

Tips & Tricks: Summer Life Hacks

Give these summer life hacks a try to help make your summer even brighter!

Keep your bottled aloe vera gel in the fridge – the cool gel will be extra soothing on sunburned skin. You can also freeze aloe vera gel in ice cube trays. Once they are frozen, pop a few in a ziplock bag and pack them in your beach cooler to soothe overexposed skin on the spot.

Freeze grapes to use in place of ice cubes in your wine glasses – they will keep the wine cold and won't melt to leave you with a watered down drink.

Use baby powder to remove stuck on sand easily – before heading inside or loading back up in the car, sprinkle baby powder over the areas where the kids (or you) have stuck on sand from a day at the beach. It soaks up excess moisture and makes the sand remarkably easy to brush off.

Use ziplock bags to protect your phone from damage – if you don't have a waterproof case for your phone, just seal it up in a ziplock before spending the day enjoying the water. You can still see the screen and use it without fear of water, sunscreen or sand destroying it.

Carry a mesh beach bag – it will allow the sand, that seems to accumulate in your bag no matter how careful you are, to fall out as you carry it.

No more searching for your flip-flops – attach a D-ring to the handles of your beach bag and use it clip on your flip-flops. It keeps them in sight, out of your bag to help with that sand problem and one less thing you have to worry about carrying.



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SPLASH INTO SUMMER!

Summertime, when the living is easy! With its abundance of sunshine and laidback mentality, it's easy to see why summer takes the top spot on many a favorite season list. Perfect beach weather and delicious produce are just a couple other things the summer also delivers that can't do anything but solidify its high ranking with so many people.

Here at Spine Institute of Central Florida we are ready to make a splash this summer! We've filled this edition of *SpineTimes* with something for everyone, including ideas for backyard fun, water safety information and ways to stay healthy while still enjoying yourself. Living your best life just got a little easier with our most loved summer life hacks and a recipe for delicious (and customizable) chicken kabobs that are perfect for a

weeknight supper or a weekend cookout.

If you or someone you know are one of the over 50 million adults in the United States alone who suffer from arthritis, don't miss our section on exercising for arthritis pain. We also cover some of the basics and examine risk factors for the disease.

Last, but not least, our sports spotlight is on preventing common golf injuries. We include methods to employ both on and off the course to keep you at the top of your game.

We hope you enjoy splashing into the summer with us. Let's dive in!



A Word from Our President and Medical Director

Welcome and thank you for choosing Spine Institute of Central Florida (SICF) for your spine health and orthopaedic needs. We are so glad you're here!

At SICF, we're committed to and passionate about providing the most comprehensive care to our wonderful community.

~ Dr. Chukwuka Okafor



Provider Spotlight:

Meet Dr. Stacy Dale Russell

Meet Stacy Dale Russell, DPT a Doctor of Physical Therapy here at Spine Institute of Central Florida. Dr. Russell has been in the Physical Therapy profession for over 30 years. Dr. Russell started his career as a Physical Therapist Assistant after graduating from Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. He continued to advance his skills and later graduated from The Ohio State University Physical Therapy program. Dr. Russell then received his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Boston University. He holds certifications in Senior Strength Training and Clinical Instruction in Physical Therapy.

Dr. Russell has a wide array of experiences in Physical Therapy ranging from outpatient PT, acute hospital care, inpatient rehabilitation, sports medicine, geriatric

care, full support respiratory care, neurological patient care, orthopedic PT, worker's compensation PT, home health PT, employer on-site body mechanics training and currently specializes in Physical Therapy of the spine.

Dr. Russell has extensive experience in treating patients with spinal injuries and pathology. His knowledge and experience come not only from working with patients diagnosed with spinal pathology but also from living with significant spinal and orthopedic pathology. Dr. Russell understands the importance of Physical Therapy interventions due to the many successes he has facilitated with his patients and the beneficial effects it has had on his life, including allowing him to become a skilled martial artist.

