



DECEMBER 2020

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We are celebrating the 10
year anniversary of Eric
Halverson OTR/L!

HOLIDAYS & MENTAL HEALTH

How loneliness can affect
you and how you
can cope



**Merry Christmas
From Therapy
Solutions!**

NEWSLETTER



SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

***HOW REGULAR EXERCISE CAN
PROTECT AGAINST DEPRESSION***

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

HOW REGULAR EXERCISE CAN PROTECT AGAINST DEPRESSION



▶ Has your mood darkened with the shorter days and longer nights of fall and winter? If you're like many people, getting less sunshine and being less active this time of year can contribute to feelings of sadness and apathy that may be associated with Seasonal Affective Disorder (or SAD).

The good news is that regular exercise can help boost your mood and guard against symptoms of seasonal affective disorder.

EXERCISE AND SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, 14 percent of people in the United States experience SAD (also known as seasonal depression). But research shows that many people can manage or avoid SAD with 30 to 60 minutes of exercise and 20 minutes of exposure to sunlight each day. In addition, data show exercisers have lower rates of recurrent depression compared with study participants who do not exercise. These figures emphasize the importance of exercising throughout the winter, especially if your goal is health and well-being as well as a trim waistline.

Try the tips for maintaining your winter exercise routine this winter:

▶ Arrange your schedule to start and end later or earlier so that you can exercise outside after sunrise or before sundown.

▶ Get outside to walk, jog, run, snowshoe, or cross country ski. The exposure to sunlight can help increase your vitamin D levels and elevate your mood.

▶ Enlist the services of an athletic/personal fitness trainer. Many people find meeting with a trainer helps them stick with their exercise routine. Trainers also can help vary workouts to keep them interesting and effective. Contact Tori, athletic trainer, at Therapy Solutions for your individualized exercise plan.

GET PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR SAD IF YOU NEED IT

Although lack of sunlight and activity often are culprits of seasonal affective disorder, genetics and hormonal changes also may contribute to the condition. If exercise alone doesn't improve your mood and your sadness persists for more than 2 weeks, schedule an appointment with one of our therapists. We will provide you with techniques in addition to exercise to manage stress.

References:

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STAFF SPOTLIGHT



► It's hard to believe, Eric Halverson OTR/L has been with Therapy Solutions for 10 years! He has been there from the beginning and we are so thankful for all his hard work. With his degree in occupational therapy, Eric works primarily within our Dickinson outpatient clinic. Eric specializes in treatment of upper body injuries including shoulder, elbow, wrist & hand. Eric also leads our occupational health department, where he works directly with clients completing pre-hire testing, functional capacity evaluations and work conditioning programs.

In 2005, Eric became certified with WorkWell Systems, a nationally-recognized program that works with employers to maximize their work programs, employee functions and overall physical health and wellness.

In his spare time, Eric enjoys spending time with his family, camping, attending his kids sporting events, and hunting.



TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR BALANCE THIS WINTER!

► Just because it is winter, it doesn't mean you have to stay indoors! It is easy to want to stay in, nestled up in blankets, while it's snowy and cold. However, remaining active in the winter months is just as important as remaining active during any other season!

The winter presents several fun activities that can double as workouts. Taking advantage of nearby ski slopes or ice-skating rinks can give you a fun outing that'll get you out of the house and also get you moving. Even getting outside to go sledding or build a snowman with your kids can give you the amount of daily exercise you need.

Unfortunately, exercising in colder weather poses a higher risk of injury, such as strains, sprains, and tears. Even something as small as walking to your car can lead to a slip on unseen ice. At Therapy Solutions, we want to make sure you stay balanced this winter, so you can enjoy doing activities of the season without fearing a harsh fall!

WHAT CAN I DO TO DECREASE MY RISK OF FALLING?

There are some steps you can take on your own to decrease your risk of sustaining a fall-related injury while participating in winter activities. These include:

- Choose shoes with winter soles for traction. You can also get a pair of ski or walking poles to help keep your balance. As an added bonus, these poles will also help you burn extra calories since your upper body is getting a workout too.
- Add slip-on spikes to your boots on the extra icy days, to reduce your risk of slips and falls.
- Allow at least 10 minutes to warm up when exercising in the winter. When it's cold, your heart and muscles need more time to get ready and prepare for exercise - this can help you avoid unwanted injuries.

