

INTRODUCTION:

So, you're sick of your injury holding you back. Yeah, we feel your pain. That's why we created this guide to help navigate your recovery from acute pain after an injury.

We get it—injuries can be scary and lead to an overwhelming sense of anxiety. How will I stay in shape now? How am I supposed to take care of my toddler if I can't even pick her up? Will I have to cancel my upcoming half marathon because it hurts too much to train? There are so many unknowns.

And if you're like most people, you'll spend way too much time online trying to self diagnose the problem. Unfortunately, this approach leads to knee-jerk treatment decisions and prolonged injury time frames.

Through four simple principles, you will develop a plan to stay active so that you can ultimately get back to the activities you love.

We promise these tried-and-true principles will reduce your initial anxieties about your injury and provide a comprehensive framework of actionable steps you can take to jumpstart the recovery process.

Here at MVMT 360 Physical Therapy, we want everyone suffering from an injury to make informed decisions when it comes to pain relief and overall health and wellness. So follow along with this guide to reduce pain and save you time and money. But, most of all, finally be able to achieve your goals of staying active and engaged in whatever brings joy to your life!

WHAT'S YOUR EXERCISE PLAN?

Typically, there are three groups people fall into when it comes to exercise:

1. The person who is very dedicated and always makes time for their workout routine or training regimen.
2. The person who gets swamped with work or kids and tries to fit in some exercise when they can at varying levels of intensities.
3. The person who has completely dropped the workout routine due to lack of time or motivation.

No matter which camp you fall into, when an injury occurs people typically get the same advice from medical professionals, trainers, and friends to stop all exercise and rest. In some cases, it goes a step further and pain medication or surgery is presented as the only option.

This idea of rest as the first response to an injury is one of the biggest misconceptions circulating today regarding treatment for a musculoskeletal injury. Although counterintuitive, it is extremely important to continue moving and exercising when dealing with pain.

Now, in some cases like complex fractures or entering into a post-concussion protocol, rest might be warranted and part of the initial healing process. In these types of cases, it is likely that you will have seen a specialist who will have given you a specific protocol.

But for the mom who just got back to jogging postpartum, the dad who plays pick up basketball on Sundays with his college buddies, or the triathlete that is training for his next event, it must be understood that a complete shut down of movement and exercise is the *wrong* approach to pain relief and healing.

So am I supposed to just push through the pain? Well, the simple answer is no. Pushing through pain to keep exercising the way you were isn't the answer either.

I ENCOURAGE ANYONE IN PAIN TO DO THE FOLLOWING WHEN IT COMES TO MOVEMENT AND EXERCISE AFTER AN INJURY:

1. IDENTIFY THE AGGRAVATING FACTORS:

While this may seem like an obvious thing, you'd be surprised at how much the "no pain, no gain" culture has defined how we view the injury process.

