Physical Therapy

Description

This article is part of a series of posts I have written about various therapies that may be helpful to relieve suffering due to arthritis.

Physical Therapy has not been high on my list of therapies helpful to relieve sciatica. However, pain up and down my right leg emanating from pinched nerves at L5 and L4 sent me back to the Physical Medicine doctor at my HMO, the Polyclinic here in Seattle. Dr. Ren recommended the Physiotherapy Associates at Greenlake. Eight sessions later, I still have pain, but I am stronger and less fearful.

Perhaps you have had similar responses to pain. When you hurt every time you walk a couple blocks, pretty soon, you stop walking altogether. When that happened to me, I stumbled on Tarama Gillest, Therapeutic Yoga instructor and owner of Bend n Move. In four sessions with her, I learned to manage my anticipation of pain with deep breathingand a series of body loosening and strengthening moves. I got out my sticks and tookthem everywhere so when the pain came, I have help. The hiking sticks help me lift mybodywith my arms, taking the pressure off my back.

In spite of this therapeutic intervention, I still experienced increased weakness in the right leg. This is where *Physical Therapy* came in. Two things to tell you about **Physical Therapy** with Physiotherapy Associates.

1. the exercises and stretching moves they employed did not increase pain. In fact, the opposite. Several of their stretches and exercises were ones I feared because they mirrored the actions that have caused pain in the past, such as the doggy leg lift when on all fours. In the controlled environment at the Physical Therapy office, I have been able to do leg lifts, strengthen the ham string without fear. Fear of pain is one of the problems that keeps us from moving.

2. Repetition increased strength. Do you know how many reps these guys make you do? 15 to 20 with each leg, twice or three times. You have to increase strength with that kindof workout.

They always end with icing and a ten minute rest. I recommend this PT experience for anyone who is struggling with the results of arthritis.

Finally, the therapist and my personal trainer talked to discuss my strength training at Xgym, so I have a tailored program to keep the upper body strong while I am working on the muscles and tendons and nerves below the waist.

The experience that pushed me over the edge was cross country skiing last week. The pain was so great, I had to stop after 2 hours and sit in the car while my companions

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