# CURCIO LAW'S MAGAZINE HARD HITTING The Science of CTE and the New Awareness of Concussions

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A Letter from the Firm



Dear Friends,

I write this letter as the Thanksgiving Holiday is just two days away. The older I become, the more I appreciate Thanksgiving. Not only is it the start to the wonderful Holiday Season, when everyone's spirits seem brighter and happier, but it is also fundamentally a time to slow down and take a few days from our hectic on-the-go schedules to reflect about all the blessings we share and to give thanks for each of them.

My list of blessings has grown over the years, as I'm sure each of yours has. Of course, it starts with my

parents, who provided my two brothers and me with a happy, safe, and secure home. My parents, through example, instilled in us the importance of respect, hard work, integrity, and family. What blessings those values are. With such a solid footing, pursuing higher education and obtaining a law degree which gives me the privilege to help others, was easily obtained, and another blessing. Having been raised in a loving home, other blessings in my life naturally came to be, such as my loving wife, Gale, and our two sons, Peter and Michael. Love begets love, and we are blessed with a wide circle of friends. Opportunities presented and seized, beget further opportunities, yet more blessings. I can go on and on, as I'm sure each of you can. So, during the holiday season, and every day, I hope that you take the time to reflect on all you have to be thankful for.

As to happenings at Curcio Law, I am happy to report that Rakin Hamad, a recent graduate of the Antonin Scalia School of Law at George Mason University has joined our team as a first-year associate. Rakin is a lifelong Northern Virginia resident and has been working closely with me on preparing and trying cases since he joined our team three months ago. He is smart, hard-working, and pleasant to work with, and I am confident that he will grow into a fine lawyer.

The focus of this issue of *Living Safer* is concussions. Fortunately, the public awareness of this silent epidemic is growing as is the number of professionals trained to recognize and treat the symptoms associated with this type of brain injury. While the number of clients that we represent who are suffering from concussions continues to increase, fortunately, the outcome for them has improved as these injuries have become better understood. As always, I hope you find the articles within helpful and informative.

In closing, on behalf of all of us here at Curcio Law, I wish you and your loved ones the Happiest of Holidays along with a safe and healthy New Year.

Sincerely, Thomas J. Curcio



The Casey Feldman Foundation

# ONE Second IS NOT A VERY LONG TIME.

But when you're behind a steering wheel and your eyes leave the road—that ONE single second can change a life.

# ONE second is all it takes to be distracted.

When you are driving, it should not be a secondary task—it should be the only task.

EndDD.org (End Distracted Driving) was established to raise awareness and generate action against the epidemic of distracted driving.

DISTRACTIONS INCLUDE:	
Visual	Taking eyes off the road
Manual	Taking hands off the road
Cognitive	Taking mind off the road

While texting and talking on the phone are both mental and physical distractions, cellphone use is attributed to 18% of fatalities in distraction-related crashes.

# What makes up the other 82%?

- » Putting on makeup
- » Reaching to grab a drink
- » Changing the music
- » Dealing with the GPS
- » Eating on the go

The distractions are endless. But they don't have to be.

# The Core Mission of EndDD

Our core mission is to preserve life and promote safety on a large scale through advocacy, education and action. It is our hope that we can prevent families and friends from suffering the loss of a loved one because of distracted driving.

**Together,** let's work to prevent distracted driving from claiming another life.

# **VISIT US ONLINE**

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# Early Detection Leads to Early Prevention

Small hearts can conceal big challenges, especially when it comes to congenital heart defects. Nearly one in three infants who die from birth defects has this condition. But a simple, non-invasive screening for all newborns could save the life of your child or the child of someone you know.

Tell your legislator to support pulse-oximetry testing for all newborns. Get involved at YoureTheCure.org



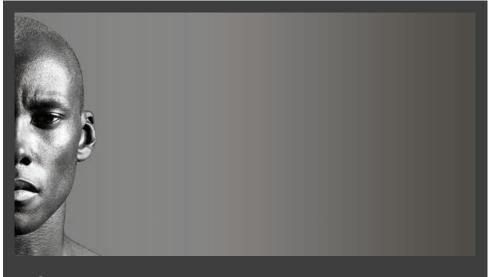
Heart Disease and Stroke. You're the Cure.

YoureTheCure.org

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The Science of CTE and the New Awareness of Concussions

In 1987, the NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers drafted Merril Hoge in the 10<sup>th</sup> round—an Idaho State University graduate who had been a three-time all-conference running back.

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# Is the NFL Protecting its Players? Consider the history, decide for yourself

Over the past few years, reports have shown an increasing number of retired NFL players who have suffered concussions have developed memory and cognitive issues, such as dementia, Alzheimer's disease, depression and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative disease of the brain that's associated with repeated head traumas.

Given what we know, here's a timeline—compiled by CNN in 2017—of how the NFL has attempted to protect its players:

**1994** – Then-NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue creates the Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Committee. Elliot Pellman, M.D., is named chairman despite having no experience with brain injuries.

**2002** – Bennet Omalu, M.D., a forensic pathologist and co-founder of the Brain Injury Research Institute, identifies CTE in the brain of former Pittsburgh Steelers' center Mike Webster, 50, who committed suicide. Omalu is the first to identify CTE in American football players.

**Jan. 2005** – The NFL's Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Committee finds that returning to play after sustaining a concussion "does not involve significant risk of a second injury either in the same game or during the season."

**2005-2006** – Omalu identifies CTE in the brains of former Pittsburgh Steelers players Terry Long and Andre Waters. Both committed suicide

**Aug. 14, 2007 –** The NFL formalizes new concussion guidelines, which include a hotline to report when a player is being forced to play contrary to medical advice.

**Feb. 17, 2011** – Former Chicago Bears player Dave Duerson, 50, commits suicide with a gunshot wound to the chest rather than his head so his brain could be researched for CTE. Boston University researchers find CTE in Duerson's brain.

**April 19, 2012** – Former Atlanta Falcons safety Ray Easterling, 62, commits suicide. An autopsy finds signs of CTE.

May 2, 2012 – Former NFL linebacker Junior Seau, 43, is found dead with a gunshot wound to the chest, classified as a suicide. Friends and family members say his suicide was brought on by multiple concussions, but an initial autopsy report finds no apparent brain damage. Portions of Seau's brain are sent to the National Institutes of Health for further study.

**June 7, 2012** – A unified lawsuit combining more than 80 concussion-related lawsuits on behalf of more than 2,000 NFL players is filed in federal court in Philadelphia. The players accuse the NFL of

negligence and failing to notify players of the link between concussions and brain injuries, in Multi-District Litigation Case No. 2323.

**Jan. 10, 2013** – NIH releases the results of their analysis of Seau's brain tissue, confirming that he did suffer from CTE.

**Aug. 29, 2013** – The NFL and ex-players reach a deal in the class action lawsuit that calls for the NFL to pay \$765 million to fund medical exams, concussion-related compensation, medical research for retired NFL players and their families, and litigation expenses, according to a court document filed in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia.

**Jan. 14, 2014** – A federal judge declines to approve a proposed \$760 million settlement of claims arising from concussions suffered by NFL players, saying she didn't think it was enough money.

**July 7, 2014** – The U.S. District Court in Philadelphia grants preliminary approval to a settlement between retired NFL players and the NFL.

**April 22, 2015** – A federal judge gives final approval to a class-action lawsuit settlement between the NFL and thousands of former players. The agreement provides up to \$5 million per retired player for serious medical conditions associated with repeated head trauma.

**Feb. 3, 2016** – Former Oakland Raiders quarterback Ken Stabler, who died in July 2015 of colon cancer, is diagnosed post-humously with CTE by researchers at Boston University.

**March 14, 2016** – For the first time, a senior NFL official publicly acknowledges a connection between football and CTE.

**July 25, 2016** – The NFL and NFL Players' Association (NFLPA) implement a new policy to enforce concussion protocol.

**Sept. 14, 2016 –** Goodell announces an initiative intended to increase the safety of the game, specifically by preventing, diagnosing and treating head injuries.

**July 25, 2017** – A study published in *JAMA* identifies CTE in 99% of deceased NFL players' brains that were donated to scientific research—110 out of 111 former NFL players.

**Sept. 21, 2017** – Attorney Jose Baez tells reporters that results from tests performed on the brain of Aaron Hernandez, the former New England Patriots tight end who was convicted in 2015 of murder, showed a "severe case" of CTE.

**Nov. 10, 2017** – Researchers publish in the journal *Neurosurgery*, what they say is the first case of a living person identified with CTE.

# Technology and Gadgets to Help Prevent Sport Injuries and Improve Performance

by Brittany Maguire

From smart helmets and mouthguards to digital ski and running instructors, we've listed some of the top technologies and gadgets available to help prevent sports injuries and improve performance.



# **Smart Helmets**

A number of companies are working on technologies to prevent and reduce concussions in football. Protective sports equipment developer Riddell recently introduced its Insite Training Tool (ITT), a football helmet impact data analysis system built to protect players with individualized training that aims to decrease the risk of concussions.

# Hypervolt

The Hypervolt is a cordless state-of-the-art vibration massage device that is used by the world's best athletes daily. This lightweight, easy-to-use device, helps relieve muscle soreness and stiffness, improves range of motion, promotes circulation, and accelerates warmup and recovery.





# Carv

Lessons are great, but you can't have a ski instructor with you all the time. Developed alongside Olympians and professional skiers, Carv is the world's first wearable technology that perfects your skiing in real-time. You can analyze your form after each run and improve your technique as you ski with audio coaching.

# **Smart Mouthguard**

The Impact Monitor Mouthguard by Prevent Biometrics accurately detects potential concussion-causing impacts in real-time, giving athletes and caregivers the information they need to make sports safer. For every head impact, including above threshold ones, the Prevent system shows the exact time and magnitude of the impact, as well as what part of the head was hit and the direction of the impact, and records the information to sideline personnel with the Prevent Team App.







# Lumo Run

The Lumo Run may seem unassuming, but this little device can be extremely beneficial for improving your run and help you become more efficient. Lumo Run measures cadence, bounce, pelvic rotation and drop, and braking while you run, providing feedback on how you can improve your form. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced runner, the Lumo Run can help you work toward your goals.

# Lumos

This next generation bike helmet goes out of its way to make sure you're seen when cycling thanks to integrated LED lights with brake and turn signals. Lumos is controlled via a wireless remote that mounts to the handlebar. With the tap of a button, other drivers can see your next move. The helmet also senses when you're slowing down and turns all the lights on back of your helmet to a solid red, giving the cars behind you an extra heads up.





# Muse Headband

Muse, a lightweight headband and app, is your personal meditation assistant. Complete with seven finely calibrated sensors, Muse monitors your brain activity during meditation and gives you accurate, real-time feedback on what's happening in your brain when you meditate.



# /// WORKING TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE IN '/// /// AND AROUND VEHICLES '//

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by Michael J. Swanson

he New Year is a great time to reflect on the past year and determine what went well and what can be improved upon in your life, including your personal finances. Here are a few ideas to help you set your financial New Year's resolutions for 2019.

# 1 Get organized.

It can be difficult and overwhelming to set your financial goals if you do not have an organizational system in place for your finances. It can be healthy to set aside some time at the end of the year to get yourself organized for the New Year.

It is important to be able to locate your financial documents when you need them. Consider getting a filing cabinet or filing folders to place all your bills, receipts and other documents so you can find them when needed. You may also want to consider going paperless by scanning documents as soon as you receive them and filing them in a designated, secure place on your computer.

If you are a person who occasionally forgets to make payments on time, set up automatic payments when you can and take some time to set reminders on your phone or mark on your calendar when bills are due for the entire year.