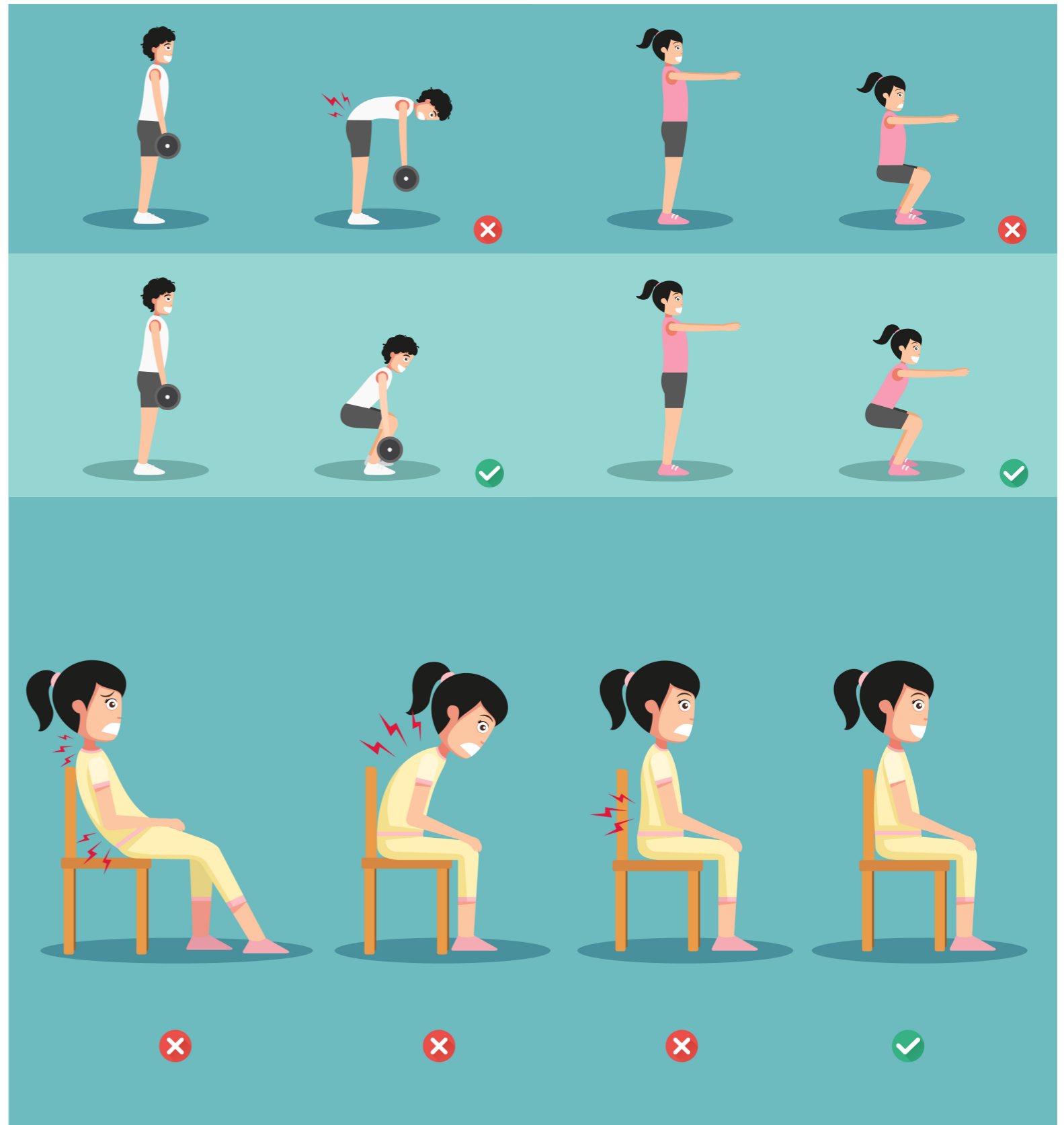
Understanding what makes your pain tick is the first step in determining what activities, exercises, or movements are okay to resume.

