

**1500 Weiss St
Saginaw, MI 48602
(989) 497-2500 ext 11060**

**Newsletter Date
Volume 5, Issue 3**

Aleda E. Lutz VAMC



**Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit
Community Living Center, Building 22**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Preventing Injury During Fall Clean-up..... pg 2

National Parks for Gold Star Familiespg 4

Benefits to Staying Active during Aging..... pg 6

PHYSICAL THERAPY CORNER

FALL CLEAN-UP IN MICHIGAN

Injury Prevention Tips

Unfortunately, Summer here in Michigan is coming to a close. As any Michigander knows, there is always another season on the way. During the fall, there is a lot of clean-up to do from our summer gardening and toys in the yard. We also have to prepare for the upcoming winter and all that it brings for us to contend with. While we are cleaning up from the summer and preparing for winter, there is the potential for injury.



In fact, one study from John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Study, found that over 80,000 Americans are injured and needed hospital treatment from lawnmower accidents each year. These injuries included cuts, amputations, back and neck injuries, and eye injuries.

There are several steps we can take to avoid getting an injury this fall while taking care of our yards.

1. Prepare your equipment. Make sure safety switches and guards are in place and turned on. Make sure you are keeping chemicals away from gasoline and other oils you might be using to run your equipment. Have plenty of open space to be able to maneuver your equipment without running into things

2. Survey the Scene: Make sure there are no wires exposed from your home, the ground or electrical poles. Watch the ground for any holes that animals may have dug up over the summer. Make sure you don't step in anything that might cause you to slip or trip.

3. Wear sunscreen and stay hydrated. It might be getting cooler out there, but you may still be at risk of getting too much exposure to the sun. Don't be deceived by the increasing clouds, the UV rays can still get to your exposed skin. Use sunscreen with an appropriate SPF to exposed skin. It is also easy to get dehydrate when you are busy at work. Take frequent breaks and consume plenty of fluids.

4. Lift properly: Be sure to keep your back in a neutral position, bend at your knees. Keep whatever you are lifting close to your body and tighten your belly before lifting. Get the lawn bags and equipment as close as possible to wherever you are trying to put it before lifting. If it is too heavy, get help. Dividing the work between 2-3 people will surely help keep you from injuring something unnecessarily.

5. Prevent overuse injuries. If you are not used to doing a specific activity, then all of a sudden are forced to do it for an extended period of time, you are more likely to have an overuse injury. You can avoid this by splitting these tasks up over several days or with extended break periods. Do stretching exercises before starting and during breaks. You might even consider using ice after a long period of doing a specific task. You may want to talk to your doctor before using ice if you are unsure it is safe for you.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of preventive measures that can be taken, it is for sure a good start. Be sure to not only check the area you will be working in and the equipment you will be using to complete these tasks, but also check on yourself. The use of a warm-up to include stretching can be very helpful in injury prevention. Finally, use proper body mechanics in whatever task you are doing including lifting, pushing and pulling. An Ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Good luck on your fall clean-up this year. mk

RECREATION THERAPY CORNER

FREE ENTRANCE TO NATIONAL PARKS FOR GOLD STAR FAMILIES AND VETERANS

Attention veterans! Thank You For Your Service and
welcome home!

Here are your FREE benefits!



Current US military and dependents, Gold Star Families, and US military veterans are eligible to receive free annual or lifetime passes which cover entrance or day use fees at national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other federal recreational lands through the veterans, and gold star family free access program.

Current members of the US Armed Forces and their dependents can enter national parks for free with an Interagency Military Annual Pass through the America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass (Interagency) Program. There are a total of eight Interagency Passes available. For more information and to obtain these passes, please visit <https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes>

Who is eligible to get a free Military Lifetime Pass as a veteran? Veterans! Members of the US Armed Forces, National Guard and Reserves. There is no application or form to fill out to receive the Military Lifetime Pass (Physical recreational land passes to keep in your wallet or purse require a small \$10.00 processing fee). Simply present one of the following forms of identification to get the Interagency Military Lifetime Pass when entering a national park:

