

Peaking Interests

Apex Physical Therapy's
patient newsletter

Summer 2009 Volume four Issue two

The Graston Technique

*New treatment method provides faster,
more effective rehabilitation results*

By Chris Miller, DPT, OCS

We at Apex Physical Therapy are excited to announce the addition of a new hands-on technique for the diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal injuries. The Graston Technique is a remarkable approach that allows the therapist to both detect and treat areas of soft tissue dysfunction throughout the body. It has been shown to not only decrease the overall time of treatment, but to achieve notably better outcomes than many other techniques.

The Graston Technique works by identifying and treating adhesions in the skeletal muscles and related soft tissue. During the healing process, our body attempts to repair muscles, tendons and ligaments with scar tissue, much like a scar that forms on the skin when you scrape your knee. However, this internal scar tissue is not as strong and flexible as normal, healthy tissue.

Over time, build-up of this fibrous scar tissue - known as adhesions - can occur. This can lead to pain and dysfunction because the replacement scar tissue lacks the strength and flexibility of healthy tissue. In fact, it can even entrap or bind down nerves. So,

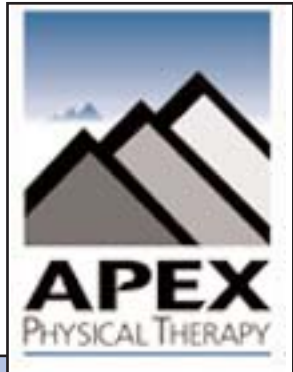
when someone says they are "tight" or have pain with movement, they are usually experiencing the binding effect of scar tissue.

While invisible, this type of soft tissue damage occurs with nearly every injury - whether acute or chronic - and is often overlooked and underestimated for its contribution to the injury. The Graston Technique allows us to better detect and treat these areas.

The six stainless steel instruments the technique employs are contoured to complement the body's shapes and curves. They glide over the suspected areas and act like a scar tissue stethoscope, identifying or "catching" on areas of restriction and adhesion. Not only can the therapist identify these trouble spots, but the patient can also feel when the tool has reached one of them. Through this tangible experience, the patient instantly connects with the therapist and the treatment.

Once the problem area is identified, the therapist then uses the same instruments for treatment. The tools function during this process in a number of ways. They separate and break down collagen cross-links - the main protein of connective tissue - and splay and stretch the connective tissue

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Now serving
Five locations

Royersford

341 10th Avenue
Suite 101

Royersford, PA 19468
610-792-8100

Blue Bell

686 DeKalb Pike
Suite 101

Blue Bell, PA 19422
610-270-0300

NOW OFFERING FITNESS!!

Chalfont

1500 Horizon Drive
Suite 102E

Chalfont, PA 18914
215-712-0300

Pottstown-Coventry

10 Glocker Way
Pottstown, PA 19465

610-323-4300

Lafayette Hill

466 Germantown Pike
Suite 200

Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
610-832-7510

Hours of operation

Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sat: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Check out our Web site

www.apex-pt.com

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and muscle fibers. They increase the rate and amount of blood flow to and from the affected area. They facilitate reflex changes in the chronic muscle holding pattern. And they increase cellular activity in the region.

Essentially, the technique is one of controlled micro trauma that rearranges the tissue structure, replacing damaged tissue with new tissue. It is normal for the patient to experience some discomfort during the treatment session. However, treatment is usually followed by ice to reduce pain, as well as stretching and strengthening exercises to increase function and range of motion.

Unfortunately, the unaided hand is hard-pressed to detect and break up scar tissue with the precision the Graston Technique's tools provide. This is why the technique can lead to quicker and more effective rehabilitation. Patients

usually receive two treatments per week over four to six weeks and most have a positive response by the 3rd to 4th session.

In fact, The Graston Technique can often be the missing link needed to conquer that nagging musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction that other treatments have failed to help. For instance, recent research has revealed that most people who develop "tendonitis" every few months after overworking an area of the body actually have a more chronic, degenerative condition known as tendonosis. Tendonosis is thought to be caused by micro tears in the connective tissue in and around the tendon,



Photo courtesy of www.grastontechnique.com

which lead to an increase in tendon repair cells. Tendonosis must be treated differently than tendonitis, but it generally is not. The Graston Technique, however, can treat not just the tendonitis but also the underlying tendonosis, thereby leading to a more permanent and successful recovery.

