

When your sedentary hobby hurts you

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

Injury comes with the territory when you're an active athlete. Skiers hurt their knees; weightlifters strain muscles. You don't usually associate quilting or knitting or sewing with injury risk — but it's every bit as real as it is for more active pursuits.

Yes, quilting can hurt you. Local therapists see it all the time — a patient who is all stove up from long hours of repetitive activity in awkward and unnatural positions. Headaches, neck pain, back pain, sciatica, "tennis elbow," even numbness in the extremities can be the result of hardcore crafting. Even kids are susceptible when they sit for hours manipulating video-game controls.

A lot of the problem stems simply from sitting for long periods of time.

"Sitting is the new smoking," says Sarah Conroy, a chiropractor at Bigfoot Wellness in Sisters.

She's only sort-of kidding. Sitting is very hard on the body not only because you are sedentary, but because

you are in positions that are unnatural. Posture is really, really important to your well-being (*see related story, page 14*), and our hobbies often throw our posture out of whack.

Matt Kirchoff of Therapeutic Associates notes that much of our hobby work — from quilting to writing — puts us in a posture of rounded shoulders, with our head forward and not properly supported. Then, too, your legs are often tucked away where they tighten up and ... well, pretty soon it all catches up to you.

Pain and discomfort alone are usually not enough to send a hardened quilter looking for help, though.

"It's when they end up with pain and limitations," says Ann Griffin of Bigfoot Wellness. "Limitation is a great motivator."

In other words, it's when people feel like they might have to give up their beloved craft that they get motivated to get help. It doesn't have to be that way.

The earlier you can get in to see a chiropractor or physical therapist, the quicker a

problem can get resolved. There is a multiplicity of techniques that can bring relief and get you back in the game.

"I prefer to see them before it's really painful," Conroy says.

But Sisters' practitioners aren't just about seeing patients and doing repairs. They want to help us avoid getting racked up in the first place.

"People are not as proactive and preventative as we would like them," Conroy notes.

There are plenty of things you can do to make your hobby easier on your body.

Kirchoff recommends getting a quilting table that is set up ergonomically. Adjust it to the appropriate height, so you minimize awkward reaching. You can even set yourself up to stand instead of sitting.

Griffin agrees.

"It's not really what you're doing, it's what you're not doing," she says.

Griffin and Conroy recommend "active sitting," using a stability ball, which is also known to improve brain function and productivity.

And all agree that taking a break from sitting is the simplest and most effective way of countering its effects.

"I think the biggest thing for folks is frequent rest breaks," Kirchoff says.

“Sitting is the new smoking.”
— Sarah Conroy

Get up and move around for about two minutes ever 30 minutes. Do shoulder-blade squeezes and shoulder rolls. *Move*. Of course, it's easy to get lost in your work and completely lose track of time. Griffin says setting an egg timer is a great way to remind yourself that it's time to get up and move.

Listen to your body. If it hurts, you're doing something wrong. Get in to a therapist, chiropractor or massage therapist before things progress to the point where you can't do the things you love. Your sedentary hobby may not be "athletic" but it has its demands — and you need to be fit to enjoy it.

Oregon teen's bandage invention wows judges

PORTLAND (AP) — An Oregon teenager has invented a bandage that can tell doctors when it needs to be changed, impressing Google judges and securing a \$15,000 scholarship.

Anushka Naiknaware, 13, placed in the top eight in an international science contest run by Google. She won the Lego Education Builder Award, which included the scholarship, a free trip to Lego world headquarters in Denmark, and a year of entrepreneurship mentoring from a Lego executive, reported *The Oregonian/OregonLive*.

Large wounds must be kept moist to promote healing, but changing bandages too often to check moisture levels can make things worse. Naiknaware, a seventh-grader at Stoller Middle School in Portland, designed and tested a bandage that is embedded with tiny monitors.



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Partners In Care is committed to bringing compassionate care into the homes of hospice patients and their families throughout Central Oregon—including Sisters, Black Butte Ranch, Camp Sherman, Metolius, and surrounding areas. Our hospice volunteers are an important part of the patient care team.

Sisters resident Jennifer Boley is one such volunteer — along with her therapy dog Griffyn. As HosPet volunteers at Partners In Care, Jennifer and Griffyn visit patients together.

"Taking Griffyn on visits with me is a simple thing I can do, and yet his presence does so much for the patients as well as their families," said Jennifer. "I have seen over the years how a therapy dog can bring a smile and a bit of brightness into people's lives, especially people dealing with life-changing circumstances."

To become a hospice volunteer in your area, contact Partners In Care Volunteer Coordinator Jason Medina at 541-382-5882 or visit PartnersBend.org.



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