

# Injuries of spring in Sisters Country

By Jim Cornelius  
News Editor

Every year it's the same. Physical therapists and other health practitioners see a rush of business from people who just tried to do too much too soon.

Sometimes it's a foot or leg strain that comes from hiking too many miles on the first trek of the season. Sometimes it's a tweaked back from going out cold and trying to drive a golf ball into Harney County. But the biggest culprit seems to be the most mundane: yard work.

**“People will not figure out that it doesn't all have to get done today. And yard work is never done.”**  
— Dr. Bonnie Malone

Dr. Bonnie Malone has been a chiropractor in Sisters Country from more than three decades. And every year she's seen her patients and friends come in wracked up from that first crack at spring-cleaning

the yard.

“People will not figure out that it doesn't all have to get done today,” Dr. Malone says. “And yard work is never done.”

Barrett Ford of Step & Spine Physical Therapy says that a sedentary winter sets up an injury-ridden spring, where even normal activity can cause injury.

“They've been hanging out in front of the TV and the fire and all of a sudden they're doing bending, lifting, walking even,” he said.

Older people in particular should focus on building up leg strength.

“Older people bend in their back because they're weak in their legs,” he said.

Matt Kirchoff of Therapeutic Associates in Sisters says he sees shin splints in runners who push too hard, and back and shoulder injuries in golfers who swing into the season too fast.

And returning to favorite activities with an equine partner can be fraught with danger, too. They, too, must ease into things.

“We also see a fair number of thrown-off-a-horse, kicked-by-a-horse,” Kirchoff

said. “We see about a half-a-dozen horse-related injuries in the clinic.”

The best preventative for seasonal injuries as Kirchoff sees it is to avoid getting out of shape in the first place.

**“A consistent fitness program throughout the year is the easiest way to make sure your body is ready for these kinds of activities.”**

— Matt Kirchoff

“A consistent fitness program throughout the year is the easiest way to make sure your body is ready for these kinds of activities,” he said.

There are two keys — as Barrett Ford reckons it — to avoiding or minimizing seasonal injuries: “Knowledge of body mechanics, especially when it comes to gardening, things like that.” And, “not going zero to 60 — going zero to 20 at first and easing into things.”

## CONCUSSION: Injury can have long-lasting effects

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audio books instead of texts for reading assignments. Accommodations can include modifications to testing protocols and workload.

Though it's been a long haul, Wyatt says, “I feel like I've gotten a lot better.”

Getting better requires plenty of rest, avoiding excessive stimulation and easing back into a normal routine. Most people who experience concussion recover fully — given time and avoiding additional blows to the head.

That means that Wyatt has to take it very easy on the athletic front. He missed basketball season. He's in the process of getting cleared to play golf — but that's the extent of the activity his doctor is willing to sign off on.

Wyatt says he would like to play football again — but he won't.

Doctors haven't given him a timeline for full recovery.

“They haven't really given us an answer,” he said. “It's hard to tell with concussion.”

He said they're taking a wait-and-see approach

regarding his speech. It is getting better, but if the stutter doesn't go away on its own, he will do speech therapy.

The 15-year-old youth is pretty upbeat about his condition at this point, although he acknowledged that he's had some tough moments.

“I kind of go up and down,” he said. “The first bit after (the injury) was pretty hard.”

Like many of his peers, he's just learning how serious a matter concussion can be.

“I knew about concussions, but I never knew they could get this bad,” he said.

His advice to other young athletes? “Don't be afraid to speak up” if you think you have been hurt. “Don't be embarrassed.”

Changing athletic culture to make coaches, parents and students more aware of concussion — and to encourage them to speak up as Wyatt urges — is a major push right now. Sisters High School hosted a retired neurologist for an extensive talk on concussion during a mandatory spring sports meeting last month, so that everyone is aware of the potential for injury, the symptoms, and the means of recovering to avoid potential lifelong effects.



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The second pillar is visual input, and therapy can help you be more sensitive and responsive to that input.

Third is the balance receptors in your body. Just being stiff interrupts those receptors. Improving your mobility, strength and flexibility will restore



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## Simple N Fresh

Sisters Country is definitely on the map when it comes to healthy eating. Angelena Bosco is a new feature of that landscape with Simple N Fresh. Working with local growers like Mahonia Gardens, Simple N Fresh is offering cooking classes and one-on-one sessions that provide nutrition information and consultation on eating raw foods to improve health.

Angelena's classes aren't just for foodies; in fact, they're great for people who don't particularly like to cook and don't have a bunch of time to spend in the kitchen — yet still want to eat well.

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