Analyze your spending choices from the year prior and determine if any changes should be made.

In order to set financial goals, it is important to evaluate

what is going well and what is not. One of my favorite sayings is "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." Once you have your finances organized, go through your records to analyze your spending habits. For example, do you buy coffee from a coffee shop twice per day or have a TV subscription that you do not use? It can be helpful to look at the areas where you are spending the most to figure out where money could be saved. You may find that you can save money each month by making small adjustments like cancelling

unused subscriptions or waking up earlier to prepare your coffee at home.

# Create a budget.

After you have evaluated your spending habits, consider creating a realistic budget for the year. Write down your income and expenses, and create a plan for how you are going to spend your money.

There are even smartphone apps that can help you stay on track throughout the year so your financial resolutions are not quickly forgotten. Apps like Mint and Clarity Money can assist you in creating a budget and staying on track.

## Make a point to save money each month.

It is important to save money each month. Creating targeted savings accounts can be beneficial. You can create an emergency fund, vacation fund, new car fund, a retirement fund, or whatever fits best with your financial goals. Determine how much you want to put into your saving account and how frequently you want to do so. Your employer may be able to make direct deposits into the various accounts for you with each pay cycle. Having a savings plan can give you peace of mind and financial freedom and flexibility.

## Set specific financial goals.

Set specific goals for what you want to accomplish financially. Make sure the goals you set are realistic. They should have a distinct timeline and can be long-term or short term. After you have thought about your goals, write them down and create a plan for how you are going to accomplish them. Then, set reminders so that you frequently check your performance against your goals.

I hope these tips will help you make 2019 your best financial year yet! IS



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AWARENESS. RESEARCH. EDUCATION. OUTREACH.



by Tatum O'Brien

ccording to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines have been subjected to years of widespread testing, and are safe and effective in providing ongoing protection against cancers triggered by the virus.

Although more than 100 countries have approved HPV vaccine programs for females and more are extending the recommendations to include males between the ages of 9 and 26, there is still controversy surrounding these universal vaccine programs.

## What is HPV?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in both sexes, with more than 6.2 million new cases are diagnosed in the U.S. alone each year. Worldwide, HPV infection is responsible for almost half a million cases of cancer and over 250,000 deaths each year. Many HPV infections are asymptomatic and subclinical in nature, but some have been found to cause cervical, penile, anogenital, vulvar, vaginal, and oropharyngeal cancers. For females, the risk of cervical cancer and the potential for prevention of the disease encouraged widespread adoption of the vaccine in 2006, and the rise of genital lesions, as well as cancer of the penis, anus genitals in males has prompted the expansion of the vaccine to both sexes in 2009.

#### An Ethical Dilemma

For some parents, HPV vaccination is an ethical dilemma, because they see it as potentially encouraging sexual contact at earlier ages. This is the basis for the "moral, religious, political, economic, and sociocultural arguments" discouraging mandatory administration

of the vaccine. Opponents also cite the inherent right of parents to make decisions regarding their children's sexual health. But as public education improves, government-mandated vaccination programs increase, and the benefits of vaccination related to cancer prevention outweighs these controversial issues, the adoption of universal HPV vaccination continues to increase.

For female patients, the belief that the vaccine will prevent cervical cancer seems to carry more weight than the opposing view that vaccination will promote earlier sexual activity and riskier sexual practices. According to one study published in the journal *Pediatrics*, the most frequent reasons parents went against physician recommendations and did not vaccinate teenage girls were either a lack of knowledge about the vaccine or that the girls were not sexually active and therefore did not need to be vaccinated.

Since overwhelming evidence favors administration of the HPV vaccine to prevent cancers caused by HPV infection and the risks of the vaccine are comparable to that of other vaccination programs, vaccination rates are increasing, according to CDC data. In 2017, nearly half of all adolescents in the U.S. were up-to-date on the HPV vaccine, and about 66 percent between the ages of 13 and 17 had received the first dose in the vaccination series. Still, 51 percent have not completed the three shot series and vaccination rates were 11 percent lower among those living in rural locations than in urban areas.

Despite the fact that many states appear to endorse the administration of the HPV vaccine, only three—Virginia, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia—require vaccination to attend school, and opponents continue to believe that HPV vaccination is sending a mixed message to young people regarding premarital sex and risky sexual behaviors. IS



# Seven Common Skin Problems and How to Fix Them

by Margaret Murray

ith the colder season, our skin tends to be overlooked. We worry about the sun throughout the summer but these months bring true challenges to keeping our skin feeling and looking its best. With some planning, your skin can look and feel great as you welcome the New Year.

#### Dry Skin

Lack of humidity in the winter is a real challenge. Dryness in the air means less moisture for our skin to absorb. The easiest way to ensure that your skin stays hydrated is to apply a good lotion within five minutes of a warm—not hot—shower or bath. Lotion works best if it contains little water. The pretty bottles with fun fragrances are primarily water-based and actually pull moisture from your skin, requiring more lotion and frequent application. Look for lotions that are hypoallergenic, fragrance-free and noncomedogenic.

# Frequent Skin Blemishes

When the holidays arrive, we tend to make poor eating and drinking decisions. We get out of our good habits of eating apples and drinking bottles of water. We replace those habits with cookies, eggnog, and coffee with alcohol. These replacement foods are poor substitutes for our good diet. While we tend to experience heartburn and other problems chalked up as the "flu" or the "bug," it is often our poor choices that cause our systems to become irregular. Our food choices will also be obvious in our skin. When we eat poorly, our skin develops blemishes that appear quickly and never seem to disappear. Stick with your healthy choices and treat yourself to the seasonal goodies, rather than replacing all of your good choices. Have a glass of water and a fruit or vegetable before heading to that holiday get-together.

#### Rashes

Holidays are compressed into a six-week span during which we want to enjoy every moment, remember past happiness, and create wonderful memories for the future. This includes shopping, baking, budgeting, entertaining, cleaning, and working. This kind of stress can show in our skin's health. Large rashes appear overnight causing us to slow down, take Benadryl, and call the doctor for even

more help. Get ahead of that stress. Make a list early; what is most important to you and your family this year? Is it nice lighting display? Is it a cookie exchange? By choosing the most important items, you allow yourself to enjoy those activities and not feel compelled to go to every mall, to try all new recipes, and to make all dreams come true. Being relaxed and present for others is the best gift you can give. Your skin will thank you too.

## Allergies

The sister to rashes is the allergic reaction. Many people are allergic to pine—the heart of Christmas. If you get itchy at the holidays, consider the tree. If you have food allergies, make sure you bring a dish to parties you can enjoy and consider letting the hosts know of any serious food allergies which may be hidden in casseroles or dips. Do not wait for hives to ruin a party. Plan ahead.

## Flaky Skin

With dry weather, our skin tends to shed. Moisturize your skin but also wash your skin gently with an appropriate skin cleanser. You might want to scrub your skin with soap and a washcloth. For soft and dewy skin, opt instead for a gentle cleanser, like Cetaphil, and softly wash. If you really want to exfoliate, use a mild exfoliant, a soft cloth with warm water, and a thick moisturizer

#### Sore Feet

During sandal season, we work to keep our soles smooth and clean. But winter boots and moisture wreak havoc for our feet. Take care of your feet with a pumice stone in the shower and moisturizer at night so your soles will be less likely to crack. Your feet may not be on display, but they will treat you well while you trudge through the snow or the mall.

#### Cracked Hands

Get your gloves ready before you go outside. Place them by the back door or store them in your coat. Put them on before you go outside. Antibacterial gel is important but the alcohol in it dries our skin. After use, apply a good hand cream, like Aveeno. Keep lotion in your cup holder and apply when en route to work. Put your gloves back on to seal in the moisture. Is



by Matt Devoti



hen the sun goes down, extra dangers arise on the road. Dark conditions are not ideal for human eyes, and as we age, our ability to see clearly at night deteriorates.

The National Safety Council estimates that a 50-year-old driver may need twice as much light to see comfortably over a 30-year-old driver. Limited light can affect depth perception, color perception, contrast sensitivity and peripheral vision. From compromised visibility to impaired drivers, there are plenty of hazards on the road at night. In fact, it is estimated that traffic fatalities are three times higher at night than during the day.

To stay safe while driving at night, follow these tips from the Department of Motor Vehicles:

- » Get your vision checked regularly. As we age, it is natural to experience vision changes that affect our visibility in low light situations, such as dusk, dawn and nighttime. Some drivers may be able to read street signs clearly during the day, but the cover of darkness may hinder visibility. Get regular check-ups for conditions like macular degeneration, cataracts and glaucoma.
- » Avoid wearing tinted sunglasses at night, though they may be helpful during dusk and dawn when the sun is still out.
- » Try anti-glare lenses. If you wear glasses, this can reduce strain from exterior lights.

- » Keep headlights clean and bright. Dim bulbs or cloudy covers can reduce visibility.
- » Avert your eyes from oncoming traffic. This will prevent the temporary blindness that comes from your eyes trying to adjust to the bright lights.
- » Keep your windshield clean. Sometimes dust can accumulate on the inside of your windshield that you may not notice during the day. This dust can catch the light from oncoming cars' headlights and make it difficult for you to see.
- » Dim the lights on your dash. Bright interior lights can hinder your visibility of things outside your vehicle.
- » Never drive impaired. Never get behind the wheel if you are under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any medications that can cause drowsiness.
- » Avoid drowsy driving. As we age, our sleep patterns can change. When you get behind the wheel, make sure you are well rested.
- » Avoid distractions. Distracted driving is anything that takes your attention away from the primary task of driving. Avoid cell phone use, texting, eating, drinking, talking with passengers, setting navigation and using any invehicle technologies. IS

# Get Up and Go!

# 7 Ways to Establish a Healthy Morning Routine

by Lily Grace

e've all worked with that one person—the one who rises with the sun and sends their first emails at 4:30 AM. Whether this is your goal or not, there is something to be said for starting your day off right and establishing a healthy morning routine. While not simple, it can be very worthwhile.

Here are seven tips for getting set with a new morning routine, courtesy of My Fitness Pal:

SET YOUR ALARM AN HOUR EARLIER

The first step to starting a healthy morning routine is actually, you know, getting up. As much as you might hate to hear it, setting the tone for a healthy and productive day starts with not hitting snooze. Making the effort to get up earlier really does help the early bird get the worm—research has found that early risers are more productive, happier and have lower BMIs.

HAVE A DRINK

When you wake up, have a glass of water waiting for you on your bedside table. Drinking 16 ounces first thing in the morning not only rehydrates you but also helps kick constipation, temporarily suppresses your appetite and kick-starts your metabolism.

START WITH AN EASY WIN

Research shows that our willpower peaks in the early waking hours. With that in mind, start your day with something you can easily accomplish—especially if you're not a morning person. If you love getting a good sweat in yoga, switch to the a.m. class instead of going after work. Putting something you enjoy at the top of your to-do list will make it that much easier to capitalize on your morning burst of willpower.

HIT THE GYM FIRST

Yes, waking up in time to make that 6 AM spin class can seem like cruel and unusual punishment—but including exercise in your morning routine really is better for your health than hitting the gym after work. Not only will you feel. In addition to feeling super accomplished by the time you arrive at the office, studies also show that morning exercise routines help you get a better night's sleep and burn more calories during your sweat session.

GET OUTSIDE

To make the early rise a little easier, get outside—or at least open the curtains if you can't step out into the fresh air. Exposure to daylight resets your body's circadian rhythm. In other words, it helps you start your day feeling alert and energized rather than groggy and cranky.

