

FULL CUP OF JUSTICE

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**HOLLIDAY
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Seek Treatment Early and Often FOR NECK AND BACK INJURIES

Holliday Karatinos Law Firm remains open to offer legal assistance. We can meet with you in person or remotely. We offer the ability to sign documents remotely via docusign. Schedule an appointment today.

Neck and back injuries are common following a traumatic event (e.g., a motor vehicle accident; a recreational accident; or a slip, trip or fall). Though these injuries can be quite painful, many people delay seeking medical treatment and/or fail to get regular treatment. Don't fall into this trap. If you do not seek early and consistent treatment, it can be detrimental to your health and to any personal injury claim you might have. Let's learn more about why this is so.

OVERVIEW: BASIC SPINE AND SOFT-TISSUE ANATOMY

In order to understand the mechanism of an injury, you first need to understand how a healthy system functions. Accordingly, we'll begin with an overview of basic spine and soft-tissue anatomy.

The spine is the vertical axis of the body. The bones that make up the spine are called "vertebrae." There are 33 vertebrae in the human spine, running from the tip of the neck to the bottom of the coccyx (tailbone). The spinal vertebrae form a protective tube around the spinal cord. Spinal nerves branch out through openings in the vertebrae (called "foramen") and send messages throughout the body. The vertebrae are separated from one another by "intervertebral discs." Each disc has a tough outer membrane and a softer core (imagine a jelly donut). The discs work like shock absorbers to provide a cushion between the vertebrae.

The spine is stabilized by the surrounding muscles, tendons and ligaments (the "soft tissues"). Ligaments connect bone to bone; tendons connect muscle to bone.

COMMON SPINE AND SOFT-TISSUE INJURIES

Spine and soft-tissue injuries that commonly result from a traumatic event include:

1. DISC INJURIES

A **herniated disc** is a disc with an asymmetrical bulge that is caused when the internal disc material leaks outside of the outer membrane (like the jelly leaking out of the donut). A **bulging disc** is a disc with a symmetrical bulge caused by the internal disc material leaking out around the entire circumference of the disc.

A note re: disc degeneration

It is not uncommon for an intervertebral disc to degenerate (shrink and lose buoyancy) over time. An injury-accident will not cause degeneration, but it might cause disc herniation or bulging which, eventually, may result in degeneration.

2. SOFT TISSUE INJURIES

Sprains and Strains

When a muscle or tendon is overstretched or torn, this is called a “strain.” When a ligament is overstretched or torn, the injury is called a “sprain.”

Whiplash

“Whiplash” is the common term for a sprain or strain of the soft tissues of the neck. The term “whiplash” derives from the mechanism of the injury – a sudden and rapid back-and-forth motion of the head, which causes exaggerated stretching of the surrounding soft tissues. Whiplash is a common injury in rear-end motor vehicle accidents, even at low speeds, but it can occur any time the head is whipped back and forth (e.g., in a sports-related collision or a recreational accident).

TBI

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an injury to the soft tissue of the brain. A concussion is a common form of TBI. Contrary to popular belief, you do not have to suffer a blow to the head to sustain a TBI. For example, whiplash often causes TBI. The whipping motion of the head causes the brain to hit the back of the skull, rebound, and then hit the front of the skull.

Nerve Injury Secondary to Soft Tissue Injury

A nerve injury can occur secondary to a soft-tissue injury or spine injury. For instance, disc material leaking from a herniated or bulging disc may result in painful nerve compression. Sciatica – pressure on the sciatic nerve causing low back pain, radiating down the leg -- is a common example of this type of nerve injury secondary to a herniated disc.

IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING TREATMENT EARLY AND OFTEN

If you are involved in an accident that results in a spine or soft-tissue injury, it is critical that you seek medical treatment early and consistently for two reasons: (1) to safeguard your health; and (2) to safeguard your right to fair compensation under the law.

1. SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH

Immediately following an injury accident, many people – whether out of shock or denial or wounded pride – will make a quick self-assessment, conclude “I’m fine,” and go home to try to put the whole incident behind them. While that may be the natural human inclination, it is not the smartest choice. The far better option is to err on the side of caution and seek medical treatment, even if you think you escaped without injury.

