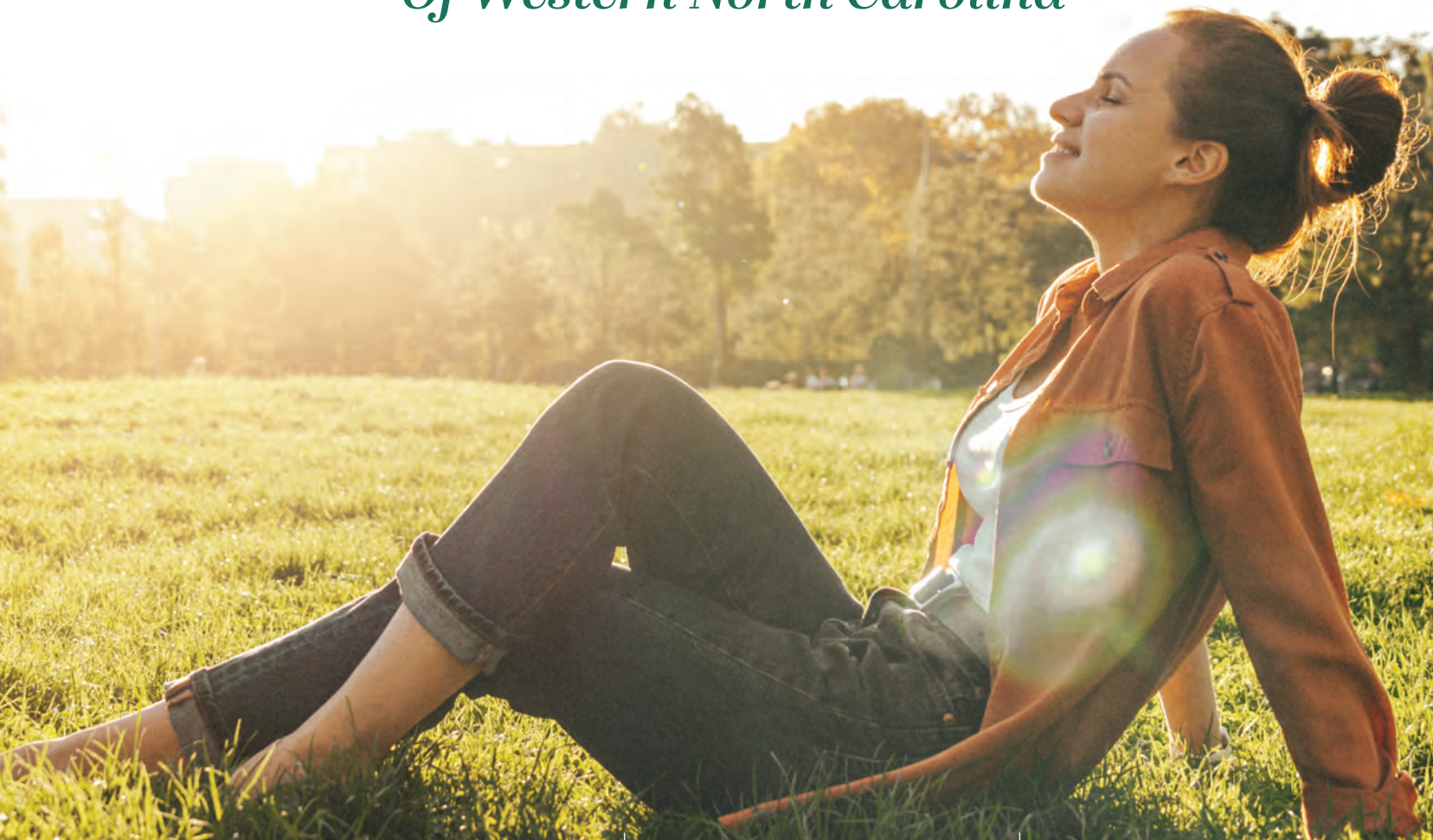


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How to stay active with arthritis

Physical activity is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle — but for people with arthritis, exercising can be a pain.