6 EAT BREAKFAST

Not only does eating in the a.m. jump-start your metabolism for the day, studies show that those who eat a healthy morning meal make better food choices all day long. One study found that breakfast skippers were particularly likely to consume more calories from fat throughout the day.

MEDITATE

To round out your morning routine, spend 15 minutes meditating. Not only is meditation a proven way to reduce stress, increase your multitasking skills and stimulate your parasympathetic nervous system, it will also make sitting in traffic on your morning commute way easier to handle. IS



# Is CTE Genetic? Some Studies Say Yes

#### by Florence Murray

ith a rise in the number of deaths of professional football players over the past five years has come a steady growth of awareness of a brain condition known as CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy), a neurodegenerative disease characterized by changes in thinking, mood or behavior that progresses overtime and, in severe cases, leads to dementia.

It used to be that a concussion was "just a concussion," a blow to the head that resulted in a few days' rest. However, given the deaths of high-profile football players, such as Hall of Famer Junior Seau, who took his own life, the National Football League is now finally taking such situations more seriously.

With this, the general public is now more aware of CTE and the other activities that could be related (due to repetitive concussions)—including soccer, basketball, wrestling and baseball, as well as from repetitive brain trauma, such as that experienced by soldiers returning from war.

Previously, the belief had been that after a concussion, a person needed only a very short period of time to be cleared, and without lasting symptoms, could return to play.

However, we now know that the brain does not heal as quickly as originally believed. Nowadays, a series of cognitive tests must be given—with time between each—to ensure that an athlete is truly ready to return to play.

Unfortunately for some, this new information has come too late.

#### Is it in the Genes?

At this point, there is no known genetic factor that could cause some individuals to develop CTE. There has been recent speculation—based on a small 2018 study of only 86 Caucasian American football players, on whom autopsies were conducted—that there may be a gene that protects some players from developing the same degree of CTE or dementia.

However, many red flags arise when trying to take that information to determine who might be affected even after years of concussive blows to the head.

The biggest limitations with this type of is the lack of control group. In addition. The autopsies were also limited to players

whose surviving family agreed to participate.

As such, the results were more likely to be from families who had seen traits that worried them and knew to ask for an autopsy. Beyond those concerns, however, is that the variation in the TMEM106B gene in question, rs3173615(G), which is relatively common even though it is a minor allele, is only correlated to a "somewhat less neuroinflammation and an increase synaptic protein density."

In lay terms, it found that there was a little less swelling in the tissue in the central nervous system and less ability for brain signals to be received, and that this difference was only noted in players whose autopsies were positive for CTE.

In other words, there was no decreased likelihood of developing CTE even if the variation was present, but the symptoms were less severe.

Newer studies are also looking at the possible role of a genetic predisposition based on the apolipoprotein E (APO E) gene, which comes in several variations—one of which is the APOE4 allele.

Among Alzheimer's sufferers, 40% have this variation on autopsy, but the link is also questionable because autopsies of these brains demonstrated greater amyloid beta plaques than found in any of the CTE autopsies.

#### The Future

The best hope is offered in the work being conducted jointly by Harvard Medical School and Boston University. The two institutions are examining both APOE4 and an aggregate tau risk gene score detected by PET to determine if individuals have predisposing factors. The important distinction between this latest work and the prior two studies discussed above is that the tau factors are derived from studies based on thousands of healthy aging individuals.

This work marks the closest the scientific and medical community has come to understanding the possible genetic markers for who may recover after rest versus who is at risk for permanent brain damage and ultimately CTE. IS







# **Is ADHD**Different in Girls?

by Lily Grace

raditionally thought of as something more related to boys, most people don't consider that girls can have just has much difficulty with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

In fact, ADHD is often referred to as a "hidden disorder" in girls, and with good reason. Most girls with ADHD have the inattentive type, which means that they have problems focusing but are not hyperactive and impulsive, according to childmind.org.

But even those who are hyperactive and impulsive present less obvious symptoms than boys, so it often goes unnoticed or unacknowledged. Instead of a diagnosis, girls with ADHD may receive get criticism from parents, teachers, and peers, and the fallout takes a serious toll on self-esteem.

Girls with ADHD sometimes struggle to make and maintain friendships, and the relentless complexities of the social world can be overwhelming. Dr. Patricia Quinn, co-founder and director of the National Center for Girls and Women with ADHD, recommends helping girls with ADHD find social outlets that make them feel comfortable and play to their strengths. "If your daughter is socially

awkward, find environments that are socially accepting—places that are more supervised and focused on kindness and treating people well and self-acceptance," she explains.

Encourage your daughter to get involved with afterschool activities—clubs that focus on her interests or group activities that allow for individual space, like art classes or book groups—to help her learn to feel safe, comfortable and confident in a social setting. Likewise, if your daughter is impulsive or hyper, social situations where she can release some energy, like theater or sports, can make things go more smoothly.

Because boys are more likely to be diagnosed, even though many girls have ADHD, it's easy for girls to sometimes feel alienated. Help your daughter normalize and legitimize her experiences by connecting her with other girls her age who have ADHD. Check out books about girls with ADHD and try reading and talking about them together. It also might help to find an older girl with ADHD to mentor your daughter, through school or a program. Meeting other ladies with ADHD—especially those who are open about their disorder, can make girls feel less alone and more hopeful. IS

# Why ADHD in Girls May Be Overlooked

ADHD symptoms in girls may be more subtle, which can lead to a diagnosis later in life. Here are some points to consider, courtesy of childmind.org:

- » More girls have only the inattentive symptoms of ADHD, and written off as dreamy or ditzy.
- » If they have the hyperactive-impulsive symptoms, they are more likely to be seen as pushy, hyper-talkative or overemotional.
- » Impulsive girls may have trouble being socially appropriate and struggle to make and keep friends.
- » They often work so hard to compensate for their weaknesses that they are able to hide their challenges.
- » The growing awareness, as they get older, that they have to work much harder than their peers without ADHD is very damaging to their self-esteem.
- » Girls who are chronically hard on themselves about their mistakes may be struggling with thoughts that they're stupid or broken.





# "I Choose"

anti-bullying campaign

The "I Choose" campaign is a challenge and movement for change. It's about recognizing bullying for what it is: a choice. What you say or do to someone has the power to affect that person's life. The campaign challenges people to stop, think and remember that their choices matter.

# What do you choose?

We believe that there are five powerful choices that kids and teens can make to counter bullying:

Friendship
Kindness
Respect
Compassion
Love



# How you can be a part of the "I Choose" movement

# Teachers

If you are interested in incorporating the "I Choose" Anti-Bullying Challenge into your classroom or school, please visit whatdoyouchoose.org and get signed up today.

# Youth

Whether you were the victim or you know someone who was, your story has the power to shift someone's perspective. Visit whatdoyouchoose.org to share your story and make your choice.

# Supporters

Spread the message by purchasing an "I Choose" bracelet for yourself or a child in your life.

LIFESTYLE

# How to Beat the Winter "Blues"

by Margaret Murray

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ver wonder why bears hibernate? Why birds fly south and why so many from the Midwest winter in Florida?
Winters can be tough—cold, wet, windy and, most of all, gray. When daylight savings moved later in the year, day became night. Driving home in the dark saps energy, makes driving more difficult, and encourages a short night when you finally get home. Some easy steps can make winter, if not joyful, at least tolerable.

#### **Rise and Shine**

Start the day with your coffee, tea or juice by savoring that first sip. Smell the coffee, enjoy the taste, take a deep breath. After that first cup, take time to stretch. Even extending your arms overhead and shrugging your shoulders can energize you. When you take the dog outside, look at the sunrise or relish that bit of sunshine. Use the time outside to walk the length of your driveway a couple times and get in some easy steps before the daily hustle.

#### The Commute

Before you get in the car, make sure you take out the wrappers, the empties and the coupons. Put in a bottle of water, make sure you have a blanket and a windshield scraper, and plug in your charger. Download some podcasts or a book from Audible to listen on the trip. Many drivers believe books are for long-distance trips. Listening to an author you enjoy makes the little trips enjoyable. A few minutes of a good book will engage your mind, keep you from worrying about the driver who cut you off or trying to shave a few minutes off your commute. You have heard it said, it's about the journey, not the destination. This is especially true with your work commute.

#### Lunch

During the winter months, we do not have the fresh local produce we enjoy through the summer. That does not mean we cannot enjoy our meals. Try new items that you have overlooked like naan and baba ganoush, or arugula with goat cheese and pears. Like apple pie? Slice an apple and sprinkle it with cinnamon.

Grocery stores offer so many choices if we just take the time to consider what we might like. The important point is to break from your work even for 10-20 minutes, to talk to friends, or to get out of your workspace. With the long, dark days, it is critical to recognize that the day seems longer and a mini-break during the day is essential.

#### **Evenings**

Ever get home and think, I'm just going to eat dinner and go to bed? Ever think that on a Friday? We would never think that on a summer day. When you arrive home, turn on the lights. Turn on music or a television show you enjoy. Try some top chef recipes. Make a plan to clear the kitchen counter and make the coffee for the next morning. Clean out your bag of the stuff you brought home and hang up your coat. Go through your mail when you bring it in the house and immediately sort it—recycle, bills, or read. For your bills, put the stamp and return sticker on the envelope to be paid during the weekend. Take time to read to your children, to play a game with the family, or to read part of a book.

When it is time for bed, make it a ritual. Wash your face, maybe take your shower the night before work, put away your shoes and yours clothes, and clear your bathroom counter. Maybe watch a sitcom that you've seen before or the Earth on the Discovery Channel. The key is to watch something distracting that does not make your heart race. Use your iPad if you enjoy it but limit games, Facebook scrolling, and emails to less than 30 minutes. Set a timer on the tv and start to doze.

#### **Long-Term Plans**

If you are lucky, you can plan a trip somewhere warm. If you do, look at the options ahead of time to enjoy the anticipation of the vacation. During the dark winter months, start planning your flower beds, your holidays—Memorial Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. Think about guest lists and plan menus.

Savor the rest that winter brings with thoughts of the energy summer demands. Think like a bear.  $\slash$ 





by Judson Graham

he goal of any negotiation is to reach an agreement.
While each party in a negotiation may take a different route, the negotiation is a collaboration to reach a common destination. In order to be successful in any negotiation, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of what your goals are and to strategize the most appropriate and effective means to reach those goals. Before any salary negotiation, you must commit significant time to map out the presentation that you will make to your employer and form a strategic plan to overcome the objections that you are likely to face.

Research before you determine the salary that you will ask for. There are countless websites that provide "insider" information about the salaries paid at many companies. Understanding the range of salaries paid by competitors can help you to gauge the overall market and guide your salary demands accordingly. Resist the urge in a salary negotiation to talk about the salaries paid by competitors and trust that the employer is aware of market salary range for your position.

Begin your negotiation by expressing your appreciation for the opportunity to work for your employer. Be armed with concrete examples of why you want to be an employee of your company and what it is about the company that you most value.

**Document your value** to illustrate that it is in the company's best interest to pay the salary you have requested. In the weeks leading up to your salary negotiation, build a list that identifies, with specificity, the value that you will add to justify the salary that you are demanding.

Anticipate the objections that you will encounter and be armed with responses to overcome these objections. If you cannot anticipate what your employer will say to attempt to keep your salary lower than you may wish, then you are unprepared for the negotiation.

Remember that your salary negotiation is a collaboration and that the employer wants to work with you, to the extent that it is possible. If you enter a salary negotiation anticipating a fight, then you will lose. The negotiation should be collegial and friendly, but don't be afraid to firmly assert your rationale for the salary you are seeking.