Some of the common diagnoses the Graston Technique can be particularly useful in treating include: lateral epicondylitis ("tennis elbow"), plantar fasciitis ("foot pain"), Achilles tendonitis ("ankle pain"), rotator cuff tendonitis ("shoulder pain"), patellar tendonitis ("knee pain"), Carpal Tunnel Syndrome ("wrist pain"), shin splints, and muscle sprains.

Scars from older or recent surgical procedures can also be treated with the Graston Technique. Oftentimes, these scars can become hypersensitive and may restrict surrounding tissue, causing pain and dysfunction. In addition, nerve endings can get "bound up" within the scar itself. Utilizing the Graston

Technique, physical therapists have had great success not only mobilizing the scar itself, but decreasing its sensitivity and the restriction to adjacent tissue.

The Graston Technique is not appropriate for every condition. Therapists who are qualified to obtain the tools and employ the treatment techniques must be trained and accredited in the Graston Technique course. Thus, we are able determine if the technique would be appropriate for you and your diagnosis. If you have tried other forms of therapy, but still experience lingering pain or stiffness/tightness, please ask us whether you may be helped by this effective treatment.

Meet our Apex Staff Treat^(ment) for your Tummy



John Vercher, MPT
Certified Vestibular Therapist
Lafayette Hill

John joined Apex Physical Therapy's Lafayette Hill office in October of 2008 and was promoted to managing director in May of 2009.

He received his master's degree in Physical Therapy in 1999 and his bachelor's in English in 1997 from the University of Pittsburgh.

Since graduating, John has worked

in a variety of outpatient orthopedic settings. However, his emphasis is most often on sports medicine due to his keen interest in manual therapy.

John's continuing education background is vast. Currently, he is pursuing his certification in manual therapy from the North American Institute of Orthopedic Manual Therapy. In May of 2007, John earned his certification as a Vestibular Therapist. He's also received certification as a Sportsmetrics instructor and a nutrition specialist. He continues to participate in courses each year in order to stay abreast of current topics in physical therapy and orthopedic medicine.

In addition, John has served as a clinical instructor for physical therapy students. He is an active member of the American Physical Therapy Association.

Outside of the clinic, John is an avid enthusiast of mixed martial arts, in which he trains regularly with his wife in order to defend themselves against their two dogs.



Potato Salad

The perfect companion to a juicy burger, grilled chicken breast or plate of ribs. Sure to please at your next summer BBQ.

Ingredients

2 lbs small Yukon gold potatoes
2 large eggs
Kosher salt
1/2 bunch sliced scallions, all parts
2 tbsp drained capers
2 cups mayonnaise
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
1/4 cup finely chopped dill pickles w/ 1/4 cup juice, about 2 pickles
1/2 small red onion, chopped
2 tsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1/2 bunch dill, chopped
1/2 lemon, juiced
Freshly ground black pepper
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

1. Put potatoes and eggs in large saucepan of cold, salted water. Bring to a simmer.
2. Remove eggs with slotted spoon after 12 mins. Let cool.
3. Continue cooking potatoes about 3 mins (until non-resistant to poke with pairing knife). Drain and let cool.
4. Reserve some scallion greens and capers for garnish.
5. Stir together mayonnaise, mustard, pickles and juice, onion, remaining scallions and capers, parsley and lemon juice in bowl big enough to hold potatoes.
6. Peel cooled eggs. Chop and add to bowl.
7. Break potatoes by hand into rough chunks. Add to bowl and toss to coat with dressing.
8. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.
9. Drizzle with a little olive oil before serving.

Welcome new staff members

Apex would like to welcome a few of our newest staff members:

- Natalie Derstine, physical therapist, Lafayette Hill
- Dorothy Wager, full-time admin, Lafayette Hill
- Deborah McCarthy, Billing & Collections

Special deliveries

We'd like to announce the arrival of two baby girls to the Apex family. Kamala Bongiorno, managing partner, and her husband John welcomed Gabriella Reese Bongiorno on February 15, 2009. Anne Schutt, director of operations, and her husband Phil welcomed Kayla Anne Schutt on May 18, 2009. Everyone is happy, healthy and doing well!