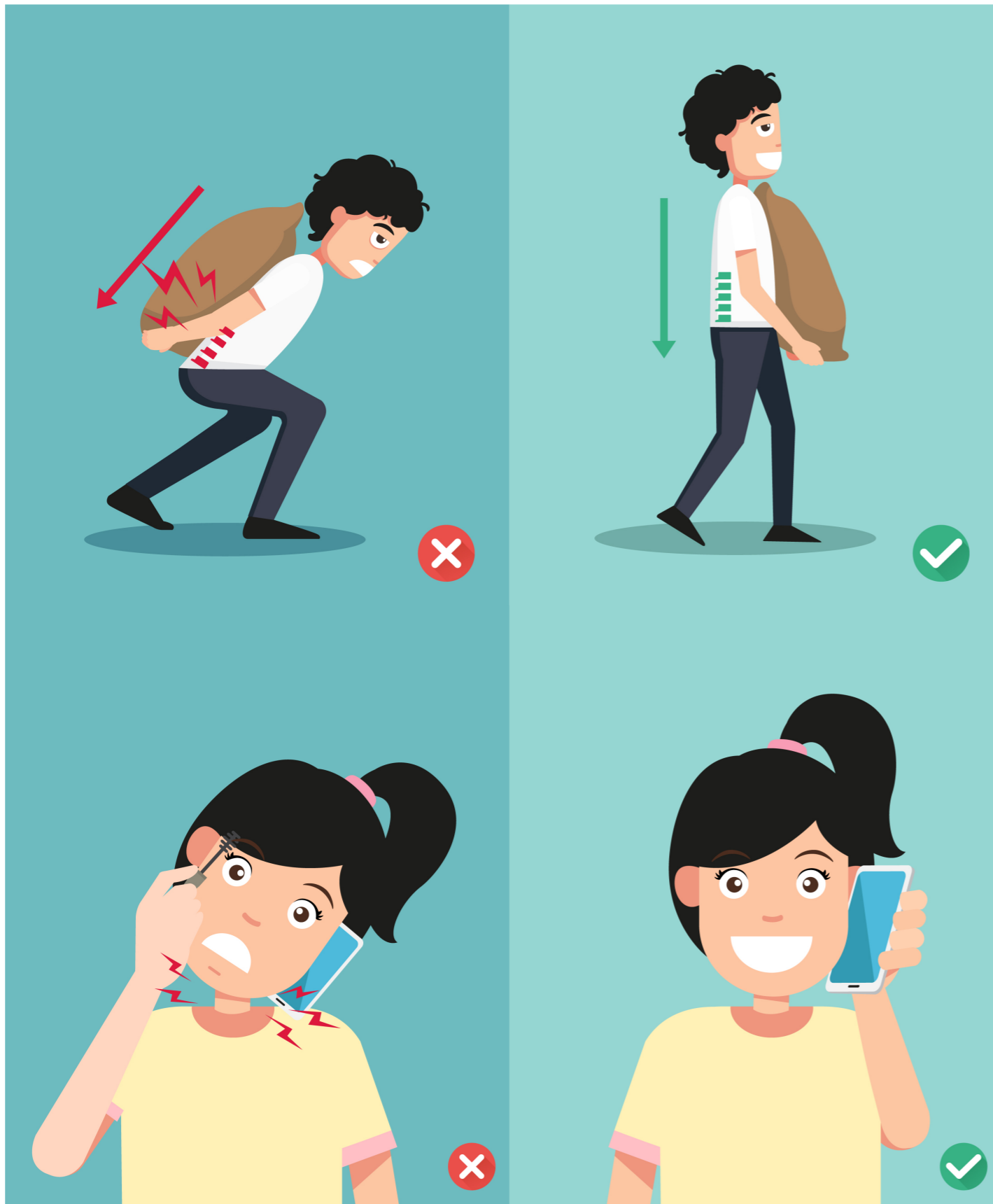
Keep it simple. And when symptoms get worse throughout the day, take a moment to identify the cause.

Was it the flight of stairs you just climbed or the 30 minutes of dishes you just did hunched over the sink?

Often times, pain isn't clear in its presentation, and the movement or exercise that aggravates symptoms will have a delayed onset. So when you take these moments to reflect on what has flared up your symptoms, it's important to rewind the tape a few hours to consider all the different possibilities.

Typically you'll start to notice a pattern over the course of a few days, which will help narrow things down.