Consider the "big picture" when you negotiate. If your current role does not command the salary that you would like, or if your employer has constraints on what they can offer you, take the opportunity to discuss your long term goals. You can always leverage a salary negotiation to learn what steps are necessary in order for you to build the skill set or get the experience necessary for a higher-paying role down the road. IS



# Managing Finances: Where to Start for a Brain Injured Loved One

by John Bair



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ragedy can upend a family in many ways. For those dealing with brain injuries, for example, each comes with unique challenges.

The initial focus for most families is healing; can I get my loved one back like they were before the injury? Under miraculous circumstances, there is nothing more blessing than a complete recovery.

However, many people only make a partial recovery, and thus face varying degrees of challenges associated with their brain injury for the rest of their life. These challenges can range from aggression, mood disorder, speech impairment, motor function, hearing and visual degradation, and overall impaired cognitive function.

As with all catastrophic injury, the healing process typically consumes the time and resources of a family completely. The first profound financial step is to realize that you are going to want assistance, and from someone you trust.

Healthcare costs, rehab, and the maze of complexities that come with current health care treatment in America are challenging enough for most families. In most instances, out-of-pocket expenses are often not even realized for years. You will want someone to help you navigate the financials of these situations that you are likely encountering for the first time.

# Circle of Advocacy

It's important to put a legal and financial team in place early on. When constructing your support team, a few good places to start are with a lawyer if there is negligence, a settlement expert if there is an ongoing lawsuit, a financial planner, and a health care expert. The Brain Injury Association of America (www.biausa.org) has a wealth of resources.

## **Legal Considerations**

Depending on the depth and complexity of the brain injury, the following are real potential solutions for a family long term:

Domestic Asset Protection Trusts can provide a legal framework that empowers a family to be in charge of the legal and financial mechanics. These trusts are typically established in South Dakota; however, many states offer similar asset protection.

Special Needs Trusts are an equally prevalent legal trust that will protect the client's assets and keep them eligible for government benefits, such as Medicaid. These trusts come with some tough decisions, however; if Medicaid is the only source of health care coverage, and you need either long-term rehabilitation or in-home attendant care, these costs can erode a family's finances quickly. A special needs trust protects the assets of the brain-injured family member.

Limited and durable **Powers of Attorney** may be considered, giving a spouse or sibling powers of decision-making for financial considerations and health care. Deciding who should have these powers is a standard family decision, but certainly not an easy one.

#### **Financial Impact**

Most families face significant financial strain during these times. It is vital to have a few financial experts that you may rely upon for life. If you are in litigation over how the accident or injury happened, it will also be important to have an expert settlement planner on your financial team to consider structured settlements, health care trusts, and evaluate lifetime budgeting.

A key ingredient to lifelong management is having a support system that you trust. The financial consultants you rely on should have experience not just in managing money for the long term, but in coordinating all of your financial needs.

In providing advice to families about building a financial and legal framework around their family and insured loved ones, the primary caregiver, spouse, child, or sibling can still stay in charge. He or she will always be the best advocate for the injured party; hiring experts, trustees, tax professionals, and/or settlement planners does not mean giving up authority. This type of complete planning allows the family to focus most of their energy on recovery and quality of life, while leveraging the expertise of people experienced to provide the type of advice they may need. IS



# legal examiner

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# How to Be a More Patient Person



by Margaret M. Murray

uring the long winter months, patience really is a virtue. The days are short and gray, and snow and ice are always in the forecast. It is the perfect time and place to develop patience. For the spring. For the summer months. For flowers and fireflies.

Patience is a skill like any other. It has to be developed and practiced. In the age of smartphones, we rarely have to wait for a response, for a package, for a movie. We simply use our smartphone and—ta da—we have what we want. We do not often have to be patient, consequently, we become impatient easily.

There are many ways to develop patience. Making a list of tasks, events and expectations helps develop a game plan for how to reach those results. If you want a great herb garden, now is the time to read gardening catalogues to determine what grows best in your area. Start looking at recipes to see what herbs you would realistically use and enjoy. Look at photos to determine what would work well with your house color or your landscape.

If you want to run a 5k in the summer, it is the perfect time to begin working out. There is plenty of time until the first race and most gyms offer great deals in January. Look at the race clubs in your area. Joining a club may be just the motivation you need to develop this longer term goal.

Perhaps, most impactful area where patience is lost is our communication with each other. We are less thoughtful about our questions when we want an immediate response. We often fail to consider what the message says to the recipient. If we text during dinnertime, are we interrupting a conversation on the other end? Think about the last time you received a letter. Did you open it the moment you opened the mailbox? Or did you wait until you were sitting in a good spot, giving it the attention it deserved? When you wrote your most recent letter on paper, did you consider the other person's perspective? Writing letters takes practice and insight. It takes patience to develop thoughts and to wait for a response.

One of the easiest ways to be patient is to weave a list of tasks, deadlines and projects. If you are distracted by another meeting, letter or project, you will not focus on the lapse of time. The ability to work on many items allows time to pass seamlessly. This is not the same concept as multi-tasking, which involves working on many items simultaneously. For instance, if you are enjoying a great book but arrive earlier than a friend to a meeting point, you have time to read without becoming impatient. If you are anxious about a response to a proposal, take time while waiting to be constructive and to free your mind from worry. Focus on the matter in front of you rather than watching your herbs grow, or waiting for your text to be returned.

Patience is mindfulness, listening to silence, seeing the view, and hearing others. Being present in a conversation or focused on one task at a time creates pace in our lives. When you are patient, you will find that others appreciate your kindness and willingness to be present for them. IS



raveling alone can seem daunting, or downright scary for some. But for those willing to go beyond their travel comfort zone, the rewards can be plenty. It can build self-confidence and make you more comfortable "in your own skin." It can offer experiences that are seen through one's own eyes only, rather than filtered through the eyes of others. And in the days of 24-hour contact with others and devices, it offers the opportunity to truly appreciate solitude and silence. However, there are some important things to keep in mind as one sets forth solo. Here are ten:

- Tell friends and family what your itinerary is. Once you have your itinerary finalized, share it with friends and family. Also, make plans with one or two people to have regular 'check-ins" so that those who care about you can make sure your trip is going as planned and you are safe.
- Don't overschedule. Trying to do too much in too little time can really take a toll on how much you enjoy your trip, particularly when you are responsible for everything from planning to execution of every detail. Know your limits, and

plan excursions and activities accordingly. You'll want to look back and reflect upon the experiences you had, rather than reviewing a check-list of places and experiences you managed to "fit in."

- Learn to be dishonest. That's right, learn to lie. That is, when you encounter people along the way, don't tell them you are traveling alone or where you are staying until you are completely comfortable with whoever you are interacting with. Even then, don't share more information than you need to.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Be in control of your faculties at all times. It's not that you can't go out and have a good time, but if you go too far, you can make yourself vulnerable to those who might want to take advantage of you.
- Carefully consider your lodging options. Many solo travelers are drawn to hostels or guesthouses, because those types of communal lodging options can make it easy to meet fellow travelers. But also consider more traditional hotels if you think safety may be an issue in a particular location, or if you



want a quiet, comfortable lodging experience. Hotels also tend to more often prioritize conveniences over the alternatives.

- Carefully consider money issues. It's always important to have some cash on hand for incidentals and minor emergencies but look carefully at how to access currency for your destinations. Exchanging money in foreign countries can be very expensive, even if you are using known, trusted sources such as airport exchanges and services such as Western Union. The transaction fees can kill you. If you don't want to carry a lot of cash on you, as many don't feel comfortable doing, look for a credit card that charges small or no fees for foreign transactions. Carry that card with you and use it when you can. Have some cash with you for transactions where the card is not accepted.
- Fnjoy your own schedule. One major perk of solo travel is you get to be the master of your own destiny. Set a daily schedule that works for you, travel when you want, sight see when you want, and relax when you want.

- Prepare to entertain yourself. If writing is your thing, keep your journal with you so can write when the mood strikes. If sketching or painting is your thing, keep your supplies handy for when you come across the perfect landscape. If reading is it for you, keep a good book handy for entertaining yourself at that café lunch or on that perfect park bench.
- Listen to your intuition. If you find yourself in a situation that just doesn't "feel right," remove yourself from it immediately until you can determine one way or another that it is safe for you.
- Have a plan B (and C). When planning accommodations and activities, have backups for each. That way, when what you have planned is not "as advertised," you are not scrambling to make sure you have your bases covered.

While traveling alone may seem intimidating, it can also be very rewarding. Don't let the potential challenges stop you; instead, plan for them and enjoy your travels. IS

# HARD The Science of CTE and the New Awareness of Concussions by Bryan Silver 30 / LIVING SAFER / VOL 10

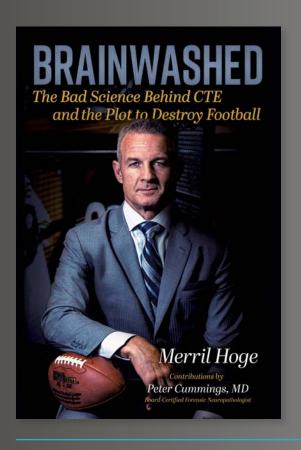
1987, the NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers drafted Merril Hoge in the 10th round—an Idaho State University graduate who had been a three-time all-conference running back. He suited up for seven seasons with the Steelers and then just five games with the Chicago Bears before a succession of incidents led to the development of post-concussion syndrome—a form of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that is caused by either a single or several concussive injuries over time. The events brought an immediate end to Hoge's playing career which put him on the path of a long and painful journey that still haunts him today.

For Hoge, it all began during a preseason game against the Kansas City Chiefs in 1994 when he suffered a concussion. Less than a week later, the team doctor cleared Hoge to play—yet, much of the evidence available now indicates he was still suffering from the head injury.

Just weeks later, he sustained another concussion on the field while playing against the Buffalo Bills. That hit was so hard that Hoge stopped breathing and went into cardiac arrest inside the locker room. He was resuscitated, but experienced major memory loss, confusion and headaches. The condition ended his football career, but the former all-star didn't give up.

Following his recovery, he embarked on a 21-year career as a sports analyst with ESPN. He wrote a book entitled, *Find A Way: Three Words That Changed My Life*, that discussed this and other health issues he's battled.

This fall, Hoge added another book to his list of accomplishments; which tackled the topic of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE. Yet, rather than condemning the sport that almost ended his life, Hoge takes a controversial stance that has many questioning what we really know about this devastating and often degenerative disease.



# A MUST READ

# BRAINWASHED: THE BAD SCIENCE BEHIND CTE AND THE PLOT TO DESTROY FOOTBALL

With a title that sounds more like a must-read for young adults than a medically credible dissertation, *Brainwashed* does offer a counterpoint as well as a personal perspective to much of the information found in mass media.

Former NFL player and author Merril Hoge sets out on a mission along with board-certified forensic neuropathologist Peter Cummings, M.D., with the intention of setting the record straight on the risks vs. the rewards of playing football:

- · Is youth football really "child abuse?"
- · Are currently cited studies actually flawed?
- What role is the media playing in many misconceptions?

Hoge is no stranger to football safety, either. He's a member of the NFL Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Committee and has worked with USA football to develop the Heads Up Safety Protocol, which teaches coaches safe playing techniques for athletes at all levels.

# WHY ARE WE SUDDENLY HEARING SO MUCH ABOUT CTE?

While CTE has been a prominent topic across current headlines, social media and even a movie starring Will Smith, there's still a lot we don't know about the disease. Recent interest can be traced to a 2005 study entitled "Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy in a National Football League Player." It was published by Bennet Omalu, M.D. a pathologist at the Allegheny County Coroner's Office in Pittsburgh, who revealed his autopsy findings from the first documented case of the long-term neurodegenerative disease occurring within a professional football player—specifically Mike Webster, of the Pittsburgh Steelers, who died in 2002.

