

PossAbilities & you

Spring 2007

www.mypossabilities.com

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Enjoy a
**Fun-Filled Day at
the PossAbilities
Triathlon!**

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for details.

PossAbilities



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
REHABILITATION, ORTHOPAEDIC, &
NEUROSCIENCES INSTITUTE

Six Ways to Exercise

Without Leaving Your Chair

Do you have limited mobility? If so, don't let that stop you from exercising. Regular exercise is especially important for those who are chair-bound or who have reduced mobility, because it:

- Helps lower your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol
- Strengthens your heart and bones
- Improves circulation
- Tones muscles
- Keeps joints flexible.

To help get you started, here are six excellent muscle-strengthening and flexibility exercises you can do right from your chair. Repeat each exercise 10 times, if possible.

- 1 **Neck stretcher.** Let your head loll over so that your right ear nearly touches your right shoulder. Gently press your head a little lower. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, and repeat on the other side.
- 2 **Shoulder shrugs.** Shrug your

shoulders up toward your ears, then lower them back down.

- 3 **Reach for the sky.** Sit tall and reach overhead with both arms stretching as far as you can. Lower your arms and repeat.

- 4 **Bicep curl.** Using a light weight, such as a 12-ounce can of vegetables in each hand, start with your arms at your sides. Bending your arms at the elbows, lift the weights to your shoulders, then lower them back to your sides.

- 5 **Seat lift.** Sit in a chair with sturdy arms. Place both hands on the chair arms

and slowly lift your bottom off the chair. Hold this position for two seconds and slowly lower yourself back to the chair.

- 6 **Chair squat.** If you are able to stand, sit tall in your chair with both feet on the ground. Lean slightly forward and stand up from your chair without using your hands.

Stay motivated by starting slowly and having fun. Exercise to music or watch television. Better yet, ask a friend to join you.

Before you start any exercise program, always talk with your doctor about exercises that will be safe for you. ■



On Our Cover

Briana Walker was the first female to be featured on the cover of *Mobility Management* magazine and is the Krypto Girl for Colours Wheelchairs. Briana enjoys skydiving, surfing, snow skiing, wakeboarding, competing in marathons and triathlons, bungee jumping, and dancing. Briana learned to transform her wheelchair into a dance prop, and she helped create one of the first wheelchair hip hop dance teams to take the national spotlight.

Get More Out of Your Medi-Cal



Making healthcare easier

Because we know that access to a doctor means wheelchair friendly facilities, we offer an accessibility guide of our doctors' offices. Get more out of your Medi-Cal with IEHP, Inland Empire Health Plan. Join the health plan that has a large network of specialists so you can find one you like or already know. At IEHP, we give you health care options, the choice is up to you. To apply, call:

1-800-440-IEHP (phone) 1-800-718-4347 (TTY)

California Medi-Cal recipients in Riverside or San Bernardino Counties can make IEHP their health plan.

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PossAbilities Triathlon



Photos from last year's highly successful PossAbilities triathlon! 1. Participants start last year's PossAbilities triathlon. 2. Inland Inferno smiles proudly after winning the Club Championship. 3. Rudy Garcia-Tolson completes the running portion of the triathlon. 4. Jared Wareham with "One Arm Willie" address the crowds at the 2006 PossAbilities Triathlon. 5. Wheelchair athletes were first on the course, including Team PossAbilities member Briana Walker, who is also participating in this year's events. 6. Brynn Sargent, 14 & under champion, competes in the triathlon. 7. Marguerit Hoher De Jo had joy etched on her face as she headed to the finish line.



Come and enjoy a fun-filled day at the PossAbilities triathlon. There will be a triathlon, 5K run/walk/roll, Kids' triathlon, and a Tiny Tots' tricycle triathlon on **Sunday, April 29, 7 a.m.** at the **Loma Linda University Drayson Center**. For information, visit www.mypossabilities.com or call the PossAbilities office at **909-558-6384**.