- Unexpired Department of Defense Identification Card (DD Form 2, DD Form 2765, or Next Generation USID replacement)
 - Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)
 - Veteran ID Card
- Veterans designation on a state-issued US driver's license or identification card

What are the interagency passes available to me? The program waives entrance or standard amenity fees for the following agencies: Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Who is eligible to get a free Military Lifetime Pass as a member of a Gold Star Family? Gold Star Families NOK (next of kin) of a member of the US Armed Forces who lost his or her life in a “qualifying situation,” such as a war, an international terrorist attack, or a military operation outside of the United States while serving with the US Armed Forces. Eligibility requirements are in section 3.2 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36.

How does a member of a Gold Star Family get a free Military Lifetime Pass? Gold Star Family members must download and print a voucher to present to park staff, exchange for an Interagency Military Lifetime Pass, or place on the vehicle dashboard at unstaffed sites (representations of the voucher are prohibited; the physical voucher or pass must be present). By downloading and signing the voucher, Gold Star Family members are self-certifying that they meet the required criteria as identified in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36.

What is not covered by the free Military Pass program? The pass does not cover expanded amenity fees such as camping, tours or special recreation permits; reservation fees and fees for organized groups or concession-operated facilities or activities.

Are passes available for disabled veterans or other people with disabilities? Yes. The Interagency Access Pass is a lifetime pass that is free for any US citizen or permanent resident, including a veteran or Gold Star Family member, who has a permanent disability. An Access Pass may also provide discounts for expanded amenities like camping, guided tours etc. For more information visit <https://store.usgs.gov/access-pass>

What if I have a current Interagency Military Pass or other type of Interagency Pass? If you already have a Military Pass, Access Pass, or one of the other Interagency Passes, you can simply use that pass for free access. If you have recently purchased an Interagency Annual or Senior Pass, unfortunately no refunds are permitted. All Interagency Passes are non-transferable.



IS IT BENEFICIAL TO EXERCISE AS I AGE?

Absolutely, and here is WHY.....



It is clear to most people, if we sit or lie down for too long there is the potential for problems. What are some of those problems, you may be asking. We will spend some time in the article talking about those potential problems. It will probably be a better use of our time to discuss the benefits of staying active throughout the life span.

THE BAD NEWS:

According to the CDC, 1 in 2 adults don't get enough daily physical activity. Each year in the US, there is \$117 billion spent on health care as a result of conditions resulting from low activity levels.

Heart Disease:

There is strong evidence that inactivity is one of the leading causes of heart disease. Issues like high blood pressure, obesity and elevated blood pressure are typical results from low activity levels, and ultimately leading to heart disease.

Type II Diabetes:

Exercise or at least general, daily movement helps us control our blood sugar, weight and promotes good cholesterol production. When we don't move, even at a minimal amount for some people, they will be more prevalent to having type II diabetes as an issue to deal with.

Cancer:

Those who don't get some form of regular movement/exercise are also at more risk for developing some forms of cancer. According to the CDC, some of the more common forms of cancer that are seen include breast, colon and uterine cancer.

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE IN THE OLDER ADULT:

Fall Prevention:

There is clear evidence that the stronger we keep our bodies the more mobile we will be and the more motivated we are to keep moving. Strong muscles help our mobility, strength, and our balance. There is a significant increase in fall risk for adult 65 and older who do not regularly exercise.

Social Positive:

Exercise has been shown to improve individuals confidence and self-esteem. If people feel better about themselves they are more likely to stay active in their communities. Staying active in ones community helps give people a purpose and a reason to keep moving. This will ultimately prevent isolation and depression.

Improves concentration/ memory

Staying active on a regular basis helps keep blood flowing through your body. This allows more blood flow to your brain allowing for better concentration. People are also able to concentrate better and focus on more difficult tasks. This results in maintaining independence and less need to rely on others for cognitive task.

This is a sampling of the health risks to a sedentary lifestyle and benefits to staying active. It should be pretty clear there is definite benefits to staying active as we age. Be sure to discuss with your medical professional on what are the best types of physical activities would be the most beneficial for you to participate in. mk