Congratulations are in order

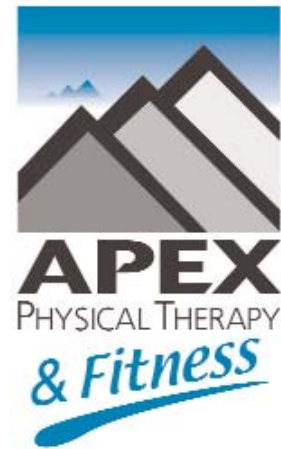
We'd like to congratulate Chalfont physical therapist Carrie Deperro on completing all the coursework required to become a senior therapist at Apex Physical Therapy. To achieve this recognition, Carrie attended several continuing education courses focused on hands-on treatment techniques, as well as participated in Apex's clinical education sessions.

Crossing the finish line

Apex would like to congratulate Chalfont managing director Marsha Berger Grant and Blue Bell physical therapist Greg Schaab for completing the Broad Street Run on May 3, 2009!

WE'VE MOVED!!

Please be aware that our Blue Bell office has relocated to 686 DeKalb Pike – behind the old office – in the Village Square Shopping Center.



Your name: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Free one-hour training session!!

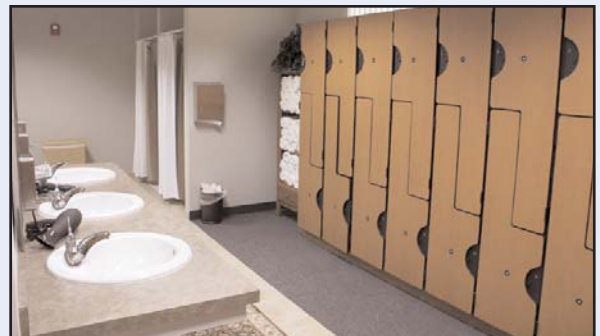
Initiation fee waived for first 25 members!!

Bring this coupon with you to our new fitness center or call 610-270-0300 to schedule a FREE one-hour session with one of our exercise physiologists. Offer expires September 30, 2009.

APEX PHYSICAL THERAPY & FITNESS

NOW OPEN IN OUR NEW BLUE BELL LOCATION!!

We are excited to finally announce the official opening of our first fitness center, located at 686 DeKalb Pike in Blue Bell. The facility offers 5,000 square feet of physical therapy and fitness equipment with men's and women's locker rooms. The fitness suite is staffed by exercise physiologists Sean Wells and Chris Campbell and offers MedEx and Nautalis equipment. We offer yearly and monthly memberships and personal training packages. If you're interested, stop in to see the facility or call 610-270-0300.



Achieving the Apex

What patients are saying about their successes at our clinics

"I had several problems when I came to Apex. [My therapist] was great! We used the Graston Technique to help my hip and low back pain. It seemed to be worse, at first, but gradually, over time, my pain got better. Top notch care!"

- Ken J.

"On my first post-op visit, Dr. Muphy and I discussed physical therapy. He thought it was a great idea and wrote out a script for me to work with [the therapists] at Apex Physical Therapy. While the surgery had been successful, following up with physical therapy greatly reassured me that I was doing exercises that would strengthen muscles that needed to be strengthened."

- Susan H.

"After having what I thought was just a 'bad headache' with terrible neck stiffness, I decided to see my family doctor. He recommended physical therapy. How fortunate I was that Apex PT was right around the corner and accepted my insurance. I was only to find out later how much more fortunate I was to be actually treated at this facility. The professionalism, quality of care and genuine concern by [my therapists and the receptionists] was nothing short of amazing. Their instructions for my [home exercise program] were clear, concise and informative. Three weeks later, I'm like a new person!"

- Lynne K.

"When I finally sought help for the pain in my left shoulder and arm from Dr. Kovalsky, he recommended physical therapy. I found Apex in the phone book and made my appointment. The staff was friendly and accomodating. With each session, I was seeing results. I 'graduated' yesterday pain-free. I am thankful to Apex for that."

- Diane M.



Philadelphia International
Cycling Championship
Photo courtesy of Pro Cycling Tour News



676 Dekalb Pike
Suite 205
Blue Bell, PA 19422