



Physical Therapy & Wellness

The Newsletter About Caring for Your Health



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BACK PAIN AND SCIATICA

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BACK PAIN AND SCIATICA

Most people have heard some form of statistic that lots of people experience lower back pain at some point in their lives. I've read that that statistic is as high as 80%. Regardless, lots of people experience lower back pain.

There definitely is some confusion when it comes to specific diagnoses of lower back pain. Those different diagnoses can be descriptive as to what is causing the pain (herniated or bulging disc, degenerative disc disease, pinched nerve). Or the diagnoses can be descriptive regarding the location of the pain (lower back pain, sciatica, SI Joint Dysfunction).

Which leads to the subject of this article: What's the difference between lower back pain and sciatica? Basically, lower back pain refers to, literally, pain that is localized to the lower back region (also called the lumbar spine region). Sciatica refers to pain that is located in the buttock, the back of the thigh/hamstring, or even the calf.

While the immediate cause(s) of sciatica can be different than lower back pain, the root causes of the two diagnoses are nearly always the same. There can be a few different immediate causes of sciatica. The most common is an inflamed sciatic nerve (hence the name sciatica), which is located deep in the buttocks. This inflamed nerve can cause

pain in the buttocks, or pain that shoots down the back of the leg, occasionally into the calf. The most common cause of the sciatic nerve inflammation is pressure on a spinal nerve root that branches off the spinal cord in the lower back. Even though this pressure is on a nerve located in the lower back, oftentimes there is no pain in the lower back, just the buttock and/or the back of the leg. Occasionally the sciatic nerve itself is impinged or pinched by one of the deep buttock muscles called the piriformis, but this is rare.

Ultimately, with very few exceptions, lower back pain and sciatica are really just two sides of the same coin, with the underlying causes of the pain having everything to do with the lumbar spine or lower back. So, while you may be getting two different diagnoses, they're really ultimately the same diagnosis with respect to causes and treatment strategies.

If you're struggling with sciatica or lower back pain and are looking for relief from the pain, consider giving us a call. We have loads of experience successfully treating both conditions and can very likely get you back to your normal, pain-free life in no time.

Focusing On The Meaning Of Thanksgiving



A letter from Mike & Sandra Van Gilder:

For several years now, Mike and I have made a point of watching "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" with the kids. It's a story that resonates with us on several levels. One, it's a story that is based on the Pilgrims' desire to escape religious persecution. Whatever one's faith is, the importance of freedom to practice one's faith is underscored in this story. Two, it's a story of perseverance. As difficult as the Pilgrims' journey was, with sickness and starvation, they persevered to attain their goals—to grow as a group into the lives that they pursued. Three, it's a story of community and the importance of community in weathering tough times and thriving in good times. Finally, it's a story of giving—how, in tough times, when the inclination is to focus inward, it can be very rewarding and beneficial to focus outward, on giving more so than receiving.

Sounds an awful lot like G3's core value: Gather. Give. Grow.

I feel this story and these values are particularly poignant this year. With so much uncertainty, chaos, and questions in our world today, affecting many of the foundations that we've come to rely upon, resorting back to the values of the Pilgrims seems logical (and helpful) to me.

So, this is a word of encouragement to remember the plight of the Pilgrims this Thanksgiving season. When enduring challenging times, I find it very beneficial to have an abundance mindset, focusing outward rather than inward.

This can mean different things to different people, but to me it means looking to gather more frequently than at other times

of the year. Looking to give more than receive. And looking to continue to grow, spiritually, physically, and mentally, in spite of being in challenging circumstances.

The gathering piece is pretty natural for many of us. We plan on renewing our tradition of visiting Mike's family back in Wisconsin—a sort of family reunion that we've missed the past two years. We also have a fun tradition of celebrating a second Thanksgiving dinner with my family, where we get to serve them a nice Thanksgiving dinner—which is especially fun given my Chinese heritage, where Thanksgiving is not a part of our culture.

As for giving, the Thanksgiving season can be a great opportunity to focus on the plight of those less fortunate than us. Whether it's buying a bag of goodies at the Sprouts checkout line for those less fortunate, or this year teaming up with St. John's Evangelist Church to collect donations for local families in need, I find that giving can be really good for my soul.

Finally, as always is the case for me, whenever I focus on gathering and giving, I naturally experience growth—personal, spiritual, and physical (often in the form of an expanding waistline!!). It never fails that, at the end of the Thanksgiving season, we talk about how we really need to make every month like November.

As I conclude these musings, I encourage everyone to get the most out of this Thanksgiving season—it's good for the body, mind, and spirit.

Happy Thanksgiving from our G3 family!!

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Tis the Season! Help Families in our Community

Help Families in our Community Now Thru November 16th!

Well, it's that time of year again—the Holidays are coming! Our favorite part of the Holidays is our Adopt a Family fundraiser wherein we help a local family in need celebrate the Holidays.

For our beginnings, G3 has adopted a family for Christmas and you have all been super generous with buying toys, clothes, and even bikes for this family. This year we decided to change things up a little bit. With times being what they are, many families are more in need of essentials rather than toys, so this year we'll be helping to adopt several needy families in the community, joining our local Catholic Parish, St. John's, yearly holiday drive for needy families.

All the money collected will go towards gift cards for StaterBros or Walmart. St John's Parish collects the money and orders the gift cards in bulk, which gives more opportunities for discounts and is easier to keep track of.

The G3 front office will be collecting any amount of money. You can donate via cash, check, or with your credit card on file. Just let us know how much you want to contribute, we will record and tally, and all donations will be delivered to St. John's Parish on November 16th. And for every dollar you contribute, G3 will match that amount (up to \$1,000).



Last year St. John's was able to assist over 170 households with basic essentials like food and toiletries, mostly in Encinitas, but as far out as Escondido.

If you know a family in need, you can direct them to St John's Parish Office. They fill out a Request Form (one per household) that will be available Nov. 22 through Dec.2.

The Parish office is open Monday through Friday, 8am until 4:30pm. Completed forms must be returned by Friday, December 3rd to the Parish office.

Thanks much in advance for helping us make the Holidays a little more special.

Holiday Recipe *Gluten-Free Pumpkin Cookies*



INGREDIENTS

- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 3 tbsp coconut oil, melted
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 1/2 cups gluten-free rolled oats
- 1/2 cup oat flour, ground
- 1/2 cup almond meal
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp allspice
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries and cherries

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease or line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside. In a mixing bowl stir together mashed banana, pumpkin, eggs, peanut butter, coconut oil, vanilla and maple syrup until well combined. Add in oats, oat flour, almond meal, baking powder, baking soda, salt, Vietnamese cinnamon, allspice, chocolate chips and dried fruit; stir to combine. Refrigerate for 5 minutes to harden. Drop cookies by spoonfuls on prepared baking sheet. They won't expand much, so feel free to press them down slightly, and make them as uniform as possible to ensure even baking. Bake for about 12 minutes until lightly browned.