Breakdown your day and identify any of the possible problem activities that may be causing you pain:

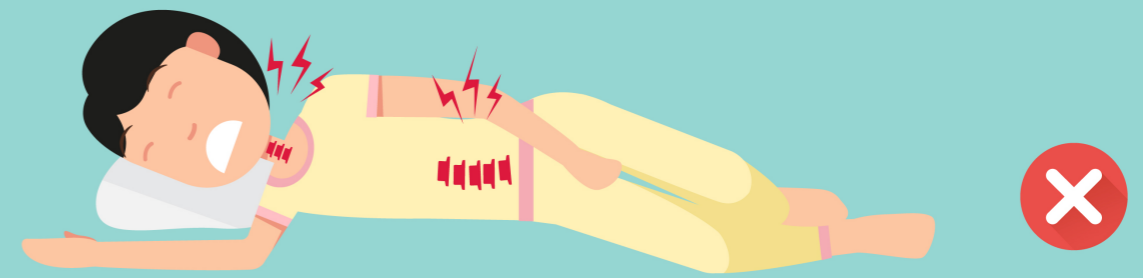
- A. Prolonged static postures? (standing, sitting time frames)
- B. Weight-bearing vs non-weight bearing?
- C. Range of motion? Does your pain only hurt at a specific point in the range of motion? (Ex. Raising your arm only hurts when it gets above shoulder height, but anything under that is pain free.)
- D. Repeated movements? (bending, lifting, twisting, reaching)
- E. Sports or exercise routine?
 - Loaded vs. body weight exercise
 - Cardio vs. strength training exercise
 - Sports specific activities (cutting, jumping, kicking, etc.)
- F. Sleeping patterns?

2. IDENTIFY THE EASING FACTORS:

While you're honing in on the different activities or movements that make the pain worse, it's equally important to pay attention to things that positively impact symptoms.

This might be in the form of a stretch, modality, movement, exercise, or position (sitting vs. standing).

Be proactive. Stay in-tune to the good fluctuations in symptoms and once you've identified something that helps, stick with it! Like, actually stick with it.



3. MODIFY, DON'T COMPENSATE:

Alright, this is the moment you've been waiting for. This is where you pull it all together and formulate a plan to stay active.

Start by making a list of all of the aggravating factors you've identified. Then, use the following modification principles as a guideline to adjust each specific movement or exercises on the list.

- A. **TIME:** Adjust the time frames spent in a prolonged static posture or performing a repeated movement.
- B. **RANGE:** Don't continue to push through a painful range of motion. Pain will not equal gain. Only work within ranges that are pain free.
- C. **INTENSITY:** Performing high-intensity workouts come with a few different challenges and can make you vulnerable to injury. First, look at the number of reps and sets that are achieved during these workouts and consider adjusting them. Maybe the reps decrease and the sets increase or vice versa. Next, think about your form and try to get a better picture of how your technique might be suffering as your muscles fatigue. Bringing in a friend to watch or simply using a mirror can provide the feedback you need.
- D. **POSITION:** Body position is hands down one of the most important modifications at

your disposal. Here are the major positional changes to consider:

- Standing
- Sitting
- Kneeling
- Quadruped (On hands and knees)
- Supine (Lying on you're back)
- Prone (Lying on you're stomach)

Think about each of these positions in relation to your aggravating factors.

Can't run? *Start riding a bike instead.*

Can't squat? *Switch to a kneeling position with a Bulgarian Split Squat.*

Can't perform a standing bent over row? *Lay prone on an incline bench for extra support.*

Having difficulty loading your shoulders in standing or sitting? *Try just using body weight in quadruped.*

Often times a positional change can make all the difference.

- E. **LOAD:** Decreasing the amount of load on a muscle or joint can be a highly effective modification. Consider the type and amount of resistance being used like barbell, cable, free weight, or theraband.

Remember, load is not specific to strength training and weights either. Load can be as simple as the force of gravity on the body.

By taking these initial first steps after an injury you'll start to get a very clear picture of how you can stay active and functional without making things worse.

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT

"We are what we eat" isn't just a saying anymore.

Studies are consistently showing that diet plays a much larger role than we previously knew when it comes to pain and long-term health.

Let's dive into the anatomy a little bit more.

Inflammation is the immune system's response to a stimulus. This 'stimulus' can be accidentally cutting your finger while cooking or rolling your ankle during a basketball game.