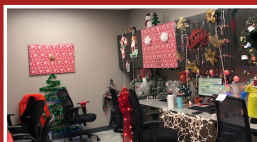
No matter what winter activity or exercise you're partaking in, warm-ups should always include a combination of low-intensity movements that will make the physical activity easier to perform. For example, if

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THERAPY SOLUTIONS!



► Therapy Solutions is celebrating the Festivities this month with door decorating contests, Christmas theme games and trivia and of course wonderful Christmas food. Stay by and see us!

Therapy Solutions wishes everyone a Very Merry Christmas!





you decide to go on a walk or run through the winter wonderland that your street has become, you could warm up with lunges, squats, arm swings, or jumping jacks, making sure to also get a good stretch in your calves and thighs. This will keep your body warm while you exercise and will be a good way for you to feel out the terrain beforehand to see if it's too icy.

Add in any additional assists, as needed. Snow and ice are the main culprits for many injuries during the wintertime, which is why it is important to add to your stability. Ice cleats or rubber-soled boots can provide you with grip and support. Using a cane or crutch can also help in remaining steady on frozen terrain.

WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT A PHYSICAL THERAPIST?

Consulting with a physical therapist can also help you keep your balance and reduce your risk of falling this winter. If you are already at risk of falling, or if you have noticed an instability in your balance lately, Therapy Solutions can help.

If at any point you feel as if you may be at risk of falling this winter, don't hesitate to contact us. At Therapy Solutions, we are dedicated to helping our patients live their lives with joy, rather than fear. We want you to be as comfortable as possible as you participate in your winter activities.

While we hope there won't be any issues, so you can enjoy the season at its fullest, we are always here to assist you in the event that there are. Our dedicated team will provide you with any help and support you need to take this winter by storm – without the risk of falling!

For more information about how Therapy Solutions can help you, visit our website at therapy-solutions.net.

Therapy Solutions
TAKE YOUR LIFE BACK.

HELPING HOLIDAY LONELINESS

► The Holidays are upon us, and the irony they bring is the potential for isolation and loneliness. Holidays' essential identity is getting together with loved ones, but some people do not feel as connected as they would like or expect due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The Holidays, therefore, present an excellent time to discuss how we can reinforce connections during a time that requires us to be apart to protect our physical health, a requirement that paradoxically can have a damaging effect on our mental health. We can, however, take charge of improving our mental health.

LONELINESS AND ISOLATION AND OUR HEALTH

What is the difference between loneliness and isolation? "Loneliness is the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Social isolation, on the other hand, is a lack of social connections. Put differently, one can have many social connections but still feel lonely.

The physical and mental health risks of loneliness and isolation are significant. They include but are not limited to:

- Social isolation increases the risk of premature death, revivalling smoking, obesity and physical inactivity.
- Social isolation is associated with increasing the risk for dementia
- Loneliness is connected to higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicide.

A 2020 report by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) states that more than one-third of adults 45 and older feel lonely, and approximately one-fourth 65 and older are socially isolated. Add the holidays and COVID-19 to an already preexisting condition, and the time is ripe for all of us to take action to protect our mental health.

SIMPLE STEPS FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Specific to the season and the times, there are common-sense tips that we all can practice to help manage loneliness. For example:

- **Talk to someone about your sense of loneliness and isolation.** There's stigma around loneliness so it can be hard to do. However, you may well find that you're not alone in those feelings, and sharing them can help lessen their effect.
- **Manage your holiday/COVID-19 expectations.** The holidays can fall short of expectations, but this year it may be worse. Understand that the pandemic won't last forever, and that we're all in this together. Indeed, many people's holiday gatherings will likely be different this year.
- **Remember to take care of yourself, now more than ever.** Sleep, exercise and good nutrition — with the proper amount of holiday indulgence — go a long way in addressing mental health.
- **Avoid social media, such as Facebook or Instagram, especially during the holidays.** It's easy to negatively compare one's life to the "perfect" lives posted on social media, forgetting that people mostly post only the positive.
- **Practice Self-Talk-The Truth.** Recognize when you are allowing your mind to unravel into the unknown or about things you can't control, which causes stress. Replace those thoughts with the truth: "I can only control what I can. I can get through this." Take a deep 8 second, breath and commit to stop letting your mind go into the unknown.