Omalu, who was played by Will Smith in the 2015 film *Concussion*, noticed that Webster's seemingly normal looking brain tissue actually showed large accumulations of tau protein, a condition that then affected Webster's emotion, mood and executive functions.

Omalu suspected a similarity to a somewhat forgotten form of mental disorder known as dementia pugilistica—a condition first observed in boxers in the 1920s. In fact, the term chronic traumatic encephalopathy gained prominence in 1949 when a British neurologist published the research paper "Punch-Drunk Syndromes: The Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy of Boxers," which cemented the connection between the brain malady and repeated blows to the head.

At the time it was not considered to affect individuals other than boxers. Omalu not only made the correlation between football and CTE, but also opened up any and all contact sports to the possible risks of such brain injury. Thus, awareness has grown due to the doctor's groundbreaking research, however the number of confirmed cases hasn't kept pace—mainly because it's impossible to definitively diagnose the condition in a living individual.

# WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE DISEASE

Currently, analysis of brain tissue is required and there are no tests or procedures beyond the documentation of likely symptoms. Similarly, there is not a lot of definitive detail on the causation of the disease.

What can be said is that the disease is determined by a larger-than-normal presence of tau protein in the brain. It is this abnormal and permanent buildup that eventually disables neuropathways and can lead to a laundry list of clinical symptoms including memory loss, confusion, impaired judgment, aggression, anxiety, impulse control issues, depression and even attempts of suicide.

Many medical professionals warn that equating sports-related concussions to CTE doesn't take other important factors into account, such as genetics of the individual, environmental factors and past treatments or lack thereof.

Shawn Spooner, M.D., a fellowship-trained sports medicine

physician practicing in Iowa and who serves as the team physician for the U.S. Hockey League's Des Moines Buccaneers, knows all too well that treatment must be tailored to the individual.

"Those who exhibit disorders or symptoms [of post-concussion syndromes] are treated best in a multidisciplinary approach. Physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and neuropsychology are common members of a treatment team," says Spooner.

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What should be understood is CTE is not a continuation of concussion ... we simply do not know enough about CTE to definitively say how it develops.

—Dr. Shawn Spooner, Sports-Medicine Physician

# NEVER HAD A CONCUSSION? YOU MIGHT STILL BE AT RISK

For many, the thought that non-concussive head impacts, even mild ones, could cause CTE if repeated over a period of time might seem far-fetched. But not for researchers at Boston University, where a recently published study pointed the proverbial finger at routine hits to the head—even when classic signs of a concussion, such as dizziness or disorientation, are not present.

Lee E. Goldstein, M.D., the study's leader, surmises that many have chased concussions as the cause of the degenerative brain disease afflicting football players and other contact-sport athletes for more than a decade because it was the most obvious perpetrator from a very short suspect list.

Simply put, Goldstein says, "it's hits to the head that cause CTE." While a concussion might be present as well, it's not what causes CTE—most likely it is just another byproduct of the blow to the head. In testing mice, some were administered a hit to the head that took days to recover from the impact, yet no evidence of tau protein accumulation—the hallmark of CTE onset—was detected. Other mice that received a series of mild head injuries akin to what a player might experience recovered immediately with no ill effects, yet an examination days later would reveal tau protein build up.

Such new evidence goes a long way in explaining why approx. 20 percent of athletes who were found to have CTE once they passed away were never diagnosed with a concussion beforehand. This suggests that players who bounce back quickly after a head blow could actually begin over-producing the tau proteins without any knowledge of the physiological change—possibly for years before any signs of CTE are displayed.

"The overwhelming majority of people whose brains are hurt are going right back in and doing the worst thing possible: getting hit again and again," says Goldstein.

# PRO SPORTS FIGURES KNOWN TO HAVE SUFFERED FROM CTE

Because awareness first began with professional athletes, there are a lot of prominent names associated with the disease, and not all of them are football players. Athletes from other sports such as baseball, hockey and even wrestling have been affected. Recently, former U.S. women's soccer star Brandi Chastain has even announced she will donate her brain to Boston University for research into CTE.

**KEN STABLER** – NFL quarterback for the Oakland Raiders, Houston Oilers and New Orleans Saints; died in 2015 at age 69

**BUBBA SMITH** - NFL defensive end for the Baltimore Colts, Oakland Raiders and Houston Oilers; died in 2011 at age 66

**DAVE DUERSON** – NFL safety for the Chicago Bears, New York Giants and Phoenix Cardinals; died in 2011 at age 50

**RYAN FREEL** – MLB utility player for the Baltimore Orioles, Chicago Cubs, Kansas City Royals and others; died in 2012 at age 36

**STEVE MONTADOR** – NHL defense for Calgary Flames, Florida Panthers, Anaheim Ducks and more; died in 2015 at age 35

**CHRIS BENOIT** – WWF/WWE professional wrestler; died in 2007 at age of 40

# WE KNOW THE WHAT, BUT HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?

Because the presence of CTE is impossible to determine without postmortem testing, it's hard to say how much of a given population subset—football players, for example—actually has the degenerative disease, but the limited data that is available can be disturbing. One study published in the medical journal, *JAMA*, in 2017 based its findings on brains of professional football players that had been donated for scientific research. Of the 111 brains analyzed, 110 of them showed signs of chronic traumatic encephalopathy—just over 99 percent.

Such information comes with a caveat, though. While the JAMA study is the largest such study to date, its sample is still small when compared to the sheer number of professionals who have been exposed to the physical abuse of the game. Additionally, the researchers only required that submissions for study be from an individual who was exposed to repetitive head trauma during their time on the field, but it could be that family members made the decision to donate brain tissue because they had noticed CTE symptoms while the player was still living and wanted a definitive diagnosis.



I unequivocally think there's a link between playing football and CTE. I think we are going to be surprised at how common it is.

—Dr. Ann McKee, Neuropathologist

Even with such limitations, the evidence is compelling. And the study really only adds confirmation to what many have begun to suspect—that there is an undeniable connection between football and CTE.

In 2016, the NFL publicly acknowledged this for the first time, saying that a link between the sport and the disease certainly exists. A spokesperson for the League made this statement before the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce during a roundtable discussion on concussions that included the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Military, researchers, medical experts and representatives of other professional and collegiate sports organizations. The meeting led to the introduction of H.R. 2360, or the Concussion Awareness and Education Act of 2017—a positive step toward providing details on the disease to the medical and sports communities as well as the general public.

# HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, PRO-A DEADLY PROGRESSION

While it's hard to deny the CTE connection with professional football, its appearance within young adults is causing many to question the safety of youth sports programs.

In 2013, Michael Keck—a linebacker who played college ball for both the University of Missouri and Missouri State—donated his brain for study to the Boston University CTE Center. While he died of an unrelated heart condition, the Center found that he showed signs of severe CTE at the time of his death—Keck was just 25 years old.

And then there's Eric Pelly. An 18-year-old rugby player from Pittsburgh, he died from brain swelling after suffering his fourth concussion from game-play hits to the head. When doctors at the Boston University CTE Center examined his brain, they found the early signs of CTE as tau proteins were already beginning to build up.

Ann McKee, M.D., a neuropathologist at Boston University and the director of the CTE Center, believes there is an unequivocal link between playing football and CTE.

To date, she has been able to examine brain tissue of 55 college football players, 45 of which showed signs of CTE. Additionally, she's examined the brains of 26 high school players and found CTE within six of them. The 2017 JAMA study previously mentioned also examined youth players and found that three of 14 high school players and 48 of the 53 college players displayed evidence of CTE.

Another neuroscientist at Boston University, former professional wrestler Chris Nowinski, notes that youth football needs to take notice and take action—possibly following in the footsteps of other athletic organizations. For instance, the U.S. Soccer Federation forbids children younger than 11 from heading the ball and USA Hockey has outlawed checking in the sport for those younger than 13.

A sufferer of post-concussion syndrome and a former award-winning defensive tackle at Harvard, Nowinski doesn't feel the gridiron game deserves any slack; "Football has been open season on your child's head from the time they're allowed to play. Hopefully, this will inspire changes for the next generation of football players."

# **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

While there still needs to be further research and more data analysis, the issue of chronic traumatic encephalopathy is undeniably a problem for our professional athletes and our children. As the numbers grow, it's important to understand that heightened awareness is a giant step toward controlling the prevalence of CTE.

Everything from medical protocols to professional equipment are being re-evaluated and refined with brain injury prevention in mind. Brain health education is moving forward as well, with a focus on recognizing warning signs.

#### GENE VARIANT LINKED TO RISK OF CTE

After studying the brains of more than seven dozen professional football players, scientific researchers announced in late 2018 that they had identified a variant of a gene that plays a role in the severity of CTE.

Specifically TMEM106B, possessors of the gene variation are reported to be 2.5 times more likely to suffer more drastic symptoms of CTE when compared to others without the gene but similar levels of past head trauma.

Researchers suspect more genes contribute to the activation and severity of CTE in humans, and that this is just the first step toward future testing for and treating the disease.



Finally, one of the most promising future developments is the push to develop a CTE test that can tell if an individual is in the early stages of developing the condition.

"You've really got to have a living diagnosis scan in order to make much headway on understanding the disease," says Julian Bailes, M.D., a neurosurgeon at Chicago's NorthShore University HealthSystem and a researcher who's on the hunt for such a solution.

Unfortunately for now, our information on CTE is all after the fact. But as the science on chronic traumatic encephalopathy becomes more clear, we will be able to make better decisions

involving recognition, treatment and prevention of the disease. Ultimately, it comes down to whether or not one participates or allows a family member to participate in sports that pose such a risk.

As we learn more about this disease, it's important to realize that CTE is not merely a continuation of past concussions and that the connection goes beyond the gridiron game.

"It's soccer; it's ice hockey; it's wrestling," says Bailes. "It's any sport that has the potential for collision and head impact." Something to keep in mind in order to maintain a healthy brain. Is

# DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS FOR CTE

by Frederick Schenk



high stakes class action lawsuit, filed on behalf of thousands of former players against the National Football League, has raised awareness about the dangers associated with multiple concussions, including the potential for Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease.

As a result, public concern about CTE, which can cause depression, erratic behavior, memory loss, impaired judgment, aggression and progressive dementia has mounted, especially following the suicides of several former professional athletes, involving former Pittsburgh Steelers lineman Terry Long, New England Patriots player Aaron Hernandez, San Diego Chargers linebacker Junior Seau, Steelers linebacker Adrian Robinson, Jr. and Chicago Bears safety Dave Duerson—all of whom were found to have CTE.

Currently, CTE can only be officially diagnosed through autopsies, but researchers are working toward a breakthrough and have used a PET scan—an imaging test that uses radioactive tracer dye to show how organs and tissues are working to identify abnormal tau proteins in living football players. However, there is still much work to be done on that front.

As a result, there is a fundamental problem with the diagnostic tools—which entail neuropsychological testing along with neurologic medical evaluation—currently utilized by the NFL to diagnose and classify the levels of the disease. Under a \$1 billion concussion settlement reached with the NFL, many retired players will receive an untrue medical diagnosis with minimal followup or treatment.

#### **WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM ENTAIL?**

To qualify for any recovery, players must be preapproved with a brain injury diagnosis through a Baseline Assessment Program (BAP)—a neuropsychological testing program that screens for

signs of cognitive impairment. Sadly, this system has been beset with problems, with 70 percent of claims denied or sent back with requests for more information.