The body then responds with a localized response. This is characterized by increased blood flow, capillary dilation, and release of a host of other chemical mediators.

This is the immune system responding (as it should) to a harmful threat to the body and typically presents as red, puffy inflammation.

In some cases, low-grade inflammation can persist over an extended period of time and has been linked to chronic pain, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, autoimmune disorders, obesity, and inflammatory bowel disease.

You know, all that fun stuff.



Now, your eyes might have glazed over the second you read the word "diet" and, really, who can blame you?

There's so much overwhelming misinformation about dieting out there, but rarely any that accurately explains the benefits it can have on injury relief.

And while it's true that diet alone won't provide you with immediate tangible pain relief to an acute injury, it *will* most certainly decrease the likelihood of developing chronic pain and can strongly influence recovery time.

When dealing with any injury, diet can be a powerful tool in making sure our bodies are operating with optimal efficiency to prevent persistent pain beyond the acute phase of healing.

I know, I know! With all the different diet theories and trends out there, how do I know which one will help? So rather than choosing the new fad diet, start with these general guidelines to incorporate into your own grocery shopping and cooking habits.



FOODS TO TARGET

As a general guideline, you should aim to increase consumption of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, healthy oils, and fish.

This is a good starting point to maintain normal inflammatory levels within the body and reduce risk factors for common inflammation-related diseases. Additionally, antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids are also linked to anti-inflammatory effects.

FOODS HIGH IN ANTIOXIDANTS INCLUDE:

- Berries
- Cherries
- Apples
- Avocados
- Dark Green Leafy Vegetables (kale, spinach, and collard greens)
- Sweet Potatoes
- Broccoli
- Nuts (Walnuts, almonds, pecans, and hazelnuts)
- Beans (red beans, pinto beans, and black beans)
- Whole Grains (oats and brown rice)
- Dark Chocolate (70% cocoa)

FOODS HIGH IN OMEGA-3s INCLUDE:

- Oily Fish (salmon, herring, mackerel, sardines, and anchovies)
- Flaxseed
- Chia Seeds
- Walnuts
- Omega-3 Fortified Foods (eggs and almond milk)
- Herbs and Spices (ginger, turmeric, and garlic)

FOODS TO AVOID

Avoiding foods that have been linked to increased chronic inflammation and poor gut health need to be avoided.

The problem is these foods are usually delicious, easy to prep, and more accessible than the healthy alternatives.

I mean, have you ever seen anyone look at kale and Chia seeds the way they look at a juicy burger and fries?

We get it. If you're starting to feel overwhelmed at the thought of a drastic diet—don't. Start small and choose a few items off this list to start limiting in your weekly diet.

FOODS LINKED TO INFLAMMATION AND POOR GUT HEALTH:

- ALL FAST FOOD (You hear me? All.)
- Fried food
- Sugar
- Non grass-fed beef
- Dairy products (such as milk, cheese, butter, and ice cream)
- Margarine
- Vegetable oils
- Sugary drinks
- Processed snack foods (these typically have glucose, fructose, and high fructose corn syrup)

If you are the type of person who likes to follow a diet, try the Mediterranean Diet, which incorporates most of these principles.

To get more information or get a specific plan tailored to you and your goals, contact a nutritionist in your area!



3. MANAGE STRESS AND ANXIETY

Your boss gets on you over the course of a week. You're swamped with paperwork. Deadlines are piling up. No matter the source—stress always seems to be accompanied by headaches, tightness, poor posture, and, of course, tons of stress eating. And if you're already dealing with pain from an injury, your brain and central nervous system's pain response to the injured tissue gets even worse.

Stress doesn't just manifest mentally within the body, there is also a physical stress response. During times of stress our sympathetic nervous system is activated, which you may know as the fight-or-flight response.

During this response, signals are sent to the muscles, which tighten, and to the adrenal glands, which release stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones help your body prepare to fight or flee to safety; your heart pounds, blood pressure rises, and more of your blood is sent to your brain and muscles. Breathing then becomes quicker to get more oxygen into your blood and your body releases fats into the blood for energy.