While the recommendations for exercise may vary for each individual, general guidelines from public health agencies suggest most people should get around 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per day. People with arthritis may be hesitant to head to the gym or engage in home workouts because the instinct to rest is strong when joints feel stiff or painful. However, health care advocates note that movement is one of the most effective treatments for arthritis.

Exercise is not just a lifestyle choice, but an essential component of joint health. People who engage in physical activity report significant reductions in pain.

Here are some ways you can safely navigate physical activity while managing arthritis:

- Emphasize exercise that improves flexibility. People with arthritis should focus on exercises that reduce stiffness and keep joints moving through their full range-of-motion. Examples include gentle neck rotations, shoulder rolls and finger stretches daily, especially in the morning during flare-ups.

- Incorporate low-impact aerobic movements. Cardiovascular exercises improve heart health and help with weight management, which is essential for people with arthritis. Losing just one pound of body weight can remove four pounds of pressure from the knees. Walking, cycling and water exercises are low-impact ways to get the cardio a body needs.

- Make resistance training part of your routine. Building strong muscles can help protect the joints by acting as shock absorbers. People can use bodyweight exercises like chair squats, resistance bands or light dumbbells to build muscle. Focus on the muscles surrounding the joints that are experiencing the most pain, such as quadriceps for knee arthritis or abdominals to protect the hips and spine.

- Assess pain. Experts suggest using something called the two-hour rule to determine if exercise added to or diminished arthritis pain. If joint pain is higher two hours after exercising, then it's important to reduce the duration or intensity of exercise the next time. During a flare-up, do not stop moving entirely, but shift to gentle range-of-motion stretching only.

Exercise can remain a key component of daily life, even for those with arthritis. If you suffer from arthritis or injuries from exercising, orthopedic care could help. Orthopedics diagnose and treat everything from sports injuries to spine issues to arthritis.

Southeastern Orthopedics and Spine, in partnership with Advent-Health Hendersonville, delivers advanced orthopedic, spine, and sports care backed by a regional health net-



work. Southeastern offers a range of treatment and recovery options including physical therapy, surgery, rehabilitation and sports medicine services.

Visit southeasternsportsmedicine.com to learn more, or call or visit one of its four locations in Western North Carolina.

What is arthritis?

Arthritis is a broad category of joint and connective tissue disorders that impacts around one in five people in North America. Arthritis becomes a greater concern as people age.

Common symptoms of arthritis include joint pain, swelling, reduced mobility, and physical weakness. Such signs underscore how much arthritis can affect daily life. Symptoms may come and go, but it's not always easy living with arthritis.

Arthritis is a leading cause of disability. There is no cure for arthritis, so working on lifestyle changes can improve quality of life and help people manage day-to-day tasks more easily.



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The project described was supported by Funding Opportunity number CMS-NAV-24-001 from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The contents provided are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HHS or any of its agencies. GetCoveredWNC serves WNC with support from the Dogwood Health Trust.

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PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

Jonathan Key

GENERAL MANAGER

Karl Miller

EDITORIAL

Becky Johnson

Sarah White

ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Jennifer Worley — jennifer@themountaineer.com

Alan Sharp — asharp@themountaineer.com

DESIGN/PRODUCTION

Heather Allen

Kylie Frazier

Mac Heishman

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Surviving seasonal allergies

Rising temperatures and the reemergence of wildlife make spring a popular time of year. But the blooming flowers and blossoming trees of spring may not be a wonder to behold for seasonal allergy sufferers.

Coping with allergies often comes down to a multi-pronged approach that may involve medication and lifestyle changes.

Oral antihistamines (particularly non-drowsy, second-generation options) combined with nasal steroid sprays can reduce inflammation and congestion and alleviate sneezing, itchy noses and eyes. Decongestants can offer temporary relief of nasal congestion, while saline nasal sprays and rinses can help wash out pollen and mucus.

To help mitigate the effects of pollen on your allergies, avoid the outdoors when allergens are very high. When coming in from outdoors, remove clothing and launder it right away to keep allergens from transferring to furniture and bedding. When pollen counts are high, keep your windows and doors shut and ensure your HVAC



system has a fresh filter. Or try a HEPA room air filter to clear indoor air even more.