Meet the Team

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Grilled Chicken Kabobs

These grilled chicken kabobs would be excellent served at a summer cookout or for a weeknight supper. Made with marinated chicken and colorful vegetables threaded onto skewers and cooked to perfection. In addition to tasting great, they are versatile and can easily be adjusted to fit each person's taste. If you don't like a vegetable listed below, switch it out for one of your favorites.

Ingredients:

1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into 1 inch pieces
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1/3 cup soy sauce
 1/4 cup honey
 1 teaspoon minced garlic
 1 red bell pepper cut into 1 inch pieces
 1 yellow bell pepper cut into 1 inch pieces
 2 small zucchini cut into 1 inch slices
 1 red onion cut into 1 inch pieces
 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
 Salt & Pepper to taste

Instructions:

Place the olive oil, soy sauce, honey, garlic, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Whisk to combine.

Add the chicken, bell peppers, zucchini and red onion to the bowl. Toss to coat in the marinade.

Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or up to 8 hours. Soak wooden skewers in cold water for at least 30 minutes. Preheat grill to medium high heat.

Thread the chicken and vegetables onto the skewers. Cook for 5-7 minutes on each side or until chicken is cooked through.

Sprinkle with parsley and serve. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe from Sara Welch (June 2018)
www.dinneratthezoo.com



Summer Like a Boss

Easy ways to
 stay healthy
 this summer
 without spoiling
 all the fun!

Summer brings with it the promise of long sunny days, cookouts with family & friends, beach trips and flip flops as standard attire. Whether it's due to the hotter temps or the relaxed mentality that summer also brings, the world around us seems like it's moving at a much more laidback pace. Which is great of course if you don't let too much of that relaxed mentality trickle over into how you take care of yourself. The good news is that it's very possible to enjoy all the spoils of summer without sacrificing your health.

Let's start with one of the most fundamental parts of summer – sunshine. Enjoy it at the beach, on the lake or in your backyard, but keep in mind that the summer sun gives off increased ultraviolet (UV) radiation, the sunburn producing rays that can also cause skin cancer, eye problems and premature aging with overexposure. It's very important to protect yourself with a broad-spectrum sunscreen, meaning it blocks both UVA and UVB rays, and you should re-apply it every two hours or more often if you're swimming or sweating. Sunglasses that offer broad-spectrum protection are also important, along with a wide-brimmed hat and protective clothing. Limit your direct exposure to the sun between the hours of 10:00 am and 4:00 pm, when UV rays are the strongest, by seeking shade. Be aware that water and white sand reflect the

sun's rays so be sure to protect your skin and eyes even if you're chilling under an umbrella.

Also synonymous with summer – cookouts. Getting together with your family and friends to enjoy a warm evening with lots of good food just screams summer. A lot of typical cookout fare is laden with fat and calories, but it is possible to lighten up your menu without sacrificing flavor. If you can't fire up the grill without knowing you'll be throwing on burgers, go with lean ground beef or consider trying chicken or turkey burgers. Season them with fresh herbs and spices for flavor and offer tons of veggie toppings to pile on. If you're willing to think outside the bun, kabobs loaded with veggies and a lean protein are a healthy, crowd-pleasing option. Grilled chicken and fresh fish on the grill are also delicious and healthier options. For sides, offer a pasta salad made with whole-wheat pasta and heaps of veggies like tomatoes, onions, bell peppers and cucumbers. Top it off with a dressing made from olive oil, apple cider vinegar, lemon juice and herbs for an extra punch of flavor. Grilling corn on the cob or squash seasoned with salt, pepper and olive oil are healthy and easy additions to your menu. If it's just not a cookout without Aunt Suzie's potato salad recipe, lighten it up by replacing half the mayo with plain yogurt. For dessert, make a big fruit salad or grill peaches and pineapple slices drizzled with honey that might even tempt the

biggest cookie monster you know. Add some activities like horseshoes or cornhole to keep guests entertained and moving after the meal, instead of falling into a food coma while they hold down the lawn chair. To make a splash with the kids (or kids at heart) and get them moving, check out our *Just Add Water Balloons* section on the next page.

