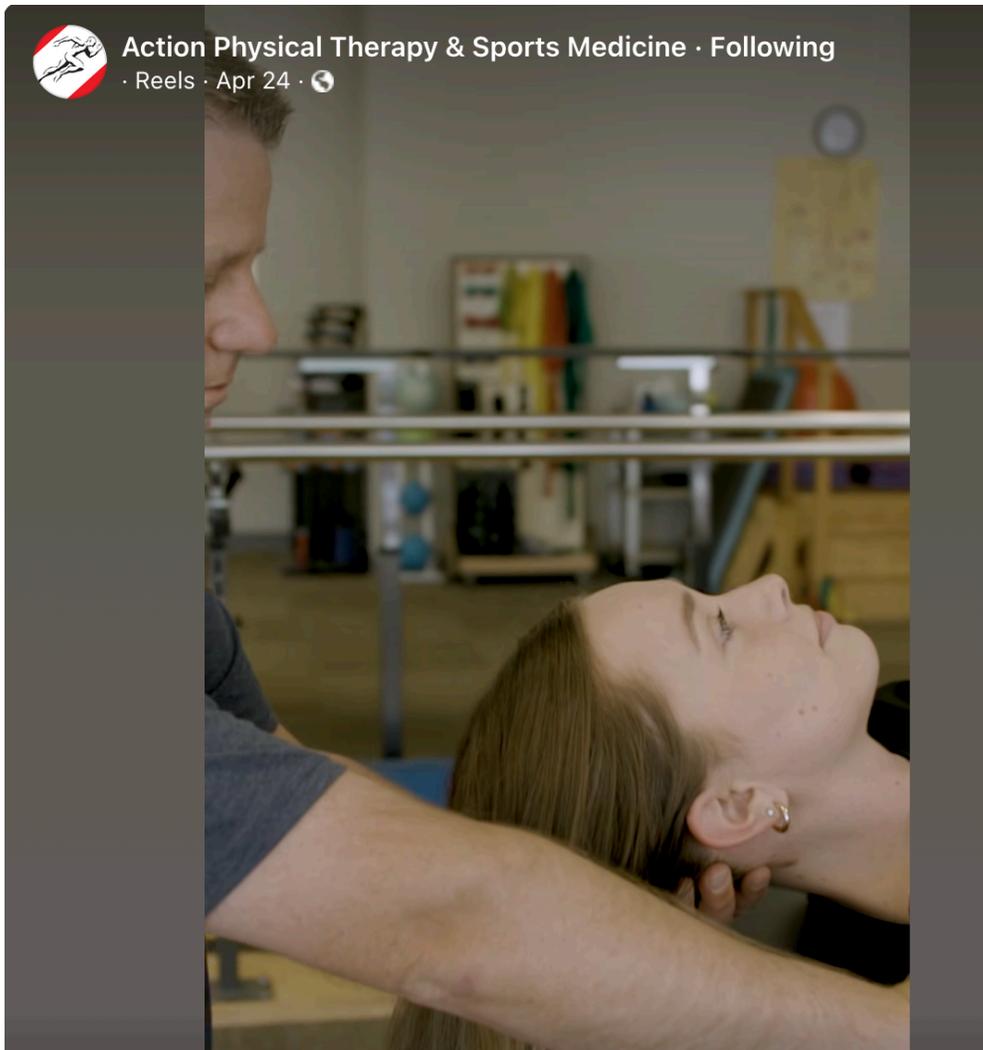
Join us for a **FREE “Headache & Migraine” Workshop** designed just for busy moms.

Discover how gentle, hands-on physical therapy can help you get lasting relief - without meds or downtime. Stop surviving. Start thriving!

MAY 14TH @ 5:30 PM. Limited spots available - reserve yours now!

Check out and share our video e-vite on YouTube (click the link below)

<https://youtube.com/shorts/cfKxktgOkes>





Employee Appreciation Day!



Happy Employee Appreciation Day, to the staff at Action Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine!! This week, owner/ operator, Gary Dragon took his staff out for an afternoon of fraternity, food and fun to celebrate his "favorite day of the year." Everyone had loads of fun bowling before enjoying a delicious lunch with a latin flair!! Says Dr. Dragon, "I am so blessed to have such a fine staff here at Action PT. These people love what they do and provide quality care along with positive attitudes to our patients every day. It is my honor to host these great people and enjoy time together with them outside of the work day. Great times had by all....The staff, in turn, wishes to thank you, Gary - and Melissa, too - for the surprises and all of the fun we had !! It was a wonderful afternoon.



She's intelligent. She's eager. She's a quick learner, and now she's graduating! All our best to student-intern, Maya Okoro, who leaves us this month - bound for college!!! She received high school credit interning at our facility this school year while we received and were blessed by her presence and enthusiasm. Maya moves on to Prairie View A & M University to pursue higher studies. Wishing you our very best in your future, sweet Maya. You were terrific and will be sorely missed around the gym. Don't be a stranger when you're back in town. She is pictured with our therapy staff (L to R): Jenna Rabalais, PT, DPT; Gary Dragon, Jr., PT, DPT; Maya; Katie Kersh, PTA; and Rency Long, PT-Tech.

Who is that?

Meet Action PT's, Ms. Rency Long.

Rency joined our staff last year with a passion for helping others and learning all that she can about the healing we provide here. As our afternoon PT Tech, she enjoys the time she has with patients, providing them with a her gentle approach and strong compassion. In her role as a therapy technician, she monitors patient transitions during PT sessions, ensures that all equipment is properly prepped for patient limitations, sees that patients follow their plans of care, are reaching the goals set in place during evaluation, and are dismissed from sessions in a timely manner. She monitors patient performance during therapy - ensuring that they present good form, and are carrying out their exercises correctly.

So what brought her to us? Says Rency, "I was blessed to hear about this opportunity at Action PT soon after the departure of a previous employee. I was actually working at another facility when I was heard of the opening and am so glad to come aboard. Action PT offers a friendly atmosphere with the opportunity to spread your wings and learn all that you can."

In her time at Action PT, Rency has gained multiple shadowing hours and the opportunity to put into practice the patient interaction. This will come in handy as she intends to pursue her higher education in the coming months to gain a PTA certification. She earned her degree in Kinesiology from Louisiana State University, and is a native of Slidell. A knowledgeable and helpful Tech, Rency spends her spare time with her boyfriend, family and 'fur-baby' - a cat named Thelma.

We are blessed to have her positivity here at Action PT, and know she is going to excel in her pursuit of a PTA this coming fall.

Now, you know about our fantastic, Rency!



WE'RE BACK IN ACTION

We are proud to have promoted all of the following patients from therapy as well as those who wished to remain "faceless" since the release of our last, monthly newsletter:



Nicholas



Kasper



Dalton



David



Christy



David



Clyde



Marlene

COMING SOON

Action Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine is expanding its social reach and will soon launch our Instagram page.

Be sure to follow us at both FACEBOOK (link below) and very soon on INSTAGRAM



Likely, our May Newsletter will not reach you before we have the opportunity to extend to everyone who fits the role.

So to all of you, from the entire staff at Action PT, we wish you a:



<https://www.facebook.com/ActionPTSports/>