BAP is the key mechanism by which a player's claim is handled. Under the BAP, every retired NFL player who has earned at least a half of an eligible season can be seen by an independent board-certified neuropsychologist or board-certified neurologist to receive a cognitive assessment that scans for neurocognitive impairment.

The medical evaluations available to retired players include the baseline level examination, the identification of any symptoms of cognitive decline and a diagnosis of any existing qualifying condition.

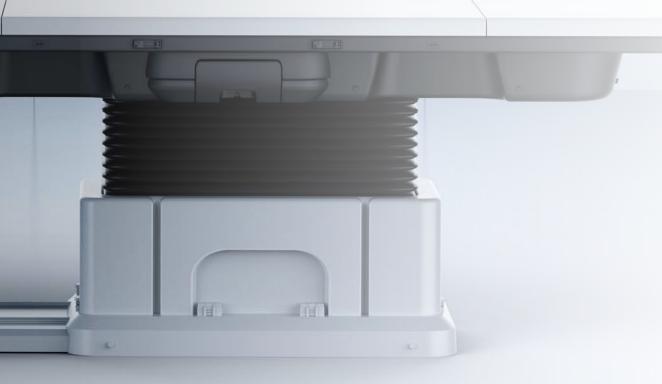
Even if the player is found to be free from impairment, the results of the examination can be used as a baseline for any similar evaluations in the future.

#### THE BAP DILEMMA

The problem with the BAP exam is that brain injury—especially CTE—is highly complicated and exceptionally difficult to diagnose. Currently, a completely accurate diagnosis of CTE requires a brain study during autopsy to detect the existence of tau, the abnormal proteins that kill brain cells.

BAP exams entail a battery of neuropsychological tests performed by trained psychologists but do not require a thorough medical evaluation. Again, as of now, unless the player is dead, there is no way to accurately diagnose CTE short of pathologic confirmation.

For those who suffer from CTE and the emotional instability, depression and memory loss that it so often triggers, a reliable medical breakthrough cannot come soon enough. IS





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### The Real Story on Meal Replacement Shakes

by Colleen M. Story

or individuals trying to lose weight, or looking for a nutritious meal on the go, meal replacement shakes have long seemed the perfect solution. They're easy and convenient and supply about 200-400 calories along with other nutrients meant to replace those normally consumed in a meal.

But whether these drinks are healthy, particularly on a longterm basis, is unclear. Before making the decision to use them regularly, it's best to be well informed about what they can and cannot offer.

#### Three Healthy Characteristics of Meal Replacement Shakes

Like most things, meal replacement shakes can be beneficial under certain circumstances, but not in others. First, even though they are fortified with nutrients, they're not real food. They have some vitamins and minerals, but not all of the nutrients real food has, like enzymes, antioxidants, and phytochemicals that work synergistically with each other.

Scientists are working on a way to condense everything in food into a pill or drink, but so far have not succeeded. Meanwhile, real wholesome food has proven benefits for the body and mind, which can't be replaced with anything else.

There are, however, three ways that meal replacements may provide health benefits.

#### 1. They're Better Than Fast Food

For a quick, on-the-go meal, a meal replacement shake or drink is a much better option than fast food or vending-machine food. The shakes have fewer calories, more nutrients, and less saturated fat than most fast food restaurant menu items. They're also more nutritious than many packaged and processed foods that are marketed for convenience.

#### 2. They Can Help with Weight Loss

Replacing one meal a day with a meal replacement shake can help with weight loss. In a 2012 study, researchers found that the shakes helped participants lose weight by curbing hunger and reducing calories consumed each day. Earlier studies showed similar results, with meal replacements being part of a successful weight-loss diet.

#### 3. They May Provide Important Nutrients

For those who don't use a daily multi-vitamin, a meal replacement shake may provide some missing nutrients, particularly for those who are cutting back on calories. Limits on food intake sometimes correlate with limits on nutrient intake, and a meal

replacement shake can help fill in some of the gaps. Many quality shakes are good sources of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

#### Three Unhealthy Characteristics of Meal Replacement Shakes

Though meal replacement shakes can be handy and beneficial in some cases, they're not so beneficial in others.

#### 1. They Aren't a Permanent Solution

Meal replacement shakes can be misleading. Consumers use them for a while and lose weight, but once they stop using them, they often regain the weight they lost. In the end, the shakes are not a long-term solution. The body needs the nutrients that come from real foods, so staying with meal replacement shakes for a long period of time (over six months) is not a healthy option.

The best approach is to use the shakes for a short period of time, and be prepared with diet modifications to avoid regaining the weight.

#### 2. They May Contain Too Much Sugar and/or Artificial Sweeteners

Some meal replacement shakes contain too much sugar or artificial sweeteners, both of which aren't healthy in high quantities. The American Heart Association recommends only 9 teaspoons or 150 calories a day of sugar for men, and only 6 teaspoons or 100 calories per day for women, but some meal replacements contain up to 20 grams of sugar, which is about four teaspoons.

Artificial sweeteners aren't much better. Studies have linked them with an increased risk of weight gain, type 2 diabetes, and increased sugar cravings. Always check the label on a meal replacement shake, and choose the ones that contain less sugar (and no artificial sweeteners).

#### 3. Some Have Other Unhealthy Ingredients

In addition to sugars, some meal replacement shakes have other unhealthy ingredients like hydrogenated vegetable oils, synthetic food dyes, chemical preservatives, and artificial flavorings. Fiber and protein may also be lacking.

Look for healthier options that are high in protein and fiber, low in sugar and oils, free of high-fructose corn syrup, and made with whole food ingredients like nuts, seeds, vegetables, and herbs.

Meal replacement shakes can be helpful in a pinch, but in general, it's best to eat a healthy diet rich in whole foods, lean meats, whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.  $\mathbb{S}$ 



by Michael Bryant

leep, work and stress have a significant overall impact on our overall health. If you are among the many people who are stressed, work long hours and don't get enough sleep, there will not be a quick and easy solution to change those issues. However, if you are dealing with increased problems with weight

However, if you are dealing with increased problems with weight gain, diabetes or even obesity, then you should take action and this may be of interest.

There has been recent research done in the United Kingdom that links the timing of calorie intake to obesity. The study indicates that if you consume the majority of your calories in the morning, you are less likely to be obese and you will work off the calories during the day.

There are a number of variables that come into play here, such as types of food are eaten, portion size and your activity level. However, a good healthy breakfast will start you in the right direction.

For those who prefer to eat late at night, studies have shown that skipping meals earlier in the day can result in an issue with insulin levels, and that heart and circulatory issues can arise when food is not processed properly. There is also the strong possibility that sleep, intended to heal the body, gets directed toward breaking down calories and away from taking care of the rest of the body.

The American Heart Association suggests that eating smaller meals multiple times a day is better for you overall. This includes

an emphasis on eating food earlier, being active, and keeping a food diary to keep track of how your body reacts to different foods you eat and at different times.

In a statement, the AHA went further to say, "Allocating more calories earlier in the day might help reduce cardiovascular disease risk." While this comes with a disclaimer that more studies needs to be conducted, it is clear that giving your body the most advantage in processing food at the right times is healthier in the long run.

An Italian study found that people who were following a Mediterranean diet lost more weight when the majority of their caloric intake was in through lunch vs. the afternoon and evening. This group also lost more body fat and used insulin more effectively, which is another advantage in warding off diabetes.

Marie-Pierre St-Onge, Ph.D., a researcher with Columbia University's Institute of Human Nutrition, suggests in papers written for the AHA that the big difference is that fasting at night vs. doing so during an active day leads to better regulation of insulin and glucose in the body, key factors in preventing diabetes and having a stronger heart.

In conclusion, if you are going to be looking at a health plan, look at what you eat and when. You want to get enough calories in to strengthen your body, but in a way that holds your body back from doing other vital tasks. IS

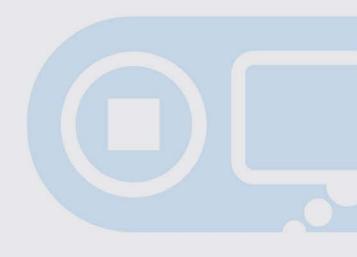


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## What is the Best Way to Talk with Kids About Tragic Events?

by Marc McCallister

In today's world, we are exposed to tragic events like never before. The same is true for kids. Regardless of a child's age, it is likely that he or she knows about one of the many tragic events that has occurred in the not-too-distant past.

In 2018 alone, daily news coverage was overrun by stories of mass shootings and natural disasters. Social media has also profoundly impacted the coverage of tragic events, as it provides additional pathways for these stories to be shared directly among friends, family and peers.

As a parent, the initial instinct in the face of tragedy or trauma is avoidance. Talking about scary feelings or worries related to a tragic event is difficult. In many cases, a child's inquiry about a tragic event will be met with "don't worry, everything is going to be OK."

This makes sense—as an adult the goal is to maintain the child's innocence and to reassure him or her that they are safe. However, attempting to avoid the difficult discussion can eventually lead to anxiety and confusion in the future. The quick attempt to alleviate the kid's fear may even be interpreted as dismissive or minimizing the fears that the child is experiencing.

Communicate with children through acknowledgement and validation. When the time is right, it is important to engage in open discussion about a child's feelings, fears and worries that relate to a tragic event. Studies have shown that kids as young as four and five can become aware of tragic events, but not all of them know how to talk about their feelings and concerns.

For this reason, it is important for you to take the first step and ask, the child "what have you heard?" or "what have you seen?" Once you are able to learn about the child's feelings, fears and worries, acknowledge them as being valid. If appropriate, it is also OK to express your own concerns so that the child can see that it is normal to have these type of feelings after a traumatic event.

By focusing on the child's feelings and thoughts, you give them the opportunity to talk without judgment or suggestion. As you gain a better understanding of how the tragic event has impacted the child, it is appropriate to explore and try to understand how they have perceived the tragic event. Be careful not to make assumptions or to project your own thoughts, concerns, and worries onto the child before they have had an opportunity to share things from their unique perspective.

Communication in this manner, an open expression of feelings and emotions, will also help the child begin to cope with the tragedy.

Reassure children with facts that demonstrate everything possible is being done to keep them safe. When speaking with kids about tragic events, it is important to avoid "what if" fears. Instead, provide honest information and facts that are responsive to the concerns and fears being expressed. The goal is to avoid misinformation or creating a false sense of safety.

Likewise, it is important to think carefully about the information that is shared. The amount of information and the level of detail you share should be consistent with a child's age and maturity. Maintaining routines and structure is also reassuring to children and will help to restore a sense of normalcy and safety.

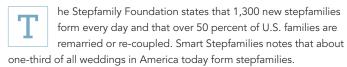
Limit media exposure and social media access during and after a tragic event. While it is important to provide kids with basic facts and answers their questions following a tragic event, it is equally as important to monitor media exposure immediately following a tragic event.

Studies have shown that repeated exposure to traumatic events through media can result in further trauma and increase a child's anxiety and fears.

Lastly, when you talk with kids about tragic events, keep in mind that children process traumatic events at their own pace. Discussions about tragic events should be done on an ongoing and as-needed basis. Recognize that conversations about tragic events may need to occur over time during multiple occasions and be available and open to conversation when the opportunity presents itself. Is



by Colleen M. Story



Though a stepfamily can be a blessing, it can also be a huge challenge. Even if everyone lives under the same roof, members can still feel like from two separate families. Bridging the gap between the two takes time, effort, and patience, but with the right approach, the results can be well worth it.

#### Is It Possible to Achieve a Complete Blend?

Though parents hope that eventually, their new family can feel the same unity as their original families, experts suggest keeping expectations realistic. Family bonds take time to form, and each family brings their own history into the mix. In a traditional family, the couple gets to know themselves first before children come along. In a blended family, the parent-child connections are well established, while the new couple forms.

