



PROACTIVE

PHYSIOTHERAPY THERAPEUTICS

Message

**FROM
OWNER/DIRECTOR
LAURIE MCLAUGHLIN**

The holiday season is upon us – bringing with it the challenges of staying fit and healthy as we rush about our errands and celebrate with loved ones.

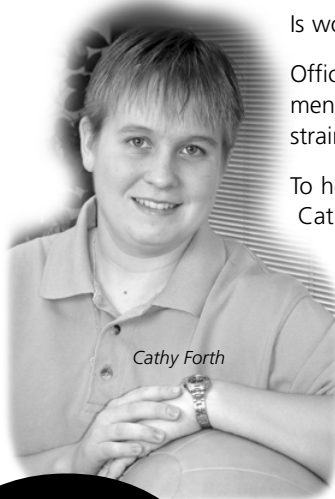
Too often, our ProActive physiotherapists see people who have launched into post-holiday fitness programs with such vigor that they hurt themselves. Others start fitness programs but can't keep up the momentum. But getting active doesn't have to be a painful – or fleeting – experience, if you follow some of the tips we're providing in this issue.

Staying active throughout the winter is important for everyone, and particularly for seniors, who can be at added risk for injury if their muscles weaken from a sedentary lifestyle. We'll look at their special needs in this issue as well.

As 2002 comes to a close, I'd like to thank our staff, partners and patients for another successful and fulfilling year. And on behalf of the entire ProActive team, I would like to wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy holiday season!

Laurie McLaughlin
Owner/Director

Help for **WORKPLACE ERGONOMICS**



Cathy Forth

Is work a pain in the neck? Sometimes it can be – literally.

Office chairs that are too high or too low, or poorly positioned computer equipment can contribute to back pain, neck pain, headaches and other repetitive strain injuries.

To help identify these trouble spots, ProActive has welcomed kinesiologist Cathy Forth to the Hamilton clinic. Cathy specializes in ergonomic assessments in the workplace. Her hour-long evaluation can help make a work-station more comfortable, for a healthier and more productive workday.

In addition to the assessments, Cathy will also be working with patients at the clinic, teaching therapeutic exercises and assisting the physiotherapists. To book your workplace assessment, please call the Hamilton clinic at 905-577-0098.

WINTER CHILLS CAN LEAD TO SPRINGTIME SPILLS

FOR Seniors

We all get tempted to hibernate indoors during the winter – especially for seniors who may be worried about the cold and ice. But for older folks, keeping active during the cold winter months is essential. That's because inactivity can weaken muscles, making seniors more likely to fall when they venture out again in early spring.

The British Journal of Sports Medicine reviewed a number of studies that found that regular fitness activities can lower an older adult's risk of falling. Fitness programs should include exercises to improve strength, flexibility and balance.

While walking outdoors might be out of the question there are a number of indoor alternatives. Walking indoors, by joining a "mall-walking" group or using a treadmill, can help keep muscles strong. Fitness programs, such as Tai Chi or Pilates, can help improve balance and flexibility. If a group fitness program is chosen, the social interaction will also improve mental well being, providing the added benefit of warding off loneliness while reducing the risk of falls.



Talking **TURKEY**

Having a large family gathering for the holidays? Watch that turkey. When removing the bird from the oven, face the oven directly, set your feet squarely on the floor, hip width apart, and concentrate on using your leg muscles to help you make the lift so that your back doesn't take all the weight. Wear an apron so you can hold the roasting pan as close to your body as possible. Make sure you've got a clear counter space ready to put the roaster down, so that you're not twisting and turning with the heavy roaster in your hands, trying to find a spot. Finally, be sure to wear solid footwear in the kitchen to prevent slips and falls – everyone will enjoy dinner much more if you're not wearing it!



Check out our web site!
www.proactivehealth.ca

Post-Holiday FITNESS

For many of us, holiday celebrations are followed by post-holiday guilt. The feasts, sweets and treats have added extra pounds, while shopping and parties have edged out time for regular workouts. Inevitably, we make the requisite New Year's resolution to get fit.

While launching into a regular exercise routine is important, remember that immediately overtaxing your body will cause more harm than good. It's always a good idea to check with your physician, physiotherapist or fitness professional before beginning a new regimen, especially if you have any pre-existing medical conditions.

Once you do begin your new routine, start out slowly to prevent injury. Begin with a 20 to 30 minute workout a few times a week and gradually increase the time and intensity. Don't forget to warm up and cool down. To get your blood flowing for indoor exercise regimens, walk up and down the stairs a few times or start out on the treadmill at a slow pace. Stretch each of your major muscle groups. Isolate each muscle, don't stretch past the point of a gentle pull, and hold each stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat the stretching at the end of your workout.

During the wintertime, fitness often moves indoors and into the home. This is convenient but challenging – home can be full of distractions. The couch beckons, the laundry piles up, the kids are calling. How can you make that resolution stick?

To make home-based workouts more effective, schedule them into your calendar and let the family know you aren't available during that time. Let others, or an answering machine, take the phone calls while you are exercising.

Entertainment makes the time fly by, so wear headphones or read a magazine. For stationary bikes and stair climbers, buy a plastic rack that fits onto the console and holds reading material and a water bottle. Remember to maintain good posture while using your home fitness equipment to prevent strain and injury.

To make the transition to a fitness program easier, try to stay fit during the hectic holiday period by squeezing *some* physical activity into your daily routines. Often, it can be as easy as opting for the stairs instead of the elevator, or choosing to walk instead of driving to nearby errands. Research has shown that even light, consistent physical activity can have great health benefits.

Please Bring Food to Your Next Appointment!

Throughout December, both ProActive clinics will collect non-perishable food items.

We encourage all patients to bring one or more food item with them to appointments and we'll turn the collection over to local food banks.

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Fax **905-337-1357**

STAFF News

Congratulations go out to physiotherapist Greg Spadoni, who personifies the ProActive philosophy of lifelong learning. Greg recently earned his Masters of Science in Rehabilitation Science from McMaster University.

"You can never go wrong with education," Greg says of his M.Sc. "It has helped me to stay energized in my career and engaged in new developments in the field."

Greg Spadoni



Congratulations are also in order for Elaine Principi, a part-time physiotherapist at the Hamilton clinic, for her fine showing at the World Duathlon Championships this past October in Alpharetta, Georgia.

The duathlon is a challenging race that involves completing a 10-kilometre run, cycling 40 kilometres and then finishing with another five-kilometre run. Elaine did the Canadian team proud, placing 25th in her category of women age 40-44. An alumnus of Mohawk College, she was also inducted into the college's Sports Hall of Fame last month. Elaine is truly an inspiration to us all!



Laurie McLaughlin (left) and Elaine Principi (right)

Australia Bound

ProActive Physiotherapy

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Phone **905-577-0098**
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ProActive owner/director Laurie McLaughlin will be heading to the Land Down Under in February 2003 to teach physiotherapists there about treating pelvic pain. Laurie is very experienced in treating pelvic pain and for several years has provided instruction to Canadian physiotherapists who are developing their skills in this area. (see information on pelvic pain on our web site at www.proactivehealth.ca).

In addition to presenting this practical workshop, Laurie will spend time with several world-renowned physiotherapists throughout Australia in order to bring back the latest developments in areas such as shoulder treatment, neural tension and core stability exercises.