A latent (delayed) onset of symptoms is not uncommon with soft tissue injuries, particularly whiplash. You may not feel the injury for several hours, days or weeks after the incident, when the swelling of the injured tissues becomes severe (and, possibly, impinges on a nerve). Early treatment is critical to obtaining an accurate assessment of your condition. A trained and experienced medical doctor will be in the best position to evaluate, diagnose and treat any injury you may have sustained. Your doctor also can advise you about follow-up care and educate you about what to expect in terms of your recovery.

In addition to early treatment, regular treatment is critical to your recovery. Don't be a "one and done" patient. The surest way to protect your health is to obtain consistent medical treatment and follow your doctor's orders until your injuries have resolved.

2. SAFEGUARD YOUR RIGHT TO FAIR COMPENSATION

A second reason it is important to seek early and consistent medical treatment following an injury-accident is to protect your legal rights.

When you are injured as a result of another person's or entity's carelessness (in legal terms, "negligence"), you may be entitled to monetary compensation for the harm done to you. How much compensation will depend, in large part, on the evidence found in your medical records. The insurance adjuster for the party who caused your injuries will review your medical records with a fine-toothed comb, looking for any reason to reduce the value of your claim. "Delayed treatment" and "inconsistent treatment" are two strong reasons. Viewed from the perspective of a claims adjuster, delayed and/or inconsistent treatment suggests:

Your injuries were not that serious.

After all, how badly could you have been hurt if you didn't seek treatment right away? Likewise, even assuming you were injured enough to seek treatment eventually, how serious could your injuries have been if you only sought treatment once; or didn't see a specialist; or failed to follow your doctor's orders, missed appointments, and eventually stopped treatment altogether?

Your injuries are not related to the accident at issue.

The longer you wait to seek treatment, the weaker the cause-effect link between the accident and your injuries becomes. The adjuster will use your delay as an opportunity to find some other explanation for your injuries and seek to deny you compensation.

You are looking to "cash in" on a mere accident.

In a personal injury action, the injured party has a legal duty to "mitigate damages" -- that is, to take reasonable steps to limit the harm that flows from the injury-event. That means you have a responsibility to do what you can, within reason, to recover from your injuries and get back to "normal." If you fail to seek early and regular treatment, the insurance company may use this as evidence that you are not really injured (or are not as injured as you claim), but are instead milking your "injury" in the hopes of obtaining a bigger settlement.

In all of these ways, delayed and inconsistent medical treatment are red flags to an insurance adjuster and will lower the value of any personal injury claim you may have. Moreover, and more importantly, delayed and spotty medical care will have a negative impact on your recovery and your overall health. It is always in your best interest to seek early and consistent medical treatment for any spine or soft-tissue injury.



Stay Connected During Isolation

Many of us are finding ourselves working from home today. While remote work offers many benefits to the environment (and to your bottom line), it can be challenging to remain connected with others. These tips and tools will help to keep you connected and healthy while working from home.

SET A SCHEDULE

Setting a schedule for yourself for working from home is crucial. It will help keep you focused and productive. Give yourself breaks to stretch, walk around, and look away from the screen like you would in the office. Staying on a schedule is extremely beneficial if you're working with a team who may need to chat with you throughout the day.

It's also helpful to stay connected to people in your life outside of the office. People will know when you're available and can check in more easily.

UTILIZE VIDEO CALLING

Video calling platforms are rapidly gaining popularity. There are many different platforms you can use, so it can't hurt to experiment and decide which one works best for your needs. These are great because they give you a chance to meet with your whole team face-to-face -- even if it's through a screen.

Different platforms offer different features, but a popular one is the ability to screenshare. A chat option can be helpful, too. Some offer backgrounds that you can implement, even without a green screen, if your home office looks less than professional.

These group video calls are important, and if you've found one you like, you can use it to socialize with

other people in your life as well. Being able to see the person on the other end of the call feels more personal.

STAY ACTIVE IN YOUR OFF TIME

Setting a work schedule will help you to maintain your routine for the workday, but it's also important to have some type of routine in your downtime. It's easy to waste time binge watching your favorite TV show, but it's important that you take care of your health. Working from home can sometimes make it difficult to end the workday, but scheduling a workout that starts at the end of your workday can help you feel refreshed.