Should over-the-counter options and lifestyle changes prove ineffective, seek medical advice. This is especially true if allergies cause intense sinus pressure, difficulty breathing or wheezing. Long-term or prescription treatments like immunotherapy could be the next step to find relief.

Gardening and mental health



Gardening and strong mental health seemingly go hand-in-hand.

Spending time in and around plants and green space — and particularly gardening — is beneficial to both physical and mental health. Working with the soil and plants can help relax the mind and have a grounding effect on the gardener, as gardening can help to reduce stress, anxiety and even built-up anger.

Gardening can also help you connect to the current moment and not be caught up in your mind. Nearly all forms of exercise, gardening included, can lighten your mood and lower levels of stress and anxiety. Also, routines, such as spending a certain portion of the day weeding or tending to gardening needs, creates a soothing rhythm to ease stress.

Overcome your lack of exercise motivation

When adults incorporate exercise into their daily routines, they can lower the health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle. But even if the benefits of exercise are widely known, many still lack the motivation to get up and go. Time constraints and even fear of the unknown are some of the common reasons people fail to exercise regularly. Others simply can't get excited about exercise, and that lack of motivation can have long-term negative consequences.

What can motivate you to exercise?

- **Fun:** Though exercising in a gym offers the opportunity to build strength and improve cardiovascular health, alternative exercise options can be just as effective and perhaps more fun for those who do not enjoy traditional workouts. Dancing, swimming and cycling are just some of the fun ways to reap the rewards of physical activity without confining yourself to a gym.
- **Health:** Individuals who understand the health benefits of exercise, including illness prevention and increased life expectancy, are more motivated to exercise. Keeping these bene-

fits in mind can increase your appetite for exercise — particularly if you have a family history of health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease.

- **Ability:** When individuals are motivated by a desire to improve their physical performance in a given area, they are more likely to stick with a fitness routine. Identifying an ability-related goal, whether it be running a marathon or getting better at a sport like pickleball, can provide the motivation people need to commit to an exercise regimen.

Lack of exercise motivation can be a significant hurdle as people aspire to be more physically active. But identifying some effective motivators can help you stay on track on the road to a longer, healthier life.

To help you on your exercise journey, SEPT Physical Therapy leads the way in sports rehab and physical therapy – treating orthopedic, muscular, bone and joint injuries, ailments and pain. Whether it is a sprain or post-operative repair, SEPT's clinicians, including physical therapist doctors with advanced manual therapy certifications, have the experience and expertise to help patients get the results they deserve. Visit www.septphysicaltherapy.com.



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How do I know if I need back surgery?

Spinal problems are among the most common — and challenging — orthopedic conditions, and often encompass neurological issues.

Haywood Regional Medical Center uses a multi-disciplinary approach to holistically treat patients with spine and back conditions. The team of physiatrists, anesthesiologists, physical therapists, pain-management specialists, nurses, and specially trained spine surgeons are equipped to assess and treat spinal problems resulting from injuries, genetic abnormalities, and diseases such as arthritis, sciatica, and scoliosis.

Whenever possible, HRMC's spine care providers strive to achieve positive results using non-surgical or minimally invasive techniques.

Surgery is rarely the first answer, however, there are cases when it offers the best path to long-term wellness and a better quality of life — especially when non-surgical treatments no longer provide adequate relief.

While fear of spine surgery is a normal human sentiment, today's spine surgery has been transformed by technological

advances. Minimally invasive approaches now allow for smaller incisions and faster recovery. Advanced imaging guidance ensures precise surgical navigation, while enhanced recovery protocols help patients return to normal activities sooner.

Conditions that may require surgery include:

- Scoliosis (curvature of the spine)
- Spondylolisthesis (segment of the spine slips forward)
- Spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal)
- Radiculopathy (herniated disk causes nerve irritation and inflammation)
- Degenerative disk disease

Haywood Regional Medical Center's spine care team offers a collaborative partnership with each patient to determine if and when surgery would be right for them, analyze the risks and benefits, and tailor the type of surgery to their individual goals for pain management and lifestyle.