Can *Sports Drinks* Really *Rev You Up?*



Team PossAbilities Partners with Accelerade

Team PossAbilities is proud to announce a new partnership with Accelerade, the team's official sports drink and energy supplement for 2007. Accelerade was designed by scientists to aid with athletic performance and recovery. For additional information about Accelerade, go to www.accelerade.com.

Whether you're a serious athlete or a casual exerciser, you may have grabbed a sports drink to quench your thirst. But do sports drinks really boost performance?

Studies show that certain ingredients in sports drinks—such as carbohydrates and electrolytes—can improve endurance and help prevent dehydration. This is true particularly if you exercise for an hour or longer at a time.

It is less clear whether sports drinks improve performance in people who exercise for less than one hour at a time. The latest research shows that you may

benefit from a sports drink during short workouts if you exercise in the morning before you eat. Otherwise, drink water to quench your thirst during short workouts.

Athletes should drink before, during, and after exercise. Start drinking between 14 to 22 ounces of fluid two hours before working out. During long exercise sessions, take breaks every 15 to 20 minutes to drink 6 to 12 ounces. And after exercising, drink at least 16 more ounces to help your body restore fluid.

When you buy a sports drink, read the label carefully. ●



Rehab Helps Stroke Survivors

After a stroke, healthy parts of the brain often can take over functions for damaged parts of the brain. This is sometimes called the "plasticity" of the brain.

A rehabilitation program can help your brain "rewire" itself so you regain skills that you may have lost. Physical therapy is an important part of this process. It improves your coordination and mobility. Occupational therapy can make daily activities—such as eating or bathing—easier to perform. This helps you stay independent. In addition, speech and language therapy can assist you with any communication problems you may have. Combined with time and patience, these therapies help you take back control after a stroke.

Lower Your *Blood Pressure* to *Reduce* *Recurrent Stroke Risk*

Survivors of stroke and transient ischemic attacks (TIAs)—also called mini-strokes—are at risk of suffering from another stroke. At least one in six will experience a stroke within five years. Secondary strokes are fatal in 25% of the cases.

High blood pressure—hypertension—is the most important risk factor for stroke and also greatly increases your risk for cardiovascular disease. A recent study found ways to reduce this risk. The study is called the Perindopril Protection Against Recurrent Stroke Study (PROGRESS). This study investigated the effects of a blood pressure-lowering treatment on the risk of stroke and other major cardiovascular events. Researchers looked at 6,105 people—with and without high blood pressure—who had a history of stroke or TIA.

Medications Involved

Study participants took the ACE inhibitor perindopril with the addition of a diuretic called indapamide. Patients took the diuretic if the treating physician determined that it was appropriate for them to take it. Both medications act in different ways to lower blood pressure.

Promising Results

Findings from the PROGRESS trial are encouraging for individuals who have suffered stroke or TIA. Results show that combination therapy with perindopril and indapamide significantly reduced blood pressure and reduced repeat stroke by 43%.

Some patients took the ACE inhibitor perindopril only. Overall results for patients taking the ACE inhibitor/diuretic combination and the ACE inhibitor alone included reduction of:

- Blood pressure by 9/4 mm Hg.
- Total stroke by 28%
- Heart attack or death from cardiovascular disease by 26%.

Take Action and Keep Blood Pressure in Check

Here are some steps you can take to help control and prevent elevated blood pressure:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Keep physically active. Aim for a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-level activity on most days of the week. Activities can include walking briskly (3 to 4 miles an hour), gardening,

cleaning, or even playing ping-pong.

- Make healthy eating a priority. Reach for fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods.

- Consume and prepare foods with less salt and sodium. Keep your intake of sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams a day. That's approximately 1 teaspoon of table salt.

- If you smoke, stop!

