



Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

Cramp relief is not what you think

Many exercisers can testify to the agony of muscle cramps. Muscles lock up in a painful contraction with persistent and unrelenting pain. These painful situations can seriously affect a workout or activity, and people are often willing to try anything and everything to intervene.

Things as silly as pickle juice or concoctions of cinnamon are often home remedies. Cramping is often cited as a result of dehydration or electrolyte deficiency. Someone will rush to bananas (because they contain potassium) or even pedialyte (infant electrolyte formula) for relief.

Many of these remedies are steeped in old theories, and have only anecdotal evidence to support them.

So, what is the true cause of muscle cramps?

Exercise science is finally discovering some of the mechanisms that cause exercise-induced cramps and are revealing that what many people think about cramping is wrong. Now that there is more knowledge about cramps, practical steps can be taken to alleviate the agony.

It is now understood that cramping is a neuromuscular dysfunction that resides within the muscle

cells. Inside the muscle's cells there are mechanisms which tell the muscle what tension to be at and what the resting length of the muscle should be. That's important for moving, lifting, and resting. The system is completely automated. These tiny organisms are connected to nerves, which are regulated by the autonomic nervous system. Sometimes, a disturbance occurs and the muscle becomes very short and tense.

This can be a "knot" in the muscle, or a full-on cramp.

Cramping occurs more often in a fatigued muscle, which is why the dehydration myth seemed plausible. A fatigued muscle is more likely to also be dehydrated. Correlation — not causation. Hot weather as the culprit behind cramping also seems plausible, because under warmer conditions, overexertion may be more likely than in cooler temperatures.

A cramp is more likely when the muscles are under more tension, which might explain why they are more prevalent when going uphill or down. Under these conditions, more of the muscular cells are activated and there is a higher likelihood that the nerves can be disrupted.

To alleviate a cramp, it was once thought important

to immediately consume a dosage of fluids and electrolytes. If one considers how long it would actually take for the fluid to reach the affected area it seems impossible to believe this hypothesis. One would be cramped for a period of many minutes before the fluids reach the muscles.

What is now recommended is a stretch-relax-contract sequence to "shut off" the haywire nerves. This can be done with a light stretch of the affected muscle for five seconds, a complete relaxation period (as much as allowed), then a slight movement contraction.

Another interesting recommendation is using a certain type of compound found in foods to stimulate the nervous system through the mouth. Compounds found in peppers, and some other foods activate a system called the TRP pathway. It seems that this works with the nervous system to provide relief by giving a shock to the system.

This new research and findings give us some new insights and opportunity to understand cramps and how to prevent them. It is amazing how connected our body is as a system — and that this whole system continues to work most of the time without any interruption.

TREE REMOVAL: Dispute over what 'light thinning' means

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Vitelle said he contracted with the District to remove the trees at no cost to the District. Vitelle told *The Nugget* that the District "absolutely" complied with the August agreement and engaged in lighter thinning than originally planned.

"There's plenty of wildlife trees, wildlife thickets, lots of blue-marked trees that we initially wanted to take that we didn't," he said. "The proof is in the pudding; it's on the ground."

Vitelle expressed frustration, asserting that there had been "no reachout, no dialogue ... from anybody at the City" indicating that they were concerned about the number of trees he was removing after the agreement — just the stop-work order.

Superintendent Scholl told *The Nugget* that the District and the City of Sisters have a good relationship and that he planned to talk to Davenport and that he is "sure we can work this out with the City."

The stop-work letter states, "The UFB will be meeting on Monday, October 9, 2017, to discuss the violation, removal, and remedy including but not

limited to a tree replacement plan for Significant Trees removed, a planting plan for the unauthorized removal of right-of-way trees at the elementary school, and potential fines for violations. Until then, no tree removal related activity or work shall commence until further notice."

“ There’s plenty of wildlife trees, wildlife thickets, lots of blue-marked trees that we initially wanted to take that we didn’t...
— Dave Vitelle

At the time of news deadline on Monday, *The Nugget* was waiting to hear back from Galecki, Stock, City Public Works Director Paul Bertagna, and UFB members.

Some of the questions still to be answered include: How "light thinning" is objectively measured and whether the proposed protocol or plan was ever clearly spelled out. Also at question is what will be done with the timber that is removed from district property.

News editor Jim Cornelius contributed to this report.

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