For more information, visit www.myhaywoodregional.com/spine-care.

Haywood Regional Medical Center named 'Best Hospital' for spine surgery

Haywood Regional Medical Center has been recognized by Healthgrades as one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Spine Surgery, reflecting strong clinical outcomes for patients undergoing back, neck, and spine procedures.

"For patients, what matters most is receiving safe, effective care that helps them move better and live with less pain," said Dr. William Miller, HRMC spine specialist. "This recognition reflects the teamwork, preparation, and attention to detail that go into every spine case, from the first consultation through recovery."

Healthgrades is a nationally recognized resource that evaluates hospital performance using objective clinical data, including outcomes, patient safety indicators, and patient experience measures.

"This recognition speaks to the consistency and coordination of care our patients receive," said Sue Shugart, chief executive officer of HRMC. "It reflects the expertise of our spine providers and the collaboration across surgery, nursing, re-

habilitation, and support teams who care for patients from diagnosis through recovery."

At HRMC, spine care is tailored to the individual needs of each patient. Services include thorough evaluation, surgical and nonsurgical treatment options, coordinated perioperative care, and rehabilitation focused on recovery, mobility, and pain management.

Spine care at HRMC is delivered in collaboration with Mountain Spine Care, where patients are treated by William Miller, MD; Brian Haycook, MD; Aaron Giese, PA; and Andy Steele, MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC. With locations in Clyde and Sylva, the practice helps ensure access to specialty spine care for patients across the region.

Appointments may be scheduled by calling 800-424-DOCS or by visiting HaywoodMedicalGroup.com. To learn more about spine surgery services at Haywood Regional Medical Center, visit www.MyHaywoodRegional.com.

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Haywood Regional Medical Center has earned full Chest Pain Center Accreditation from the American College of Cardiology, reflecting its commitment to advanced, evidence-based heart care. As an accredited Chest Pain Center, the hospital delivers the right care at the right time to minimize heart damage, provide rapid and accurate diagnosis, and help patients recover quickly and confidently.

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Going barefoot? Beware:

Tips for a safer barefoot summer in Haywood County



Dr. DelBene

If you enjoy the warmer weather by kicking off your shoes, learn how to prevent cuts, puncture wounds and other injuries while going barefoot by following some simple recommendations from a local foot and ankle surgeon.

"Shoes are the best way to protect your family's feet from injuries," said Dr. Robert Todd DelBene. "But if your summer just wouldn't be the same without kicking off your shoes or sandals, you can still make it a safe season."

Try these tips for a safer barefoot summer:

- Apply sunscreen to the tops and bottoms of your feet. Feet get sunburn too, and rare but deadly skin cancers can develop on the feet.
- Make sure you've been vaccinated against tetanus. Cuts or puncture wounds from sharp objects can lead to infections and illnesses such as tetanus.
- See a foot and ankle surgeon within 24 hours for puncture wounds. These injuries can embed unsterile foreign objects deep inside the foot. A puncture wound must be cleaned properly and monitored throughout the healing process to avoid complications. Foot and ankle surgeons are trained to properly care for these injuries.

• Inspect your feet and your children's feet on a routine basis for skin problems such as warts, calluses, ingrown toenails and suspicious moles, spots or freckles. The earlier a skin condition is detected, the easier it is for your foot and ankle surgeon to treat it.

• Wear flip-flops or sandals around swimming pools, locker rooms and beaches. To avoid cuts and abrasions from rough anti-slip surfaces and sharp objects hidden beneath sandy beaches, and to prevent contact with bacteria and viruses that can cause athlete's foot, plantar warts, and other problems.

• Use common sense. Every year, people lose toes while mowing the lawn barefoot. Others suffer serious burns from accidentally stepping on stray campfire coals or fireworks. Murky rivers, lakes and ponds

can conceal sharp objects underwater.

Dr. DelBene, DPM is one of six Podiatrists at Smoky Mountain Foot & Ankle Clinic, PA. Offices in Asheville, Waynesville, Sylva, Franklin and Murphy and accepting new patients. Call (828) 452-4343 to schedule appointment or visit smokymountainfoot-clinic.com.