Next in the summer tango line – drinks. Your best bet for a summer drink is water. It will keep you hydrated in the summer heat and drinking it before a meal could help you consume fewer calories. But it can get boring, so try adding fresh cucumbers, lemon and mint to it. Make up a pitcher with these additions before bed and store in the fridge. This will give it plenty of time to cool down and allow the flavors to meld. If your ideal summer drink includes a tiny umbrella and spirits just be sure to drink plenty of water between your cocktails so you don't become dehydrated. Summer happy-hour favorites, like margaritas and daiquiris, can be loaded with sugar so keep those rounds to a minimum. You could also try replacing them with lower sugar drinks such as gin and club soda with a lime twist or a glass of dry wine.

Hopefully these tips start your summer off on the right path and lead to the healthiest summer yet. That's what we call doing summer like a boss!



Backyard Summer Fun

Summertime offers the perfect opportunity to get your family outside and away from their device screens for fun in the backyard. Whether you need a little inspiration or real help convincing the kids to step away from Fortnite and join you outdoors, we've put together some of our favorite ideas to get you started. We think you'll find something that even the biggest lover of air conditioning among your family won't be able to resist!

Let's start with food. A backyard picnic, complete with a blanket to sit on and watermelon for dessert, can take a sandwich with a side of chips from mundane to magical. Or plan a cookout and get ready to fire up the

grill and cook some delicious summer BBQ staples. It's a great way to enjoy time outdoors with your family and friends.

If it's going to take more than food to drag, er, draw your family outdoors, let's move on to pure fun. Bubbles are enjoyable for kids of all ages. Whether you go with the basic bottled bubbles or step it up with a bubble machine or DIY giant bubble wands, they're just hard to resist. Build a teepee for a cool backyard hangout where the kids can hold club meetings or have a quiet spot to draw or read a book.

When the sun goes down, grab a blanket and do some stargazing. Bonus points if you have a telescope

to break out. No summer is complete without backyard camping for the kiddos. Go all out with a tent, sleeping bags and a campfire for s'mores. Summer nights are also a great time to break out the glow sticks and glow jewelry for some glow in the dark fun.

For the pièce de résistance, it's of course not summer without water. No pool? No problem! Slip 'n slides, inflatable water slides, kiddie pools and sprinklers are just a few of the ways everyone can cool off and enjoy splashing around in the backyard. Arm everyone with water guns, water bombs and water balloons for an epic water war that even the most indoorsy person can't resist taking part in.

Now get out there and have some backyard summer fun!

WATER SAFETY

Whether your children spend their summers at home, away at camp or traveling with you, they are bound to be around water. Following water safety guidelines can help prevent accidents.

Swimming is one of the most popular summer activities and why wouldn't it be!? It's fun, can double as exercise and it's a great way to stay cool on a hot summer day. Before you dive in this summer, read on for some tips to make sure everyone stays safe while enjoying the water.

Teaching your children how to swim is the best thing you can do to help ensure safety around the water. Take advantage of local YMCA or Red Cross swim lessons if you aren't comfortable teaching them on your own - some offer classes for children as young as 6 months. Enroll yourself if you aren't a strong swimmer and learn together!

When possible swim where lifeguards are on duty. Never let children swim unsupervised, even when lifeguards are present. Stay within arm's reach of young children as seconds count in preventing disaster. Be aware of the hazards when swimming in natural bodies of water, like rip currents in the ocean and rocks in rivers or lakes that can't be seen from the surface. Young children and inexperienced swimmers should wear life jackets around the water, but don't rely on flotation devices alone as supervision is still paramount.

To prevent unsupervised access by children, home pools should have barriers around them that are at least four feet high with gates that are self-closing and self-latching. Pool alarms and safety covers offer extra layers of protection. Above ground pools should be covered with the access ladders removed when the pool is not in use. Keep inflatable toys and floats put away when not in use so they won't be an extra attraction to the pool for young children. Kiddie pools should be emptied after each use.