You don't have to do an extremely hard workout everyday, but going for a walk or doing some yoga will help you to feel better. You may even want to consider getting a standing desk or athletic ball so you're not sitting on an office chair all day, as there can be health risks associated with sitting too much. Having some type of physical activity in your routine will help you feel better, mentally and physically.

REACH OUT

Sometimes, communication can suffer when you're working remotely, but that doesn't have to be the case. Try to overcommunicate. Don't wait for your team to reach out to you; reach out to them. Schedule extra video calls if needed, either with the whole team or with one member.

That also goes for the people in your life that don't work with you in the office. Reach out frequently. The reality is that sometimes, working from home can get lonely. If you're feeling anxious or depressed, consider calling a therapist who can help you.

THE PERFECT TIME FOR Spring Cleaning



Spring cleaning has never looked so good when the majority of us are trapped in our houses with our piles of junk staring us in the face. And the piles are not just staring at us, they're mocking us. The mess is sitting there in its dusty corners saying "Remember how you said you would get to me when you've got time? Well, **you've got time.**"

Or maybe your piles of junk just aren't as aggressive as my piles of junk.

Either way, we are now sequestered to our homes, stuck with our piles of junk we accumulated throughout the holidays (and life in general) and very quickly, our houses (apartments, condos, or god-forbid, studios) are starting to feel a bit. . . claustrophobic.

So let's take a quick look back at cleaning goddess Marie Kondo, and what she has to say.

- **Only keep the item if it sparks joy.**
- Make sure every item you decide to keep has a home.
- Fold your clothes in the trademarked KonMari way and put them into your drawers standing up.
- Storage and organizing bins are absolutely worth it, but don't buy them before you have a use for them. Purge first, organize your treasures second.

- If you are quarantined with someone less likely to want to purge, do your best to purge in private. Nothing kills the joy of a good cleaning session as someone sneaking items out of your donate or trash pile. *Note: Unless you are very confident in your relationship, whether it is with a family member, a loved one, or a roommate, **do NOT throw out someone else's stuff.** Remember. You are trapped in a house with them.

These tips are a great place to start. Now, turn them into reality. I recommend starting with your wardrobe. You could likely spend a whole day - or multiple nights if that's more your style - reviewing your wardrobe, going through each item and holding it for a couple of seconds to determine whether or not it sparks joy. By the way, **if it does not fit, it cannot spark joy** - toss it. Or better yet, donate it.

Once you've gone through your wardrobe, you will hopefully have a pretty good sense of how the process works for you. Now you can move onto bigger ticket items. Like your storage closet. Good luck!

Slowly but surely, I am confident you will be able to move through your living space deciding whether you should keep, donate, or ditch each pile that was once laughing at you. And maybe, by the end of this quarantine, you'll feel better about your living space than you did at the start! Or maybe you'll just be so grateful to leave the house it won't matter.

Hopefully during this time of isolation, you are not focused wholly on cleaning. Maybe now is the chance to finish that project you were always putting off! You could try out a new hobby!

Hobbies like knitting, painting, drawing, developing a fitness regime, baking, woodworking, and more are all great to **engage the mind, and more importantly, the hands**. As we all know, idle hands make fretful minds. So try out something new. Maybe you won't be good at it, maybe you won't even like it, but engaging yourself in a new activity will hopefully provide you with enough stimulus to keep from ripping out the throats of your housemates.

If you are feeling stuck on what to do during this unprecedented time, here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Find a good book, author, or series.
- Exercise: honestly, never hurts and can always help.
- Binge watch a Netflix series: we're in quarantine. Not even Netflix is judging you.
- **Write to a friend or family member.**
- Take up something with yarn: knitting, crocheting, macrame - there are tons of options.
- Paint, draw, collage, anything creative.
- Learn a new skill (Photoshop, Illustrator, Excel, etc.) Brush up on any sort of digital skill or take on a new one entirely.


