



# Achilles Tendinitis Tips to Keep You in the Game

## A Message From the Doctor

Dr. Gregg Neibauer, DPM



Welcome to our newsletter; We hope you find it interesting and educational. Wishing you a safe and wonderful fall in Montana.

## Get Social w/Us



Let the games begin! Fall sports of all kinds are kicking off, and every athlete wants to start the season strong. If you're training too hard, though, it can take its toll, especially on your Achilles tendon.

Achilles tendinitis is an overuse injury and often occurs in those who increase the duration and intensity of their workouts too quickly. To avoid this sidelining condition, it's best to gradually boost your training and be sure to warm up properly beforehand. The right shoes make a difference, too. Make sure yours offer plenty of cushioning and support to reduce tension placed upon your Achilles. Orthotics can provide additional help as well.

Another great prevention method is cross-training. Alternating low-impact activities—like biking and swimming—with your high impact workouts can help minimize stress on the tendon. Strong calf muscles can do so as well, so try strengthening exercises like rising up and down on your toes.

Finally, if you do feel pain, rest! Avoid running, especially on hilly terrain, and ice the area to reduce inflammation. A little patience will go a long way here. Coming back too early can make the problem worse and even encourage future flare-ups.

Follow these tips and by the time the ref blows the whistle, you'll be more than ready to play! Just ask our friendly staff if you want to find out more.



# Fitting in Fitness at Work

When you work all day, it's hard to get in the exercise you need to stay fit and healthy. Well, in honor of Labor Day, we'd like to offer all you hard-workers some helpful hints on how to fit fitness into your busy work week.

The last thing anyone feels like doing after a long and tiring day on the job is coming home and squeezing in a workout, so try getting up early instead. Set your alarm—and don't hit that snooze (you snooze, you lose!). Exercising before heading to work is a great, energizing way to start your day!

Not a morning person? Then take advantage of your lunch break. Walk to the sandwich shop, take a quick trip to the gym, do some stretches after you eat, keep some hand weights in your desk drawer—you get the idea.

Another great way to get in some fitness is to skip the elevator and take the stairs, or hop on your bike or walk to work instead of driving. You can forget emailing co-workers too—get up and go deliver the message in person! Even if you need to stay seated for long periods of time, you can still work some muscles simply by contracting them periodically. You can also exchange your chair for an exercise ball, or set a timer to stand up and move right at your desk—do some calf raises, squats, leg circles, and wall pushups, or walk in place or around your desk a few times.

If you are destined to have to exercise after work, be sure to develop a set routine so you can make it part of your everyday agenda without skipping a beat. Once it's a habit, it'll be hard to break.

Have a Happy and Healthy Labor Day!

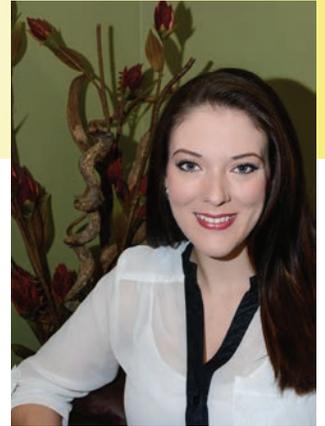
## Mark Your Calendars

- September 7** Labor Day – Goodbye summer, hello fall
- September 18** National Cheeseburger Day – Fire up the grill
- September 23** Falls Prevention Awareness Day – See balance article in this issue
- October 4** National Golf Day – Hit the links one more time
- October 18** No Beard Day – A tough one in Missoula
- October 30** National Candy Corn Day – Grab a bag



# Featured Interview For September, Falls Prevention Awareness Month:

**Jennifer Feenstra, DPT**  
Element Physical Therapy  
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**Dr. Neibauer:** At Element Physical Therapy, you have a focus on balance. Can you tell me exactly what that means?

**Jennifer:** At this clinic, we do focus a lot on balance—that's one of our specialties. We recognize with our additional training that balance is comprised of a lot of different factors. We need to sense when we are losing our balance or whether we have our balance. Our brain needs to process that information, then we need to react to whatever the situation is.

We try to break down our evaluation process a little bit further so that we evaluate the senses for balance, including vision (eyes), the vestibular system (inner ear), and somatic sensation (legs/feet). We analyze each of those three senses individually and how well the brain processes the information and how well you can react to that information.

With that more thorough evaluation technique, we can break down someone's balance problem into the specific components that gives someone those problems. That way we can treat them more effectively by addressing their specific balance problems.

**Dr. Neibauer:** What are the most common conditions that cause balance impairment?

**Jennifer:** There are many conditions that can cause balance issues, that is why we are so specific with our testing. Lower body problems that can cause imbalance include weakness in the legs or decreased sensation in the legs/feet (peripheral neuropathy). Visual problems can affect balance because their vision isn't helping them maintain balance. Inner ear problems involving vestibular system reduces the ability to perceive 'tipping over.' Heart problems, Parkinson's disease, or general weakness are other causes of balance issues.

**Dr. Neibauer:** What are some signs or clues of balance impairment?

**Jennifer:** Things you can look for are tripping or catching the toes on stairs or while walking, excessive hanging onto railings, or constant touching of furniture or walls with hands in attempt to gain more balance. Also, all adults, regardless of age, should be able to walk in a straight line on a flat surface: if you notice you're swerving side to side, there may be a balance problem. A shuffling gate may also be indicative of balance issues. Another obvious sign is history of a fall(s). If you have noticed any of these signs yourself or with a loved one, a balance screening is indicated.

**Dr. Neibauer:** I'm impressed by how thorough your balance exams are, as I have experienced some of them myself. What sets your clinic apart and how can you help patients with balance problems?



**Jennifer:** Here at Element Physical Therapy one reason why we're a little more specialized and able to address balance more specifically than a lot of other practices is because we have specialized equipment to test for balance problems. We have several different pieces of equipment, one being the NeuroCom SMART EquiTest system and the other being video recording goggles that help to determine how well the eye and the inner ear systems are working to help you with your balance. As a whole, we're able to better evaluate your balance because we have specialized equipment and we have therapists who are all specially trained to address dizziness and balance problems.





Alpine Foot & Ankle Clinic

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# Prompt Attention for Puncture Wounds

After stepping on something sharp, the first thing you'd probably do is scream out in pain then hop around on your good foot, but the next thing you better do is take care of it. Prompt treatment of puncture wounds is crucial to preventing infection. If you don't have diabetes, and you have had a tetanus shot, a minor puncture wound can be treated at home with a little TLC.

First, as much as we're sure you don't want to, you're going to have to take a look at it. Check if the object that caused the wound—or any piece of the object—is still inside. If it is, use sterilized tweezers to carefully remove it. Next, after allowing some blood to flow for a bit to promote cleaning, stop the bleeding by applying direct pressure. Then, wash the wound thoroughly with mild soap and water. Do not use anything else to avoid harming tissue and slowing the healing process.

Protect the area with a sterile bandage. You can ease any pain by keeping your foot elevated as much as possible and taking recommended medication. If you see any signs of infection—redness, swelling, warmth, increased pain, fever, or discharge—call us right away.

For more information, just ask. We are always happy to help. Oh—and watch your step!

