

## **AHH!! THE FINGER LAKES...GET ON THOSE HIKING BOOTS!**

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**Crisp air, fall colors, spectacular views, companionship and leg cramps. Leg cramps?! Ouch!! Let's talk about what to do before your hike to prevent common hiking ailments.**

Conditioning two to three months in advance of vigorous hiking is important in preventing repetitive spine and lower extremity (leg) injury.

Warm up and cool down with **toe and calf stretches**. The best way to stretch those tight toes and calves is to take your shoes off. When you are hanging out watching TV or reading emails, you can place your foot on your thigh and interlace each of your fingers between each of your toes. For some, this will be enough to do until the foot and toes loosen up. If you are ready to progress, hold and stabilize your forefoot with the other hand. Keeping your fingers interlaced between each toe, pull straight out on the toes and then make circles clockwise and counter clockwise. Keep your ankle still. Start out gently and do 10 circles in each direction, then gradually increase your repetitions. Do this daily to three times a week.

To get those **tight calves** loosened up, providing you do not have knee pain, stand on the edge of a step, hold on and lower your heels. Keep the knees straight but not locked. Hold this position for one minute and do three repetitions daily. Once you have made satisfactory progress loosening those calves, then you can do one repetition holding for a minute daily. **Be sure you do this just before and after your hike.**

You will need boots with a good arch support and wear a hiking sock. It is wise to bring an extra pair of socks in case your feet get wet, a compass, a healthy trail mix and water. Bring the cell phone, but keep it silent so you can get the true relaxation you deserve and great exercise without distraction or interruptions.

- **When preparing to hike or if you have pain after hiking, then you will need an evaluation to determine the source of your pain. Consult us at the first sign of symptoms. When left untreated, severe pain and significant inability to use the spine or lower extremities can occur. Early intervention speeds recovery and saves time and money.**

**All you need to do is call 585-396-1400 and make an appointment.**

When you have your initial evaluation session with us a review of your medical history, surgeries, medications and a thorough physical examination will be performed of the back, hips, knees, ankles and feet. A series of specialized movement tests will be provided to help pinpoint the precise source of your pain. We can identify if there is an alignment issue, fracture, ligament or cartilage injury, tendonitis, bursitis, impingement, a pinched nerve, a tear or muscle imbalance causing dysfunction. In some cases the results of the tests might indicate the need for a referral to an orthopedist or for imaging tests to further identify the problem and appropriate course of treatment.

The physical examination helps us develop a **personalized treatment plan** for the physical therapy office setting and for at home. Your treatment plan will include Pain/Primal Reflex Release Techniques (PRRT) and other manual therapies to reduce your pain. For most, pain is reduced at least 50 percent at the end of the first session. The manual therapies will also help restore joint and muscle balance. Kinesiotaping, McConnell taping or bracing may be indicated. Modalities such as biofeedback, ice, heat, iontophoresis, ultrasound and electrical stimulation may be used to help manage pain while pain free movement is restored with therapeutic exercise, functional training and postural correction. As always, our focus is on getting your pain and difficult function under control as you learn self-care and home exercise techniques to reach your goals.

**If you are interested in a complete hiking/walking conditioning program then contact us at (585) 396-1400.** You can also email us at [Zoe@lakecountrypt.com](mailto:Zoe@lakecountrypt.com) or Robert@lakecountrypt.com. For more information about Lake Country Physical Therapy and Sportscare, PC, visit us at [www.lakecountrypt.com](http://www.lakecountrypt.com).