While all of this is going on, other bodily functions that don't contribute to solving the immediate danger are all put on hold as a way to save energy. Digestion and tissue repair, for example, both come to an abrupt halt, while sex drive decreases and the immune system is inhibited.

This is extremely important when considering an acute injury and how well our body is working to heal that damaged tissue. Consistent increased stress levels can cause longer recovery times and lead to chronic pain long after the damaged tissue from an injury has healed.

Stress occurs as a means to keep us alive during an emergency situation but in today's society, we stress about everything, from missed deadlines to dinner with the in-laws. All this stress is terrible for the body and can significantly impact our pain experience.

So let's learn how to manage it.

HERE ARE SOME EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS:

- 1. GET AN EARLY START:** In today's culture, working late hours at work has become synonymous with success and career advancement.

But, as we all learn one way or the other, this leads to burnout and high levels of stress. Here's a tip—wake up early and spend four hours reflecting and executing on the tasks of the day without any of the hustle and bustle distractions. After those 4 hours are complete, plan for some downtime to recharge before getting back into work mode.

- 2. SLEEP:** Sleep is crucial to mental and physical health. A lack of sleep has been linked to multiple health complications such as ulcers, heart disease, breast cancer, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and depression.

During sleep, your body releases hormones and protective fats that help repair bruises, fight infections, replace old cells, and maintain healthy neural function.

Additionally, a good night's sleep helps the brain review the playback of your day, filing memories, and subconsciously working on problems that have been bothering you. Recommended sleep for an adult (age 18-65+) is 7-9 hours.

- * Best sleeping positions to limit pain are side-lying with a pillow between the legs or supine with 2-4 pillows underneath the knees (feet should be touching the bed)

- 3. TAKE A LONG WALK:** Getting out of your work environment to take a stroll can help mediate the stresses involved in a typical day. Walking helps tap into your subconscious, part of the brain where the majority of your best ideas stem from.

So don't just sit in your break room or at your desk to eat a quick lunch before racing back to work, get outside for a short walk to relieve stress and boost creativity.

- 4. CHOOSE THE RIGHT MOMENT TO STOP WORKING:** The old adage "quit while you're ahead" is a great mantra to live by at work or after you have just come up with a great idea.

If you've just made a breakthrough on a project with a new, innovative idea, stop or move on to a different task. Continuing past this point and taxing your brain with uninterrupted conscious thought will not only tire you out but often leads to increased stress.

Your brain will still be working on that innovative idea in the background while you clock out from work or are busy doing another task.

5. **EXERCISE TO RECHARGE YOUR COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE:** Research has found that exercise is associated with increased cognitive function and stress relief.