This makes a blended family much different and presents new challenges with which all members are unfamiliar. Children typically need more time to adjust than adults do, particularly after a divorce or separation. They may be facing numerous changes in their lives, including not only the separation of their parents, but potentially new living arrangements new schools and new neighborhoods, all of which can make blending more difficult.

Loyalty issues are also likely to get in the way, with children worrying that forming a relationship with the new parent means that they're somehow being disloyal to the original one. Considering these challenges, it's no wonder that blending a family can feel extremely difficult and stressful.

#### 5 Ways to Bring Kids Together in a Blended Family

To help smooth over the transition and encourage new family bonds to form, try these five tips.

#### Don't Add Too Many Changes

As families come together for the first time, it can be tempting to clear the slate and implement new routines and rules, but it's best to resist. Children are already dealing with a number of big changes in their lives—changes that encourage feelings of insecurity—and adding more may prove too challenging. Instead, allow the old routines and rules to stand for some time until things start to feel more settled down. Then, and only as needed, gradually add in any necessary changes.

#### Be Patient

It can be particularly difficult when children act out or rebel against the new family. Remember what the children are going through, and how upsetting all the changes have likely been for them. Try to be extremely patient, and let the children set the pace for how quickly new relationships will form. Expect that things will probably not go the way you planned. Stay flexible, be willing to compromise, and be sure to take time out for yourself now and then to relax and regroup.

#### Keep the Lines of Communication Open

Good communication is critical if the blended family is to succeed. Parents should try to model good communication skills themselves, taking turns talking and listening, making sure what is said is completely understood, and avoiding blaming and name-calling. It can also help to put into place unique ways for family members to communicate with one another, such as a centrally located whiteboard, letters written and opened once a week at a family meal, and a complaint and praise box. When necessary, seek counseling.

#### Focus on Individual Relationships

Though it is important to do things together as a family, it's also important to focus on individual relationships. Stepparents should make a point to spend time alone with their stepchildren away from the rest of the family. Setting up activities that the individual child will enjoy, and taking time out to enjoy those activities together, creates a space that feels relaxed and less stressful, where the bonds of a relationship can start to form.

#### Find Activities that Unite the Family

Since each family will have their own individual traditions, blended families are encouraged to establish new traditions and holidays. They may celebrate the day they all moved in together, or decide that a holiday like Valentine's Day or Memorial Day will now be made extra special. Consider starting new traditions like a big Sunday breakfast or a monthly trip to a local fun spot like the amusement park or zoo. Allow the children to suggest ideas, and gradually the new family will start to feel more cohesive. IS

# Is There a Right Age for Your Child to Get a Cellphone

by Colleen M. Story

ellphones give families peace of mind. Members can easily contact one another in an emergency, and parents can better track their children's' whereabouts. But that brings up the question: Just when is it appropriate to give a child a cellphone?

Parents may like the idea of being able to reach their children at any time, but there are very real concerns about how regular exposure to the Internet and social media might affect young minds. Before making the decision, it's important to be aware of a few things.

#### Cellphones Come with Serious Risks

According to a 2016 study from research firm Influence Central, the average age when a child gets his or her first cellphone is around 10 years old, which is younger than it was in 2012 (at 12 years old). Some parents, when their kids complain that most of the other school children already carry phones, actually feel pressured into buying.

Before caving, parents must understand the very real dangers that cellphones can present:

- » Sleep Problems: The blue light emitted by cellphone screens alters hormones like melatonin, disrupting sleep patterns and circadian rhythms. Several studies have linked teens' use of cellphones before bed with increased sleep deprivation, lower sleep quality, and increased symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- » Mental and Emotional Problems: A study of over 1,000 high school students ages 13-16 found that late-night texting and calling was not only associated with poor quality sleep, but more depressed moods, declines in self-esteem, and poor coping ability.
- » Cyberbullying: A 2017 study found that children in third to fifth grades with cellphones were more likely to report being a victim of cyberbullying, especially in grades three and four.
- » Internet Exposure: Though parents can monitor Internet use within the home, once a child has a cellphone (if it's Internet-enabled), the child can browse the Internet unsupervised. After surveying 70,000 children over a period of 18 months, Jesse Weinberger—author of The Boogeyman Exists: And He's In Your Child's Back Pocket—stated that on average, sexting begins in fifth grade, pornography consumption begins when children turn 8, and pornography addiction begins around age 11.
- » Addiction: One recent study showed that one out of two



teens felt addicted to their phones. Addiction, in turn, has been linked with negative effects on social life and relationships, decreased focus at school, and increased stress and anxiety.

#### How to Safely Manage a Child's Cellphone Use

Considering these very serious risks, what should parents do about cellphone ownership?

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that for children ages 6 and older, parents should place consistent limits on time spent using any media (including cellphones), making sure it doesn't interfere with sleep, physical activity, and other healthy behaviors.

While there is no expert recommendation on when to purchase a cellphone for a child, there are suggestions for how parents can make an informed decision.

First, consider the child's personality and development, as that matters more than age. Some children mature more quickly than others. Those who are trustworthy, responsible, take good care of their possessions, and follow other rules of the household will be more likely to follow rules when it comes to cellphone use, too.

Next, consider whether the child really needs a phone, as there is a difference between need and want. It may make sense for kids who are traveling on their own or need to be in touch for safety reasons, but not for a child who simply wants to have a phone because their friend does.

Once parents decide to move forward with a purchase, they should consider these options:

- » Start with a "dumbed-down" phone: These have only calling and texting capabilities, and don't allow access to the Internet or social media. See how the child handles this tool before moving on to a real cellphone or smartphone.
- » Set up parent monitoring: Most phones today offer features that parents can enable or disable, including the ability to restrict adult content on the Internet and prevent apps from using cellular data. There are also a number of apps that allow parents to monitor text messages, disable apps at certain times of the day, and block unapproved numbers.
- » Set limits: Make it clear what is acceptable behavior with a cellphone and what is not, and have real consequences for breaking the rules. Set time limits on using the phone, make sure they're not in the bedroom overnight, and explain clearly that inappropriate selfies, browsing unapproved websites, communicating with unknown strangers, and other dangerous behaviors are not allowed. IS



It's universal. The teenage years are a turbulent, troubling time for adolescents all over the world. In fact, to teach this age group, teachers are required to take multiple courses on how to handle the moods of a classroom full of hormonal teenagers. While these courses explore adolescent brain theories and coping mechanisms in depth, the takeaway involves a few simple tips that any adult can use when dealing with a teen's mood swings.

#### Patience, Patience, Patience

The first key tip any adult needs to understand about handling teens' moods is that patience is of the utmost importance. Adolescents often deal with seemingly over-dramatic and ridiculous stress, and they just want someone to listen to them. This can be in the form of simply making eye contact when your teen is speaking to you, or asking "What is wrong? Do you want to talk about it?" Teenagers, just like adults, need affirmation that someone is on their side and listening to them. However, if your teens do not want to talk (and often, they may not), it is important not to push the subject and force them into closing themselves off. Rather, simply let them know with sincerity that you are here to listen if they ever want to talk about what's going on in their life.

#### Don't Hover

On this same note, it is important to give them space. It is easy to want to know absolutely everything that is going on and fix it, but teenagers are growing into adulthood and trying to learn to cope with things on their own. It is important to give them that learning space—and trust that they will go to an adult if there is something truly wrong.

When a teenager's mood escalates, it is easy to try to be the power-house and show them that they are not an adult yet, and that they should listen to the adult in the conversation. However, it is important that the adult does not show his/her frustration. This can come in the form of a loud sigh, yelling, demeaning, rolling eyes, or walking away from the teenager. This may be the hardest thing for adults to learn to control. Such aggressive actions can escalate the situation. Joyce Meyer once said, "Patience is not simply the ability to wait—it's how we behave while we're waiting." If you find yourself getting upset with a teen, the best thing to do is to remind yourself that you are the adult in this situation; and that the teen will remember how you react. Your reaction is teaching them how to treat others, and how they should act when they get frustrated with others. Yelling, calling names, or physical aggression will show the teen that those actions are okay toward their peers, or other adults.

#### Recognize that Nobody's Perfect

In the face of frustration, it is easy to make mistakes. If you find yourself losing your temper with a teen, it is okay! Apologies go a long way with adolescents. One of the most important things that adults can do after a mistake is admit that they reacted poorly, and that they will try harder to handle their emotions in the future. These actions show a developing adolescent brain that it is acceptable to make mistakes, but it is also important to admit to these mistakes and attempt to rectify the situation.

Every teenager is different, and there is never a one-size-fits-all solution to handling people of any age. However, as an adult, it is important to reflect upon your own actions. Adolescents simply model what they see, and you are their role model for handling uncontrolled emotions. IS



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# Energy Efficient? The Lowdown on Gas vs. Electric Power

by Jeff Gutkowski

or many of us, it can be really confusing to try to compare gas power vs. electric power. Despite being expected to do the same type of work, each uses a different relative unit of measurement.

No one would ever tell you that a gas-powered car has an engine that generates 2,000 kilowatt hours or your battery-operated drill generates 1 horsepower. That's because gas-powered engines are rated on the basis of horsepower or displacement, while electrical devices are rated on a measurement of energy called watt hours.

To make things even more confusing, a kilowatt-hour (1,000 watt hours) is the same amount of energy whether drawing 1 watt for a thousand hours or 1,000 watts for 1 hour.

In other words, energy is a measurement of how much work the device can do, but power is a measurement of how fast the same work gets done. Power is energy per unit of time.

Good rule of thumb: 1 horsepower = 746 watts.

The decision analysis between gas equipment or electric equipment always starts with the right assessment of the particular task at hand. Do you really need a leaf blower that terrifies the three little pigs or do you just need it to clear off a small driveway? Do you have 5 minutes of light weedwacking after mowing the lawn, or does brush overgrowth threaten the security of your backyard?

As technologies improve, battery operated equipment is becoming more powerful, providing in some cases the power benefits and portability of gas equipment, with the environmental and maneuverability benefits of electric. Electric and battery powered equipment used around the house tends to be lighter, more manageable, more convenient and cleaner. On the con side, with an electric device, you either have to tether yourself by extension cord to an electrical outlet or allocate the time to charge a battery. Ultimately, the power generated by an electric motor on any device is limited by the amount of electricity drawn from your home's electrical service or the battery.

On the other hand, gas-powered equipment still creates more power, but at a cost. Gas engines tend to make equipment heavier, bulkier, require oil and fuel, creating pollution (ground, air and noise) and contributing to greenhouse gases.

More moving parts in a combustion engine means higher regular maintenance costs, too. But the biggest advantage that gas power has over electrical (around the house) is scalability. A quick visit to your local hardware store reinforces that when it comes to gas power, you get more by simply upsizing the engine—which isn't

quite so available on the electric side. Increasing power in electrical equipment requires a greater supply of electricity, which only comes from a distribution network that you'll find in heavy industry.

So let's take a look at some common appliances and make some comparisons:

Power washers: A solid residential electrical power washer will generate over 2,000 psi (pounds per square inch) of water pressure and 1.76 gallons per minute of flow. For the same price, a gas powered pressure washer will generate 30% more psi and flow.

Clothes dryers: Both use electricity to turn the wet clothes- containing drum, but they heat the air inside the drum differently. Gas dryers have a higher initial cost because they may require professional installation but in the long run, gas may be less expensive than electricity.