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Four Seasons named best place to work

For the fourth year in a row, Four Seasons, The Care You Trust, was selected as one of the best places to work in healthcare by Modern Healthcare.

Four Seasons is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization providing a range of hospice and palliative care services to 14 counties in Western North Carolina. This year marks the fifth time Four Seasons has received the award since 2021.

"Every day our team co-creates the care experience for our community with a heart of compassion," said Four Seasons President and CEO Dr. Millicent Burke-Sinclair.

"Our team of dedicated, passionate, and experienced professionals love the community and seek to provide the very best care. That care begins internally as we work to support each other so we are able to best support those who entrust us with their care."

This award program identifies and recognizes outstanding employers in the health care industry nationwide. Modern Healthcare partners with Workforce Research Group on the assessment process, which includes an extensive employee survey.

"At Four Seasons, we are committed to caring for our employees through enhancing our benefits and reviewing salaries annually, supporting our teams in their day to day, and creating a culture that fosters balance and flexibility. Feedback that we receive from surveys like this inspire positive change to help make us an even better place to work year after year," said Lauren Purdy, Four Seasons chief leadership officer.

Interested in joining the team? Four Seasons is hiring for a variety of positions across the service region. Learn more and

apply today at fourseasonscare.org.

Four Seasons, The Care You Trust has provided trusted care to WNC since 1979. In addition to hospice and palliative care, Four Seasons also offers care navigation, home care, grief services, and support for the caregiver and family. The generous community support through Four Seasons Foundation and Hospice Home Stores allows Four Seasons to ensure the mission and vision of the organization, providing care to everyone, including those in need.

For more information, call 866-466-9734 or visit FourSeasonsCare.org



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We are grateful to serve our Western North Carolina neighbors with trusted Palliative Care and Hospice Care. As an award-winning nonprofit organization, our focus is on the patient, providing services that take care of the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of whatever challenging season you face. Call today to request care or get more information.

REQUEST CARE: 866.466.9734 or visit FourSeasonsCare.org

Stay hydrated this summer

Summer is marked by hot and humid conditions. Although summer temperatures can make a day at the beach or in the pool ideal, that rising mercury also can contribute to dehydration.

Water is critical to every cell, tissue and organ in the human body. Water helps to regulate body temperature, flush waste from the body, lubricate and cushion joints, and promote healthy digestion — and that's just the start. So when temperatures climb and the body begins sweating to cool off, it is vital to replenish lost fluids at a faster rate.

Women should consume at least 2.7 liters of fluid per day, while men need 3.7 liters. These amounts increase if one is exercising, sweating, has an illness like a

fever, or is vomiting.

Here are six ways to stay properly hydrated during hot summer days:

- Consume a glass of water when you wake up. Start the day off with some water to give you an energy boost and get your metabolism moving.
- Coffee and tea count toward fluid intake. And contrary to popular belief, caffeine doesn't contribute to dehydration for healthy adults.
- Certain foods can hydrate the body as well — the average person gets 20% of their fluid intake from food. Hydrating foods include cucumbers, celery, tomatoes, watermelon, strawberries, grapefruit, and peppers.



- Make water more fun. Add unsweetened flavoring to water if you find plain water too bland. Or try squeezing in lemon or lime juice or floating cucumber or apple slices in the water for some flavor.
- It's easy to mistake the signs of dehydration for hunger. By drinking a glass of water or another unsweetened beverage prior to every meal, you can stay hydrated and reduce the amount of food you eat.
- Occasionally replenish your elec-

trolytes with powders and drinks after working out in the heat or sweating profusely. Electrolytes help the body regulate chemical reactions and maintain balance between fluids inside and outside of your cells. They include sodium, calcium and potassium.

Staying hydrated is essential at all times, but it's especially important when summer temperatures can make loss of body fluid more significant.



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How seniors can build their social networks in retirement

Social isolation and loneliness can have a notably adverse effect on a person's overall health. Roughly 12% of older individuals experience loneliness, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health, quality of life, and even their life expectancy.

