



Fenton Physical Therapy

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Rebooting The Healing Process

ASTYM: Ten Years Of Treatment Success

ASTYM[®] Chronic soft tissue restrictions are some of the most difficult and frustrating problems we address in physical therapy. Patients will have pain during or after activity that does not improve with medications and rest. Limiting activity of the involved body structure often produces even more pain and greater mobility restrictions. Athletes can be sidelined for months with nagging pain problems that may allow them to train, but severely limits performance. Many of these patients have had the problems for years and have not achieved any relief with other treatment methods.

Georgia and I met a Physical Therapist from Muncie, Indiana. He told me about a treatment technique his clinic was using called ASTYM. The ASTYM system had been developed by a team of Physicians and Physical Therapists to treat soft tissue pain problems caused by fibrosis, scarring, and adhesions. I read the research on ASTYM and spoke with other clinicians on their successes with this new technique. Six weeks later, I began the process of training all of our Physical Therapists in the ASTYM method. Fenton Physical Therapy was the first clinic in Michigan to have Physical Therapists certified in the ASTYM technique.

Ten years ago, I was attending a seminar in Atlanta,

Michael O'Hara, P.T., O.C.S., CSCS

How ASTYM Works

"Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes a matter of opportunity"—Hippocrates

The ASTYM system is an advanced form of soft tissue mobilization which enables a certified clinician to effectively initiate remodeling and regeneration of dysfunctional tissue. Treatment is performed with ergonomically designed instruments to allow rapid identification and effective treatment of areas exhibiting texture changes associated with soft tissue fibrosis, scarring, or chronic tendinopathy.

and recreational activities throughout the treatment process promotes optimal healing.

Adhesions, scar accumulation, and inappropriate fibrosis within soft tissue can result from trauma, surgery, immobilization, or repetitive strain. The ASTYM system stimulates the breakdown of this dysfunctional tissue and allows functional restoration to occur.



The clinician then prescribes exercise and activity that guides the body's healing in the most advantageous manner possible. Continuation of daily tasks, athletic,

Over the last ten years, the ASTYM system has been supported by scientific research and outcome studies. It demonstrates success when other approaches have failed. It has high patient compliance. It often enables workers to stay on their jobs and athletes to stay in their sport. It provides maximal results with a minimal number of treatments through an emphasis on re-establishing function.

Stick, Rumble, And Roll

Preventing Soft Tissue Dysfunctions With Daily Treatment

Restricted joint mobility is often the biggest problem facing the average exerciser. They are unable to perform a full squat or lunge secondary to tightness or inhibited muscles in the hips or lower back. They cannot press overhead or perform a chin up secondary to shortened shoulder muscles. We know that mechanical compression of restrictions in muscles and tendons helps improve physical mobility and decreases pain. Regular visits to the massage therapist are expensive and time consuming. So what can we do to resolve these joint mobility limitations and enhance fitness?

Physical Therapists and Strength Coaches have had great success with patients and athletes self-treating myofascial restrictions with massage sticks, foam rollers, and Rumble Rollers. Each of these tools creates mechanical pressure across the muscles to resolve trigger points, fibrotic adhesions, and scar tissue from prior injuries. Combining self-treatment with stretching and the training of essential movement patterns has proven to restore function and decrease pain.

Massage Sticks



These hand held devices act like a mini rolling pin to knead out the muscles. They work well for patients and clients that are unable to pull themselves across a foam roller or for individuals who have very limited mobility. A massage stick permits you to get to the too difficult to reach areas in the lower leg and foot.

Foam Rolls

Foam rolls come in many different densities. The firmer the roll, the more pressure you will feel with every pass over the muscle. The best foam roll density is the one that creates some discomfort, but not so much that you will not use it. To use a roller effectively, you must have some degree of upper body strength in order to move your legs over the roll. I have found the closed cell, styrofoam rollers to be the most durable and easy to keep clean. The average guy or gal will do best by starting with a white (softer) roller.



Rumble Rollers

A more recent addition to the myofascial self-treatment tool box is the Rumble Roller. Rumble Rollers are made of a non-latex compound with projections across the surface of the cylinder. The projections give an extra push into the soft tissue. They work well for individuals with larger leg muscles and in athletes involved in contact sports. Trigger points and fibrotic changes brought on by getting banged around on the field often require a more focused pressure to resolve. The Rumble Roller allows you to concentrate more effort on those sites.

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This newsletter, published monthly, is available by email. If you would like to be added to our email list, simply give your email address to any staff member or send your request to barb@fentonphysicaltherapy.com. You will receive the newsletter, as well as updates on events at our physical therapy clinics and fitness center.