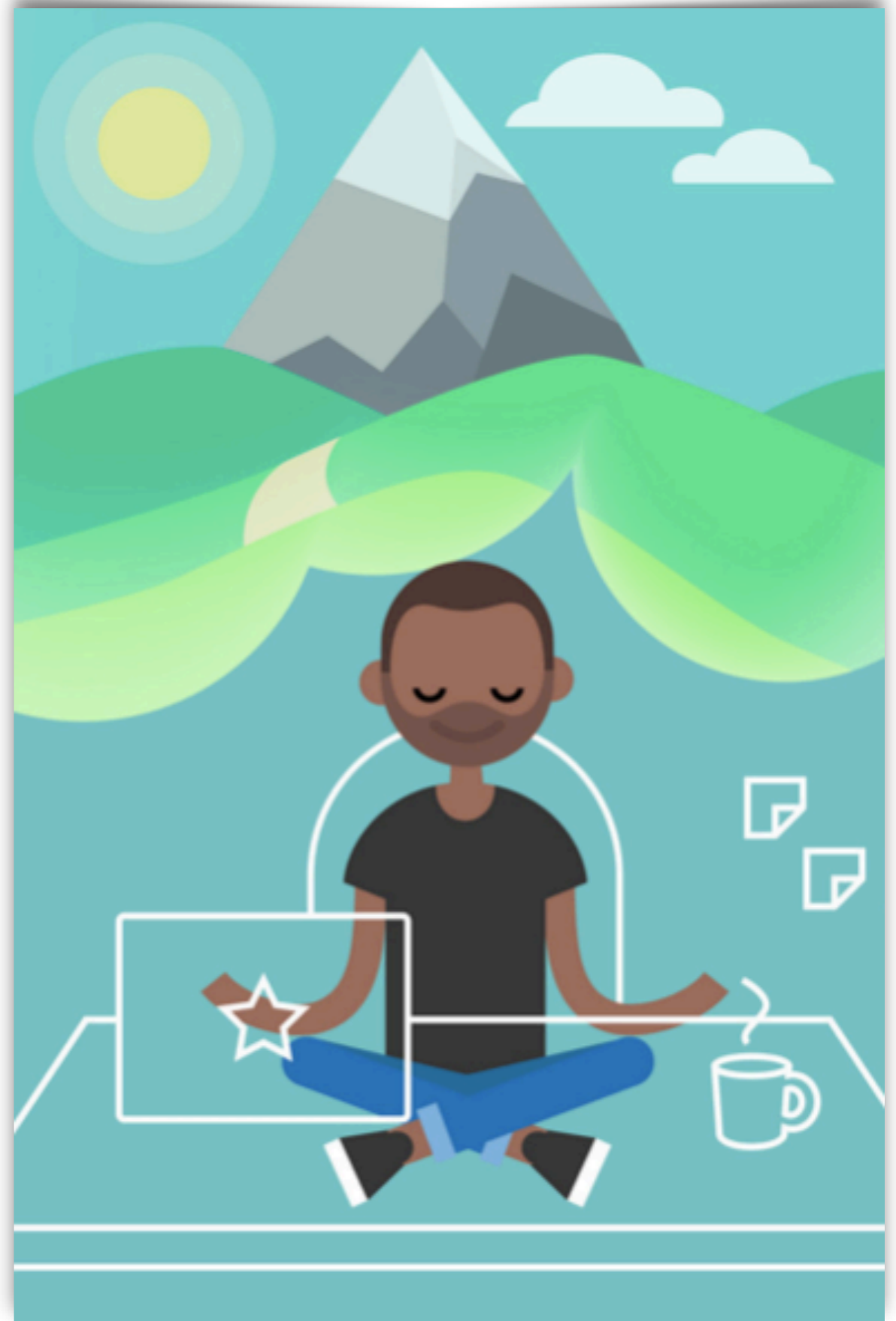
This is because the body produces neurotrophins, which are key to neuron growth and stimulates development of smaller blood vessels, (that can deliver more oxygenated blood to the brain). Your body also inhibits release of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol, while kicking up production of the all natural pain killer otherwise known as endorphins.

Using the tips found in the first section to help modify your exercise program and stay moving will not only speed up recover times but will be a key factor in stress management.

6. **CULTIVATE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBY AND ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL PLAY:** Find an activity that is mentally absorbing and provides a deep sense of satisfaction, while also challenging the different facets of your own innate skill sets.

Carve out time in your schedule for this activity so that you can let go of the stress, anxiety, and hustle of your daily life and be consumed by something you love to do.

These tips were cultivated from the book “Rest” by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang. For a more detailed breakdown I highly recommend this read!



An illustration on a blue background showing a hand in a dark blue suit sleeve holding a white sign with the words "HELP ME" in large, bold, red capital letters. The hand is positioned at the bottom center, with the sign extending upwards.

HELP ME

4. DON'T WAIT, SEEK HELP!

I truly believe that by making better dietary choices, managing stress, and staying active you will be taking the first step towards a road to recovery.