Sometimes lifestyle changes are not enough to keep blood pressure in check, and it may be necessary to take medication prescribed by your doctor. Be sure to ask your doctor if medication is appropriate for you. ●



Additional Resources

- Stroke Association of Southern California: **310-575-1699** or **1-800-STROKES (787-6537)**
Free education and tools for patients and caregivers. www.stroke.org
- American Brain Tumor Association Des Plaines, Illinois: **1-800-886-2282** www.abta.org
Check out our Resource Guide on Page 7.



What to Do About *Concussions*

Any hard blow to the head can cause a concussion, or a disturbance in mental abilities. While most concussions are minor, all head injuries should be taken seriously.

Test Your Concussion Knowledge

Circle T for “True” and F for “False.”

- ❶ The main sign of a concussion is loss of consciousness. **T F**
- ❷ It’s dangerous to let people sleep after a head injury. **T F**
- ❸ Bicycle helmets are 85% effective in preventing head injuries. **T F**
- ❹ It’s safe for athletes to continue playing after suffering a concussion. **T F**

And, the Answers Are . . .

❶ **False.** Some people who have a concussion briefly lose consciousness. But this is not common. Other symptoms include:

- Confusion and memory loss
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea.

See a doctor right away when you suspect a concussion. Some people do not develop symptoms immediately. So, that’s why it’s important to watch someone with a head injury for at least 24 hours.

❷ **False.** Rest is usually recommended after a head injury. However, wake the person up every few hours to make sure he or she is mentally OK. Ask simple questions, such as “What day is it?”

Seek immediate medical care if trouble signs appear, such as severe head or neck pain or worsening confusion.

❸ **True.** If you’re having trouble getting your children to wear a helmet, remember the power of example.



Children are more likely to wear helmets if they see adults wearing them.

Also, recognize the importance of looks and comfort when picking out helmets. Kids might add stickers of favorite cartoon characters or the names of sports figures.

❹ **False.** It’s best to seek a doctor’s opinion before returning to the game. If athletes return too soon, they risk a second blow to the head. Even a minor blow can cut blood supply to the brain, which can be fatal. ●

Head Injury Trauma Spinal Support Group (HITSS)

Loma Linda, California:

909-558-4000, ext. 42401 or 1-800-986-HITSS (4487)

Date: Fourth Monday of each month
Time: 6 to 7 p.m.

Where: LLUMC Children’s Hospital
conference room 1830

Check out our Resource Guide on Page 7.

Resource Guide

To find out more about PossAbilities, contact our office at **909-558-6384** or visit us on the web at **www.mypossabilities.com**.
25333 Barton Road Loma Linda, CA 92354

AMPUTEE

Amputee Coalition of America (ACA)

900 E. Hill Avenue, Suite 285
Knoxville, Tennessee 37915-2568
1-888-267-5669;
TTY: **1-865-525-4512**
www.amputee-coalition.org

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis Foundation

Riverside, California:
951-320-1540 or
1-800-954-2873
www.arthritis.org

BLINDNESS

Blindness Support Services

Riverside, California:
951-341-9244
Information, referral, housing support, counseling, Braille tape transcription, speakers' bureau, transportation assistance, and prevocational training.
www.blindnesssupport.com

BRAIN INJURY

Brain Injury Association of America

McLean, Virginia:
1-800-444-6443
Creating a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education, and advocacy.
www.biausa.org

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

National Multiple Sclerosis Society/Southern California Chapter

Los Angeles, California: **310-479-4436** or **1-800-FIGHT-MS (344-4867)**
www.cal.nmss.org

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Riverside, California:
951-369-0720
http://www.mda.org/

SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)

California Paralyzed Veterans Association

Long Beach, California: **562-826-5713** or **1-800-497-0565**
Provides resources for veterans.
www.CALPVA.org

STROKE

Stroke Association of Southern California

310-575-1699 or
1-800-STROKES (787-6537)
Free education and tools for patients and caregivers.
www.stroke.org