Seniors have much to gain when they take successful steps to avoid isolation. Try these strategies to build your social networks in retirement:

- Reconnect with old friends: It's easy for adults to lose touch with old friends. By the time many adults reach middle age, professional and personal obligations can leave little time for a thriving social life. Come retirement, much of those responsibilities have ended, making this a perfect time to reconnect with old friends who also might have extra free time on their hands. Reach out through social media, text message or even a phone call, and let the situation unfold organically from there.

- Take advantage of community of-



ferings: Many communities sponsor events for seniors, like bus trips to local museums or stadiums. Retirees can take advantage of these opportunities, which tend to attract like-minded

individuals with the same interests.

- Start a local club or group: Like community-sponsored bus trips, clubs and groups tend to attract like-minded individuals, providing a built-in path-

way to friendship. Take to social media and express your interest in starting a local book club or walking group.

- Reconnect with your faith: Houses of worship also offer a great way to meet locals and build relationships based on a shared identity. Faith-based communities provide a sense of belonging that can help retirees overcome social isolation and loneliness.

- Open yourself to new experiences: Trying something new is another great way to make new friends. Many local agencies like parks departments or community recreation offices offer seniors in-person workshops covering a wide range of activities. These offerings are a great way to discover a new pastime and meet new people along the way.

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The connection between hearing and emotional well-being

When you struggle to hear clearly, it affects more than just your ability to follow conversations. It can lead to feelings of frustration, isolation and exhaustion as you work harder to keep up with what's being said around you.

Over time, these challenges can affect your mood, your relationships with family and friends, and your overall sense of connection to the world around you. Addressing hearing concerns isn't just about improving sound quality — it's about supporting your mental and emotional health too.

How the brain connects sound and feelings

Every sound you hear, from a friend's laughter to your favorite song, travels through the auditory system to parts of the brain that manage feelings, such as the amygdala and limbic system. These connections explain why certain sounds can lift your mood, bring back a memory or make you feel alert.

When hearing changes are left un-

addressed, the brain receives fewer sound cues, which can affect focus, energy and emotional well-being. A quieter world may reduce stimulation for areas of the brain that process emotion, sometimes leading to frustration or withdrawal from social activities.

Mood changes, like increased irritability or frustration, are common when hearing loss develops. Over time, these feelings can affect your outlook and the way you interact with others.

How to help your hearing health

Supporting your hearing health can make a real difference in maintaining closeness and shared experiences. Whether it means seeking hearing support, using clear communication techniques or letting loved ones know how they can help, addressing hearing changes helps you stay engaged and present.

Regular checkups with your audiologist can help keep your hearing health on track and support your



emotional well-being. These visits can catch changes early, making it easier to address new challenges before they affect your daily life. Your audiologist can also suggest tools or strategies that may improve both your hearing and how you feel in social situations.

If you have questions about your

hearing or want to discuss options for support, contact Salyer Hearing Center. The team at Salyer is ready to help you understand your hearing needs and guide you toward solutions that fit your lifestyle. Visit salyerhearingcenter.com for more information.



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Aging can impact more than your hearing: Learn when to see an ENT specialist

As you age, changes in your ear, nose and throat systems can affect how you interact with others, how safely you move through your day and how much you enjoy



activities like dining out or spending time with family.

For instance, you might notice that hearing conversations in noisy places becomes harder, or that your balance feels less steady than it used to. Perhaps you've experienced more frequent sinus issues or find that swallowing certain foods takes more effort.

Regular check-ups with an ENT specialist give you the chance to address small concerns like these before they become bigger problems. Many age-related ENT issues respond well when caught early, and your doctor can offer practical strategies to help you manage symptoms and maintain your quality of life.

How aging can affect ENT health

Aging brings several changes to the

ears, nose and throat, including:

- Reduced hearing due to changes in the inner ear
- Dry mouth from decreased saliva production
- Changes in sense of smell or taste
- Increased risk of throat irritation or hoarseness
- More frequent sinus congestion or infections

Knowing when to seek help for ENT health issues

As you get older, changes in your ears, nose and throat are common, but not every change is something you should ignore. Paying attention to new or persistent symptoms can help you address problems before they become more serious.