Lastly, be prepared and know what to do in case of an emergency. Learn CPR, basic first aid and know when to call 911 or seek medical attention.

Just Add Water Balloons

Water balloons can be used to transform classic kids' games into a splashing good time. It's an awesome way to keep kids of all ages entertained and active outside while also keeping them cool. Get your water balloons ready and try some of these!

Water Balloon Tag: Whoever is "it" carries a water balloon. If they hit you with the balloon and it breaks, then "Tag you're it!"

Water Piñata: Hang some water balloons with string and grab a stick. No one will care that these piñatas aren't full of candy!

Water Balloon DodgeBall: Just like regular DodgeBall except last one dry wins. Be sure to carefully place the balloons on the ground so they don't break before the game starts or use a tub to hold the game balloons.

Water Balloon Toss: The balloon is tossed back and forth between partners until it busts. Start close and directly across from your partner. After each successful balloon toss and catch, take a step back from each other and keep going until someone gets wet!

Water Balloon Hot Potato: Have players toss the water balloon around, just like they would in a game of hot potato, until someone drops it or it breaks. This version is a little cooler than the original!

Water Balloon Fight: We couldn't leave out the tried and true original!





Exercise for Arthritis Pain

Exercising is one of the most important things you can do if you have arthritis. It might seem like physical activity would only aggravate already stiff and painful joints, but the opposite is actually true. Exercise can help you to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight which lessens stress on your joints. It's also essential in keeping your muscles and surrounding tissues strong to help support your bones and protect your joints.

The best type of exercise for you will depend on what type of arthritis you have and what joints are affected.

To be sure you get the most benefit with the least irritation, work with your doctor to formulate your exercise plan. Some of the exercises recommended might include range-of-motion exercises, strengthening exercises or aerobic exercises.

Range-of-motion (ROM) is the full movement potential of a joint and ROM exercises relieve stiffness and help improve joint function. An example would be a knee to chest stretch for arthritis pain in the hip.

Strengthening exercises build muscle strength which helps support your bones and protect your joints.

Resistance bands are an excellent

way to introduce strength training into your routine and are a great alternative to free weights, especially if you suffer from arthritis.

Aerobic exercises build endurance, increase your overall fitness and are commonly referred to as cardio. It's best to stick with low-impact cardio exercises if you have arthritis because they will be easier on your joints. Walking, riding your bike or swimming are just a few examples.

It's important to note that any type of regular movement can help, even normal daily activities. Just start slow, be careful not to overdo it and listen to your body (and your doctor)!

ARTHRITIS 101

What is it?

Arthritis is joint pain or joint disease. It's not actually one disease, as there are more than 100 different types of arthritis and related conditions. It affects the joints, the tissue around the joints and other connective tissue.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of arthritis can vary depending on the specific type, but in general it causes pain, swelling, stiffness and decreased range of motion in the affected joint(s). Symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe and can persist over time or come and go.

Who gets it?

Arthritis is most common among women and is more frequent as we age, but it affects people of all ages, sex and race. Over 50 million adults have it and it is the leading cause of disability in America.

How is it diagnosed?

Arthritis can be diagnosed by a primary care doctor. Your medical history will be taken into consideration and a physical exam will be performed along with imaging and blood tests to help diagnose the type. Knowing the specific type will help you and your doctor determine the best treatment plan, which may include referral to a specialist.

Risk Factors

Arthritis has both controllable & non-controllable risk factors.

Risk Factors You Can Control:

Maintain a Healthy Weight – Being overweight or obese puts more stress on your joints, especially weight-bearing joints like your hips and knees. Exercise and a healthy diet are vital in controlling this risk factor.

Properly Treat Infections – Bacteria and viruses can infect joints which may lead to the development of some types of arthritis if not properly treated. If your joints are swollen, red or warm it is important to see your doctor right away.

Avoid Overuse Injuries – Joint overuse and stress, such as repetitive squatting or knee bending, can cause damage to the joint and add to the

development of osteoarthritis. You can help protect overused joints by maintaining strength in the muscles around them.