Getting The Team Captain Back On The Field

ASTYM Brings Mom Back To Family Fun

Deana had been struggling with pain in her right hip and lower back for three years. Initially, she only had pain at the end of a long day of activity or after an exercise class. Over the last three months, the pain had prevented her from exercising and even walking any distance. She went on a vacation in May and was unable to walk with her family because of hip pain. That is when she decided to seek treatment for her problem. In May of 2011, Deana was referred by her orthopedic surgeon for physical therapy treatment.

Deana was accustomed to being very active. She played sports her whole life, and despite working and raising her children, she continued to exercise on a regular basis. Deana was upset at her pain and limited ability to get around. She had no idea as to the cause of this hip and lower back pain. In January, she had a bad snow skiing "wipeout" that she recovered from in three days. The x-rays on her hip showed no damage or arthritis. Two years before that she had been in a car accident, but was only "bruised up". At only 51 years old, her right hip was very tight and she was severely limited in her ability to move. She walked with a limp, and standing for more than twenty minutes was now difficult. Deana could not squat, and getting out of chair created hip pain. The front and side of her right hip was sensitive to pressure, and she could not lie on her right side.

Deana's treatment consisted of ASTYM, manual therapy, and a program of daily hip mobility exercises performed to her tolerance. Fibrotic changes



were identified with ASTYM in her right lateral thigh and hip and treated at every session. Deana reported pain with walking had been

eliminated after six sessions of therapy. She was able to squat and lunge pain free after nine sessions. Deana returned to exercise classes at the end of six weeks of therapy and has remained pain free. She has continued her mobility exercises, and has purchased a foam roller for home treatment of soft tissue restrictions.

Deana is a perfect example of how cumulative soft tissue trauma can build up to the point that it creates dysfunctional movement and pain. Years of athletics, an auto accident, and a snow skiing "wipeout" had beat up her right hip muscles. Her hip was so tight that when she moved, it pulled on her lumbar spine and pelvis and produced pain in other areas of the body. The more active and aggressive a life you live, the more important it is to perform preventative soft tissue treatment. Foam rolling, massage stick, and regular mobility training become an essential part of an ongoing fitness program.

Holiday Fitness Gifts



A fitness gift is one of the best ways to show someone how much you care. It demonstrates your concern for their well being and creates an environment for the recipient to change his or her life. At Fenton Fitness, the gift recipient can choose how they use the certificate—for group training, one on one personal training sessions, or program design. Gift certificates can be purchased at the front desk

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Hours
Mon-Thur: 5:30am-10pm
Friday: 5:30am-9:00pm
Saturday 8am-5pm
Sunday 8am-2pm

Suspension Training 101

Make Your Body Your Machine



A suspension trainer is a strap type device with handles, and sometimes foot holds, that attaches in an overhead position. Over the last ten years, I have used a

number of different suspension training devices. The Blast Straps, Lifeline Jungle Gym, and Elite Rings have all been great training tools, but the new TRX suspension trainer is the most versatile unit on the market. Suspension training with a TRX has been a very useful tool for both our rehabilitation patients and fitness clients.

TRX suspension training can be scaled to all fitness levels.

Simply modify the angle of force in relationship to gravity and you change the level of difficulty. The trainer or therapist can utilize leverage and positioning to meet the needs of any patient or client. A seventy five year old recovering from a knee replacement can be as successful with the TRX as elite NFL quarterback Drew Brees.

The TRX builds total body functional strength.



Everything you do with the TRX demands a degree of stability and balance. Even your upper extremity TRX exercises require you to stabilize your entire body and engage the muscles in the torso and hips.

A TRX permits instant adjustment of resistance.

Being able to make your exercise harder or easier in the middle of a training set is invaluable for building strength, endurance, and raising your overall fitness levels.

TRX training is a time saver.

The TRX is engineered to allow you to move seamlessly through different movement patterns. Quicker transitions from exercise to exercise keeps you training more and resting less.

The TRX is a superior lower body rehab tool.

The handles and overhead positioning of the TRX permits unloading of lower extremity movement patterns. Many clients are unable to squat or lunge with their bodyweight. With a TRX, they can perform proper squat, step up, and lunge patterns with the assistance from the TRX. As strength and stability improves, they progress away from the assistance.

TRX training makes you functionally strong.

Many athletes are “Tarzan in the gym and Jane on the field”—their training produces no carry over to real life. The balance, proprioception, and core stability that are always part of TRX suspension training transfers to real world tasks. You become more mobile, agile, and stronger. TRX training makes you more durable and resistant to injury.



Michael S. O'Hara, P.T., O.C.S., C.S.C.S.