Lawnmowers: If you don't have a lot of grass to mow or you don't let your grass get too thick, then electric provides some significant advantages despite higher initial costs. In the long run, electric mowers are cheaper and limit ground, air and noise pollution. And with the recent improvements in battery technology, you can cut the cord and mow for around an hour. On the other hand, gas mowers come with wider wheel bases for fewer passes needed, scalability in the engines, and, if well maintained, last a very long time.

Weed Wackers/Leaf Blowers/Chainsaws: For these common household tools, the analysis is the same—it all depends on the size of the job. The benefits of gas include greater power, endurance and portability, while downsides include the need for maintenance, fuel, and oil that creates noise pollution, fumes and emissions.

The electric versions don't have the same power and plugging in means dragging an extension cord around, but they are much quieter, lighter, and get the approval of your environmental conscience. For instance, a battery operated leaf blower will generate winds up to 140 miles per hour and is 8 lbs lighter than a similarly priced gas competitor that generates winds at 180 miles per hour.

When it comes to chainsaws, there is no weight benefit from a battery. Your run time could be as little as 30 minutes and don't expect to be cutting anything greater than 12" in diameter. On the con side, sometimes you need to be your own mechanic with a gas chain saw.

When making the choice about which tool is best for you, remember, "use the right tool for the right job." IS

### **Tech Gadgets**

### That Serve to Keep Us Living Safer

by Jared Smith

If you're like me, you love this time of year. It's the time that tech gadgets of yesteryear go on sale and the gadgets of tomorrow make their debut on store shelves. While many of these gadgets are geared towards entertainment and luxury, tech gadgets are increasingly being developed to help people stay safer in the event of emergency or the unexpected. Listed below are three practical, highly rated, reviewed and recommended devices. Currently available for purchase:



#### **Ring Doorbell**

Ring doorbell is a handy device that replaces the traditional doorbell with a doorbell/video camera that gives homeowners a view of the person ringing the bell without the homeowner having to answer the door. This prevents homeowners from opening the door to unwanted intruders. It also serves to deter would-be burglars from forcing entry into a home that is being monitored by camera. What makes Ring doorbell exceptionally nifty

is that when the camera is triggered either by pressing its button or upon motion detection, an alert is sent to the homeowners and a video feed can be viewed from a connected phone, tablet, or screen-enabled Alexa device.

Furthermore, Ring doorbell allows homeowners to speak to visitors from remote locations through their phones or tablets giving the impression that they are, in fact, home at the time. Ring doorbell can either be hardwired like a traditional doorbell or operated with rechargeable battery. A lifetime theft protection warranty that guarantees the doorbell will be replaced free of charge if it gets stolen is also included upon purchase. With the security that Ring doorbell provides, the \$99 per unit price is easily justifiable.

#### **FILIP**

FiLIP is a smartwatch for kids too young to be given a cell phone that . It allows families to stay connected and parents to "supervise" as best they can from a distance. Parents can program five phone numbers into the smartwatch and that their child can call whenever needed. Additionally, FiLIP serves to protect its wearer in three unique ways:

first, the FiLIP has integrated GPS, GSM & WiFi to allow parents and/ or caregivers to locate their child using the most accurate location information possible both indoors and out; second, FiLIP has an integrated SOS/Emergency button that when pressed triggers a call to the primary account holder and all trusted contacts registered to the smartwatch; lastly, FiLIP allows caregivers to set a geo-fence—referred to as "SafeZones" by the makers of FiLIP— within which



the child is expected to be at all times. If ever the child breaches the parameters of the set SafeZones, a notification is sent to the caregiver's smartphone, alerting them of the potential that their child may be at risk of danger. FiLIP can be purchased at www.myfilip.com.







#### Hip'Air

Helite, a French company that specializes in airbag technology built into clothes for skiers, motorcyclists and horse riders, has recently brought to market what may prove to be its most practical lifesaving device to date. It's so practical, in fact, that many may wonder why such a device hadn't been brought to market sooner. The Hip'Air is essentially a wearable airbag belt that deploys when it senses its wearer has begun to fall. The goal is to protect the elderly against hip fractures and other damage caused by potentially life-threatening falls. Helite has been marketing the device to nursing home companies in France and began selling the device in the United States in November 2018. The device currently retails at approx. \$800 and can be purchased individually on Helite's website at www.senior.helite.com. IS

### **DIY: Home Cleaners You Can**



### Easily Make



by Katherine A. Brown-Henry



here are a lot of cleaning products on the market and they each do something different. Instead of buying a ton of different cleaners, why not use a few different cleaners that can be combined to clean multiple areas of the home? Here are seven household cleaner recipes using similar ingredients that are easy to make and effective to use.

#### All Purpose Spray

#### What You'll Need:

2 Tbsp. white vinegar

1 tsp. Borax

½ cup dish soap (Dawn preferred)

1 cup hot water

#### Directions:

- In a spray bottle, mix vinegar, Borax and hot water.
- 2. Add cool water until there is enough room left for the dish soap.
- 3. Add the dish soap. No need to shake.

#### Glass & Mirror Cleaner

#### What You'll Need:

¼ cup white vinegar ¼ cup rubbing alcohol

1 Tbsp. cornstarch

2 cups water

8-10 drops of essential oil (optional)

#### Directions:

- 1. Combine all ingredients in a spray bottle.
- 2. Shake well to mix.
- 3. Spray onto your glass surface and wipe clean.

**Note:** Make sure you shake the bottle well before each use or the cornstarch may clog up your spray nozzle

#### **Toilet Cleaner**

#### What You'll Need:

1½ cup baking powder
½ cup citric acid
1 Tbsp hydrogen peroxide
20-30 drops of essential oil (lemon, peppermint, tea tree)

#### Directions:

- 1. In a large bowl, mix baking powder and citric acid.
- 2. In a separate bowl, mix vinegar, hydrogen peroxide and essential oil.

- Slowly, mix the liquid ingredients in with the powder ingredients. If you do this quickly, it will be a fizzy mess. You will see a small amount of fizzing regardless.
- 4. Press the mixture into the ice cube trays.
- 5. Let the cubes dry in the trays for at least 24 hours.
- Once the cubes are dry and hard, remove them from the tray and store in a sealed container that will help keep moisture out.
- 7. Use one tab to clean the toilet bowl and scrub with a bowl brush.

#### Carpet Cleaner

#### What You'll Need:

1 Tbsp. dish soap (Dawn preferred)

1 Tbsp. white vinegar

2 cups warm water

#### Directions:

- Mix dish soap and vinegar in a spray bottle and then add hot water. You can also add a couple drops of essential oil if you want a nice fragrance.
- 2. Soak up any excess liquid.
- 3. Spray the stain with the cleaner. Don't be afraid to really wet it down.
- Let the cleaner sit for a few minutes. Use a sponge or rag to soak up any excess solution. Then scrub the stain out and let the carpet air dry.

#### Floor Cleaner

#### What You'll Need:

1 cup water

½ cup vinegar

½ cup rubbing alcohol

2-3 drops of dish soap (*Dawn preferred*) 20 drops of essential oil (lemon, orange, eucalyptus)

#### Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients in the spray bottle and shake well.

- 2. Sweep/vacuum the floor to remove any loose dirt and debris.
- 3. Spray the cleaner on the floor and wipe with a microfiber cloth for a streak free shine.

Note: This mixture can be used on wood and tile surfaces, but not on granite, marble, or other natural stone surfaces. The vinegar can etch those surfaces.

#### Air Freshener

#### What You'll Need:

1 cup distilled water

½ cup vodka

10 drops of essential oil (lemon, lavender, eucalyptus)

#### Directions:

Mix all the ingredients in a glass spray bottle and shake well.

#### **Dishwasher Tabs**

#### What You'll Need:

2 cups baking soda

2 cup Borax

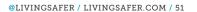
½ cup kosher or Epsom Salt

½ cup white vinegar

15-20 drops of lemon essential oil

#### Directions:

- In a large bowl, mix baking soda, Borax, salt, vinegar, and essential oil. The vinegar may fizz some. That is normal.
- 2. Keep mixing the ingredients together until they start clumping together. This means they are well combined.
- 3. Press the mixture into the ice cube trays.
- 4. Let the cubes dry in the trays for at least 24 hours.
- Once the cubes are dry and hard, remove them from the tray and store in a lidded container that will help keep moisture out.
- 6. Place one tab in your dishwasher's detergent compartment. IS







### DON'T



Determine your readiness for exercise.



Set small achievable goals.



Select exercises you enjoy.



Be consistent and resilient.



Exercise with friends.



Consider organized fitness classes and events.



Set unrealistic expectations.



Go from 0 to 100 too quickly.



Compare yourself to others.



Ignore nutrition and diet.



Try to lose weight quickly.



Be a slave to the numbers.

## **UNITED COMMUNITY MINISTRIES Impact of Your Support in 2017**



6,293

UNIQUE COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED



5,000

UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED NUTRITIOUS FOOD TO ALLEVIATE HUNGER



359

FAMILIES IN CRISIS
RECEIVED FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE TO
AVOID EVICTION



31,000

HOURS DONATED BY 920 VOLUNTEERS (EQUIV. 15 FULL-TIME STAFF)



100%

PRE-K STUDENTS AT UCM EARLY LEARNING CENTER ARE SCHOOL READY



93%

OF FORWARD STEPS YOUTH IMPROVED ACADEMIC & SOCIAL SKILLS



227

ESL LEARNERS EARNED SKILLS TO GAIN OR ADVANCE EMPLOYABILITY



\$ 0.89

OF EVERY DOLLAR SUPPORTED SERVICES TO TRANFORM LIVES





Curcio Law proudly supports the United Community Ministries, a non-profit, community-based social services agency that assists low-income families and individuals in Northern Virginia. Attorney Tom Curcio serves on the UCM Board of the Directors, and serves as one of three "tri-chairs" of the 50th Anniversary Events Community. To learn more about UCM of Alexandria, visit www.ucmagency.org.

#### About the Firm

"Through our experience, hard work, and compassion, we at Curcio Law are committed to advocating for and representing people who have been injured through no fault of their own in a genuine and professional manner while helping them rebuild their lives and making the world a safer place."

Our mission statement sets the standard you can expect from us. We pledge to treat everyone with respect and to advise to the best of our ability. Whether a contracted client or curious caller we will treat you with kindness and do everything we can to help. We will provide honest representation and will be efficient and relentless in getting you the compensation your circumstances allow. We will be diligent in understanding your needs while keeping you abreast of your situation and through our work helping you, we will hold wrongdoers accountable, adding to the common good.

With over 30 years of experience behind him, Thomas Curcio has represented the most seriously injured victims of accidents caused by negligence, including:

- Personal Injury
- Car Crashes
- Truck Crashes
- Motorcycle Crashes
- · Premises Liability
- Product Liability
- Traumatic Brain Injuries

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# ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM PAIN AFTER HERNIA REPAIR SURGERY?



Through our involvement with the Injury Board, an organization of trusted, experienced and knowledgeable attorneys from across the country, Curcio Law can refer you to the attorney you need if you have suffered severe mesh complications. Our network of attorneys have decades of experience seeking the compensation you may be entitled to for the pain and suffering, medical bills and other expenses associated with your hospitalization or corrective surgery related to the mesh used in your hernia repair.

#### Hernia Mesh Complications Include:

- Chronic & Severe Pain
- Infection
- Repair/Revision Surgery
- Mesh Migration
- Allergic Reactions

- Hernia Recurrence
- Chronic Seroma
- Bowel Adhesions
- Sinus Tract or Fistula Formation
- Organ Damage

#### THOSE AFFECTED MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION

# HERNIA MESH INJURY? WE CAN HELP YOU FIND THE RIGHT LAWYER