Stop Smoking – In addition to causing multiple health problems, smoking increases your risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis.

Risk Factors You Cannot Control:

Age – Your risk for developing most types of arthritis increases as you age.

Gender – Women are more likely to develop most types of arthritis, including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Gout is more prevalent in men.

Genetics – People born with human leukocyte antigen (HLA) class II genotypes are more likely to develop certain types of arthritis. Having these genes can also make your arthritis worse.



The Importance of Spending Time Outdoors

Spending time outdoors is beneficial to our health and wellbeing, in more ways than one. Being outdoors reduces stress levels, boosts our immune system and vitamin D levels, leads to better brain function and just makes us happier.

Stress Levels: Although the actual reasoning behind it is unknown, being outside has been shown to lower stress levels through a lower heart rate, lower blood pressure and lower levels of cortisol – a hormone used as a marker of stress. The effects on the body are similar to those of meditating.

Vitamin D & Immune System: Being outdoors and letting the sun shine on your skin for just 10 to 15 minutes a day will create a lot of the vitamin D your body needs. Vitamin D is not only essential for bone growth, it also helps regulate your immune system and reduces inflammation. Studies have also shown a general boost to the immune system from increased time spent outdoors.

Brain Function: Studies have found that spending time outdoors helps improve memory, concentration and creativity.

Happiness: Light has been shown to elevate people's mood and there's usually more light outside. Studies have even shown that spending time in nature can ease mental health issues like anxiety and depression, especially when combined with outdoor exercise.

Sports Spotlight: Golf – Preventing Common Injuries

Golf, although considered to be a low-impact sport by many, has its fair share of injuries. The most common golf injuries are caused by poor technique or overuse. The rotational movement that a golf swing requires can stress the spine and surrounding muscles and lower back pain is an extremely common complaint among golfers. Because the entire body is used to execute the swing, injury to the shoulder, knee, elbow and wrist are also common. There are some steps you can take to prevent injuries and stay in good shape on the course.

Learning how to use the proper technique in your golf swing can make a huge difference in preventing injury. Start with the proper posture – feet shoulder-width apart, a slight bend in the knees and torso tilted forward. Your spine should be relatively straight, but relaxed. Distribute body weight evenly on the balls of your feet. It's important that you don't swing too hard or too fast to avoid additional stress on your joints. The power of a golf swing comes from a smooth transfer of force through all the muscle groups.

Taking the time to stretch and warm up before you grab your driver and take a swing is another important step in preventing injury on the course. Take a brisk walk and then stretch all your muscle groups. Focus on the shoulder, torso and hip regions and don't miss stretching the elbow, forearm, wrist and hand. Be sure to take some practice swings and gradually increase your range of motion. This stretch and warm up period will get your blood pumping and all those muscles ready for 18 holes of golf. Off the course, you can incorporate strength training into your exercise routine to keep your muscles strong and less injury prone. Increase your flexibility and range of motion with regular stretching and get the added bonus of a more fluid golf swing.

Did You Know?

Your 'funny bone' is actually a nerve. The ulnar nerve is one of the three main nerves in your arm – it begins in the spine, runs from your shoulder to your hand and ends in the ring and pinky fingers. The nerve is well protected by bone and muscle as it runs down your arm, except for one spot near your elbow; here the nerve is sandwiched between skin and bone with little to protect it. When you hit that unprotected area it in effect squishes the nerve causing that very odd sensation of pain, tingling and numbness that shoots down your arm.

Upcoming Events

- May 12th – Mother's Day
- May 18th – Armed Forces Day
- May 27th – Memorial Day (Office Closed)
- June 14th – Flag Day
- June 16th – Father's Day
- June 21st – First Day of Summer
- July 4th – Independence Day (Office Closed)

Contact Us

We'd love to hear from you! If you have any topics you'd like to see covered in our newsletter or questions addressed in our Ask the Doctor features, please drop us a note in our suggestion box. You may also email us at info@SpineInstituteFL.com or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpineInstituteFL.

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