- Try a new recipe (baking, cooking, bartending - there are tons of options here.)
- Test your green thumb.
- Learn an instrument! (On behalf of your neighbors, please not the drums.)
- Build something. (Break out some legos if you have to!)
- Writing. Start a journal. Keep a mental health log.

There are a ton of ways you can focus your time during this period. Most importantly though, and often most neglected, it is a time to **focus on yourself and your mental health**. Sometimes, it is actually our minds that are most in need of a Marie Kondo treatment.

You do not have to be okay during this time. You do not have to be productive. It is also totally okay, totally reasonable, if you decide to take this time to just rest. Recuperate. Give yourself permission to just be. Stop thinking about next, next, next. And just let yourself be.

Either way, we will come out of this. And it is totally your call whether you want to spend this time tackling each pile of stuff, starting a new hobby, or taking a bubble bath every single night. There is no judgement, no right or wrong here. You are allowed to use this time in a way that most benefits you. And that's okay too.





How to Take a Deep Breath— The Right Way

Everyone knows how to breathe. It's secondhand, right? Much like your heart beating and your blood pumping, breathing is a physiological function that seems to happen on its own to keep you alive. However, you may be surprised to learn that it is actually possible to breathe incorrectly.

In today's modern society, many people are often not breathing correctly. Things like fast-paced jobs, greater stressors, and the constant access to rapidly changing stimuli can contribute to incorrect, shallow breathing.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T BREATHE CORRECTLY?

Incorrect and damaging ways of breathing include breathing with your chest, taking too big or too small of a breath, and not taking enough breaths.

Breathing like this can lead to:

- Low energy due to oxygen deprivation
- Constricted blood vessels
- Stressed cells that can no longer develop
- An unbalanced nervous system
- Higher overall levels of stress

Even your brain, heart, and muscles are directly affected by poor breathing. Your brain may function more slowly, your heart may pump blood less efficiently, and your muscles may be much more tense.

HOW TO BREATHE CORRECTLY

The first step is awareness. Always be aware of your breathing in the moment so you can quickly catch yourself if you are breathing incorrectly.

You should be breathing through your nose instead of your mouth. Your nose acts as a filter for your breath, while your mouth lets in air that may be filled with bacteria. It helps to close your mouth and touch your tongue to your upper palate; inhale for 2-3 seconds, then exhale for another 3-4 seconds. Pause for 2-3 seconds, and repeat.

You should also be breathing into your diaphragm. Oftentimes, we breathe into our chests, especially during times of distress. This is much less efficient. Breathing with your diaphragm is more efficient for your lungs, makes your heart not have to work as hard, supports healthy immune system function, and can even help relax your neck and shoulder muscles.

Be aware of stressful situations. Your breathing may change quickly to adapt to stressors. Try to prevent this by keeping your breathing relaxed and rhythmic. Take note of specific situations that trigger bad breathing—is it road rage? Or watching your favorite sports team lose a match?

Oftentimes, you hear the phrase, “Just take a deep breath.” While it might not be that easy, with focus and attention, you can learn to adjust your breathing to enable your body to function at its best.

Cake Box Cookies

Featuring Funfetti and Strawberry Cake Mix

There are few better pastimes than baking cookies. But who wants to go through all the hassle of making them from scratch when you can easily make a delicious and unique cookie that is sure to please out of something you might already have in your own cabinet?

Cake box cookies are not a new concept, but there are endless possibilities when it comes to customizing and styling these cookies. You can make cookie sandwiches, add some white chocolate chips, or sliced almonds - really, anything goes.

They are also incredibly easy to make and use very few ingredients, so let's dive in!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 box of your preferred cake mix (strawberry or funfetti recommended)
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup of butter or oil
- Preferred topping (White chocolate chips, cream cheese frosting, sprinkles are all good options.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Beat the eggs.
- Melt the butter and add to eggs.
- Add cake mix.
- Mix well to create your delicious dough.
- Add white chocolate chips if desired.
- If you have a cookie scooper, spray it with non-stick spray and start scooping out your dough.
- Place on parchment paper or a greased cookie sheet and bake for 8 - 10 minutes.
- Add your sprinkles or drizzle with cream cheese frosting (microwave 15-20 seconds to get it ultra drizzly.)