Trusting your instincts is key. If something feels off or symptoms are

interfering with daily activities, do not wait to seek help.

Taking care of your ear, nose and throat health as you age is about staying aware of changes and acting on them when needed. Simple adjustments, guidance from healthcare providers and timely treatments can make a noticeable difference in how you hear, breathe and move readily throughout your day.

If you notice any changes or have concerns about your ENT health, the team at Mountain Ear, Nose & Throat Associates can help. Mountain ENT has clinics in Sylva, Franklin, Murphy and Candler. Scheduling a check-up allows us to review your symptoms, provide personalized strategies and ensure your ear, nose and throat health supports your daily life. Visit mountainent.com for more information.



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Skin care for dry, sensitive skin

Almost everyone has experienced dry skin at least once in their life. But there are ways to manage the flaking or itching that come with it.

When the skin loses moisture and its natural oils, it can result in scaling, flaking, cracking, and itching.

Dry skin is a common condition that affects people of any age and skin type and can occur anywhere on the body.

What causes dry skin?

- Weather and climate: Exposure to the cold, low humidity, and dry indoor spaces can lead to dry skin.
- Occupation: People who work in jobs that require repeated hand washing or result in exposure to chemicals are more likely to have dry skin. These jobs could include medical professionals, housekeepers, daycare workers, cooks, florists, and hairdressers.
- Lifestyle factors: Taking long hot showers or baths can dry out your



skin. Similarly, some soaps can be harsh, stripping your skin of its natural oils.

- Skin diseases: Individuals who suffer from conditions like atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, and seborrheic dermatitis commonly have dry skin.
- Systemic disorders: People with

diabetes, thyroid disease, kidney disease or cancer may also develop dry skin as a result of their health issues.

- Age: As you age, your skin produces less oils and you become more prone to having dry skin.
- Medications: Certain medications such as retinoids and diuretics can

cause dry skin.

- Diet: A lack of water intake, along with vitamin or mineral deficiencies, can lead to the onset of dry skin.

Tips for managing dry skin

- Limit the duration and frequency of baths and showers.
- Use warm water instead of hot water for baths and showers.
- Apply a good moisturizer right after a bath or shower.
- Select and use only mild cleansers, good moisturizers, and fragrance-free detergents.

The team at Highlands Dermatology offers effective and individualized treatments to correct a host of medical skin conditions. Highlands' board-certified dermatologist has broad experience in pediatric, medical, and surgical dermatology. The office provides a full range of dermatology services and treatments. Find more information at www.highlandsdermatology.com/

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Health benefits of yoga

Are you ready for warrior pose? Have you unleashed your downward dog? You may know these popular poses, but did you know that yoga can be a tool to help your breathing and reflection to support your mind and body?

Yoga is an ancient, ascetic Hindu discipline comprised of controlled breathing, body positions and meditation. The goal of yoga is to attain a deep state of tranquility and spiritual insight.

People of all ages can benefit from yoga. It can help the healthy, but also can be utilized to treat people recovering from illness or surgery or those living with a chronic condition.



What can yoga do for you?

- Improves flexibility: Even the lowest intensity styles of yoga have been shown to increase flexibility. Yoga is especially helpful for adults ages 65 and older, helping to slow age-related loss of flexibility.

- Brain boost: Gray matter in the brain can diminish as people get older. However, people who do yoga have shown to have more gray matter volume in certain brain regions which correlates with the number of years of yoga experience.

- Back pain relief: Yoga poses can help alleviate pain in various regions of the body, especially the lower back. Yoga can be a first-line treatment for chronic lower back pain.

- Alleviate joint pain: Gentle yoga can alleviate some of the discomfort of arthritis, particularly tender, swollen joints.

- Improve mental health: Yoga can be an effective alternative treatment for major depressive disorder. Depression



is thought to be one of the most common mental health disorders in the world.

- Reduced inflammation: Yoga is also a viable intervention to reduce inflammation across a multitude of chronic conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, Crohn's disease, and

cancer.

In addition to these health benefits, yoga can help tame stress, reduce pain, improve quality of sleep, and even boost immunity. Individuals are urged to start gradually in basic level yoga classes and slowly increase intensity as they grow more comfortable.