American Brain Tumor Association

Des Plaines, Illinois:
1-800-886-2282
www.abta.org

SUPPORT GROUPS

Head Injury Trauma Spinal Support Group (HITSS)

Loma Linda, California:
909-558-4000 ext. 42401 or
1-800-986-HITSS (4487)
Date: Fourth Monday of each month
Time: 6 to 7 p.m.
Where: LLUMC Children's Hospital conference room 1830

Liver Transplant Support Group

Loma Linda, California:
909-558-4252
Date: Tuesdays
Time: noon to 1 p.m.
Where: LLUMC, Room A610



Join a Winning Team—Team PossAbilities!

Reap the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through Team PossAbilities. The team offers peer support, training, and more. Visit **www.teampossabilities.com** or call **909-558-6384** to join.



upcoming events

Amputee Coalition of America Peer Training Program

The Amputee Coalition of America (ACA), PossAbilities, and Amputee Connection of Redlands are planning a Peer Visitor Training Seminar. Anyone with an amputation who is interested in working with ACA to meet with and provide information to recent amputees is invited to attend this special training. Lunch and materials are included.

When: May or June, TBD

Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information and to register, contact Bill Nessel at **909-423-0562**.

Baseball

Who: L.A. Angels of Anaheim

Where: Angels Stadium

Cost: Free to PossAbilities members, limit two tickets

Tickets: **909-558-6664**

Limited number of games and tickets.

Own transportation needed.

Performing Arts Club

Our next performing arts club meeting will be at the California Theatre of Performing Arts.

What: Phantom

Where: 562 W. Fourth Street,
San Bernardino

Date: Saturday, April 21

Time: 8 p.m.

Cost: Free to PossAbilities members, limit two tickets

Tickets: **909-558-6664**

Limited number of tickets available.

Own transportation needed.



PossAbilities Triathlon

Come and enjoy a fun-filled day at the PossAbilities triathlon. There will be a triathlon, 5K Run/Walk/Roll, Kids' triathlon, and a Tiny Tots' tricycle triathlon.

Where: Loma Linda University Drayson Center

When: Sunday, April 29

Time: 7 a.m.

For more information on the triathlon, visit **www.mypossabilities.com** or call the PossAbilities office at **909-558-6384**.

Team PossAbilities

Team PossAbilities rides on Sundays. For more information, contact Adam Hart at **909-633-8428** or Robert Sandholm at **951-529-8997**.



Wheelchair Basketball— PossAbilities Rolling Bears

When: Thursday nights

Time: 7 to 9 p.m.

Contact: Huan Nguyen at

909-558-6496



Wheelchair Quad Rugby— PossAbilities Crown Rugby

When: Monday nights

Time: 7 to 9 p.m.

Contact: Huan Nguyen at **909-558-6496**

WILLY'S CORNER



Willie's World is about participation, training tips, and just about being involved in all aspects in life.

I remember after my injury I didn't think I could do anything. I lost my self-esteem and self-worth. I was so frightened to take on any challenge for fear of failure, and I worried about how I looked. I would not even leave the house in the daytime. In time, and with the help of counseling, I discovered how limiting those thoughts were. I learned that my disability gave me an inner strength I never knew I had. I learned that you couldn't motivate or inspire by hiding from life. What matters is how we participate in life. The most inspiring people I have ever met have gone through the greatest difficulties. All of us should understand that the challenges we have been through—or are going through—motivate and inspire people. But we can't accomplish this if we are not seen. Out of sight, out of mind, is not acceptable. There are many obstacles to overcome, such as transportation, housing, and other people's preconceived notions of our abilities. Yet sometimes the biggest obstacles are ourselves, our own minds, and how we see ourselves. Never forget that we are valuable to society and we need not hide from life as I once did.

Willie "One Arm Willie" Stewart is a four-time Ironman finisher, Paralympics silver medalist, kayaker, and Olympic torchbearer.

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