However, the final piece of the puzzle and without a doubt the most important, is to not wait around hoping that it gets better with time and rest.

Find an expert for musculoskeletal conditions in order to better understand your injury or condition as well as form an appropriate treatment plan. Getting targeted hands-on treatment in the early phases of an injury will not only speed up the recovery process and get you back to the activities you love doing, but it will provide you with all the necessary tools to maintain and prevent future injuries.

I think the underlying challenge that most people have is: how do I choose the right “expert” to address my problems with all the different options out there?

In order to answer this question, I think it’s important to understand what quality treatment looks like so you can make an informed decision.

HERE ARE FOUR PILLARS OF A WELL-ROUNDED TREATMENT APPROACH THAT WILL GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE THAT YOU ARE RECEIVING THE BEST QUALITY OF CARE:

1. ARE YOU GOING TO GET ONE-ON-ONE TREATMENT? Unfortunately in today's healthcare environment, physical therapy clinics are being forced to see higher volumes of patients due to lower insurance reimbursement rates.

This means more patients per therapist or utilizing PT technicians to facilitate 70% of the treatment session so that the therapist can bounce between patients.

If you are only getting 10-15 minutes of quality one-on-one time with your practitioner, *you can do better!*

2. WILL YOU BE WITH THE SAME PRACTITIONER OVER THE COURSE OF TREATMENT? This ties in with pillar number one regarding the changing healthcare landscape and how higher patient volumes are impacting how clinics schedule patients.

It's extremely common to see multiple therapists within a clinic over the course of your treatment rather than staying with the person who originally performed the evaluation. But this makes it impossible to be consistent with hands-on treatments and exercise progressions. It will be frustrating for you to re-explain your injury and progress every visit and if this sounds familiar, *you can do better!*

3. WILL YOU BE GETTING HANDS-ON TREATMENT? The current evidence and best practice guidelines coming out regarding the

majority of musculoskeletal injuries are supporting a variety of hands-on manual therapy techniques to impact soft tissue restrictions, joint mobility, and range of motion.

If you are not going to receive targeted hands-on treatment, *you can do better!*

4. WILL YOU GET TARGETED EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION? One of the reasons Physical Therapy can be so effective is that PT's are highly skilled in providing targeted exercise prescription to patients based off of their specific injury.

In most cases, other conservative treatments such as chiropractic, acupuncture, or massage do not include this component.

Think about it: our bodies were built to move and if we are not addressing the bigger picture of movement through targeted exercise prescription, it will not matter how many soft tissue massages, chiropractic adjustments, or acupuncture sessions you have.

Eventually, the faulty movement patterns will funnel you right back into pain. Now, I'm not disregarding any of these treatment techniques by any means and know some great practitioners in all three of these disciplines who understand the value of manual therapy and exercise.

However, if you're not getting any form of exercise prescription to go hand-in-hand with the manual therapy, *you can do better!*

At **MVMT 360 Physical Therapy** we make sure to meet and exceed this criteria for every patient we have the privilege of working with.

All treatments are one-on-one with the same therapist for an hour.

Treatment is delivered with a hands-on approach and utilizes a variety of different manual therapy techniques targeting any soft tissue, joint mobility, range of motion, or flexibility restrictions.

Exercise is also addressed each visit to give patients a program to follow independently, reinforcing all the manual therapy.

Best of all, we bring the treatment to your home, office, or gym making it flexible and convenient to achieve your movement goals.

CALL TODAY!

If you'd like to schedule a time to discuss your specific pain or injury. We'll help you identify the root cause of your symptoms and lay out treatment options specific to your movement goals.

Phone consultations are absolutely free and typically only take 10-15 minutes.

BOOK TODAY!

Schedule online through our website if you don't want to wait any longer and are ready to start the road to recovery with MVMT 360 Physical Therapy.

I'd like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to read this report and hope that it helps you get started on your journey back to all the things you love to do!

And don't forget: you deserve better.