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SmokyMountainYogaFest.com



Event Highlights

Parade Kickoff: Friday, 6:00pm
Opening Ceremony: Saturday, 9:00am
50+ Vendors: No admission fee
Chikomo Marimba: Free concert, Saturday, 5:00pm
Closing Ceremony: Saturday, 6:00-9:00pm
All-welcoming Festival with many FREE offerings
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Folkmoot Campus, 112 Virginia Ave., Waynesville
smokymountainyogafest.com | contact@smokymountainyogafest.com

When should you see a spinal neurosurgeon?



Dr. Matthew Brown

By Matthew Brown

Back pain can be debilitating when it comes to regular daily movement such as sitting at your desk, getting exercise, or simply doing the activities that you love. That's when a spinal neurosurgeon, or a physician specializing in "neurospine," can help you get moving again.

What Is "NeuroSpine"?

Neurospine is where intricate nerve care meets mechanical spine care. It is a specialized focus within neurosurgery that treats conditions affecting the spine, spinal cord, and spinal nerves.

Within the field of neurosurgery, spine care makes up most cases. Roughly 80% of all neurosurgery involves the spine or spinal nerves.

Neurospine bridges two key aspects of care: how your nerves and spinal cord communicate with your body (neurologic function) and how the spine supports your movement and posture (structural stability). It is a blend of diagnosing and treating neurologic symptoms (like pain, numbness, or weakness from nerve compression) and stabilizing the spine to prevent further injury or dysfunction.

Neurosurgeons vs orthopedic surgeons

Spinal neurosurgeons treat everything from herniated discs and nerve compression to spinal cord tumors and

fractures. Although both orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons manage spine conditions, neurosurgeons bring unique training in the nervous system, making them especially skilled in managing nerve-related disorders and delicate spinal structures.

Neurosurgeons are trained extensively in the entire neuroanatomical system, from the brain down through the spinal cord and spinal nerves to the peripheral nerves. Our focus is on the nervous system and how to protect, decompress, or repair it.

Orthopedic surgeons, on the other hand, are experts in bones, joints, and structural repair. Their training is deeply rooted in biomechanics, fixation, and stabilization of the skeletal system.

Think of it with this analogy: an orthopedic spine surgeon sees the spine as a bone with some wet spaghetti inside it. A neurosurgeon sees it as the spinal cord and nerves protected by a hard shell.

What do neurosurgeons treat?

The conditions treated by neurosurgeons at Pardee NeuroSpine Associates involve issues like spinal cord or nerve root compression, stenosis, fractures, instability, and degeneration.

Common causes include:

- Herniated discs
- Bone spurs
- Joint cysts
- Tumors (within or around the spinal cord)
- Trauma-related fractures
- Degenerative conditions

The right options for the patient

It's not always about surgery; the spinal neurosurgeons at Pardee take a conservative approach to consider all the options for providing relief and treatment.

The neurosurgeon will start with a pathway that involves the least invasive procedure necessary, like physical

therapy or other treatments, before determining if surgery is needed.

Spinal surgical procedures can range from discectomy to spinal fusion to revision spinal surgery. UNC Health Pardee even offers minimally invasive, robotic-assisted surgery that puts a surgeon's hands at the controls of a state-of-the-art, technologically advanced platform. For the patient, it means a less invasive procedure and faster recovery time.

Every patient is different. What's right for one person may not be for another. The job of the spinal neurosurgeon is to educate patients, explain what's going on, what their options are, the pros and cons of each, and help them make the best decision for themselves.

Learn more about spinal neurosurgery and the Pardee NeuroSpine Associates team at pardeehospital.org/spine. Matthew Brown is a Board-Certified Neurosurgeon at Pardee NeuroSpine Associates.





For tears and sprains to joint replacement and back pain, **Pardee is the place to go.**

At UNC Health Pardee, you have a connected team of spine neurosurgeons, orthopedics and sports medicine specialists, and physical therapists working together to guide you back to your mobility and strength. We're here to help you return to your active lifestyle.



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