

# Texas Orthopedics Newsletter

December Newsletter  
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*Giving Central Texas the Star Treatment for Decades*



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## Your Fitness Threshold: The Key to Injury Prevention

By: Scott Smith, M.D.

As an orthopedic surgeon I treat conditions of the bones, joints, tendons, ligaments and in fact all parts of the human body. Many injuries have obvious causes such as fractures from car crashes and falls and ligament tears from sports injuries. Many of my patients present with aches and pains that “started out of nowhere” or “began gradually and have worsened,” apparently without an injury. In fact on some level, the car accident patient and the “no injury” patients are really suffering from similar mechanisms. They have experienced a stress to their system that was above some undefined threshold and resulted in an injury. In the case of a femur fracture in a car accident it was a one time force bending the bone and causing it to fail. In the weekend warrior with insidious knee pain it was playing flag football too long and too hard. Both of these individuals might have avoided injury had they been in better shape. Yes, it is difficult to make your femur stronger but if it was, no fracture would have occurred. If the weekend warrior was in better condition, he wouldn’t have developed tendonitis in his knee.

Everyone has heard the term overuse. I don’t like it because it implies that there is something wrong with using our bodies. Our bodies are built to be used. I prefer to think more in terms of under fitness, meaning that the activity performed was above the fitness threshold resulting in damage to some part of the musculoskeletal system. As discussed above, this can occur with one repetition (the car accident) or many repetitions (the distance runner). In every case there are two options. One option would be to stop or limit the activity performed. This is not only no fun, it’s unhealthy. The benefits of

exercise and optimal fitness are many, including heart and lung health, bone density, a more powerful immune system, stress release, better coordination and strength, among other benefits. The second option which I base my practice on is to raise the fitness threshold such that it is never surpassed and no injuries are incurred. This would be great except that it is unlikely that anyone can obtain, and more importantly maintain their perfect maximum fitness level. Therefore, it is inevitable that we all will have some aches even if we have a high fitness threshold.

These aches should be very mild, short-lived and self-limited. In fact most will resolve if the body is allowed to repair itself. Daily, or at the very least weekly, physical activities to “stress” your system will strengthen it. As the fitness level increases so will the amount of activity required to cause pain.

The lack of sustained fitness is a predictable cycle. The inertia of being out of shape makes it extremely difficult to make any significant commitment to exercise. By exceeding our threshold in our first few workouts we become sore and even painful where we can no longer perform. The next re-initiation of a workout program is more difficult and less likely to succeed. A more gradual approach is much more effective. This allows the body to repair the damage from a work out and stepwise progress toward healthy fitness is made. Remember “slow and steady” is better than too far too fast.

### Testimonial

“I was taken care of perfectly. This office has always gone above and beyond in my care.”

Patient of  
George Hadash, P.T.

## Physician Profile

Scott Smith, MD received his BS in Biology from Texas A&M and his MD from Texas Tech University. He continued his training at Michigan State University with his Orthopedic Surgery residency. Dr. Smith is Sub-Specialty Certified in Sports Medicine.

Dr. Smith is the team physician for McNeil High School and the Austin Toros Professional Basketball team.

Dr. Smith is happily married and has four children. In his free time he is an avid sports fan and participates in basketball, golf, tennis and running. He is an Assistant Scoutmaster at Boy Scout Troop 162 and has coached 26 seasons of youth sports.



Scott Smith, M.D.

*“My job is to allow you, the patient, to select which course you wish to pursue with thorough education about your condition, the treatment options and expected outcomes. Together we can decide which course of treatment is best for you.”*

## Texas Orthopedics Gets Involved

Texas Orthopedics commits to many charities and events in the Austin area. This year, Texas Orthopedics employees volunteered at the Spokes ‘N Spurs benefit bike ride, Austin Arthritis Walk, and Komen Austin Race for the Cure. Texas Orthopedics also takes pride in contributing to a charity during the Christmas season. This year, we will donate pajamas and books to The Pajama Program. For more information, visit [www.pajamaprogram.org](http://www.pajamaprogram.org).

Texas Orthopedics is dedicated to many community educational programs; some of these include Cedar Park Regional Medical Center’s Healthy Woman, Senior Circle, and Adventures in Medicine programs. In the past seven months, the physicians of Texas Orthopedics have spoken in the community nine times. Our physicians have lectured to the Cedar Park AARP, Northwest Austin Kiwanis Club, Steiner Ranch Longhorn Village Retirement Living residents, Steiner Ranch HOA, and Lakeway Men’s Club. In addition, we offer a free monthly seminar at our Northwest Austin location for patients interested in learning more about arthritis treatment options.

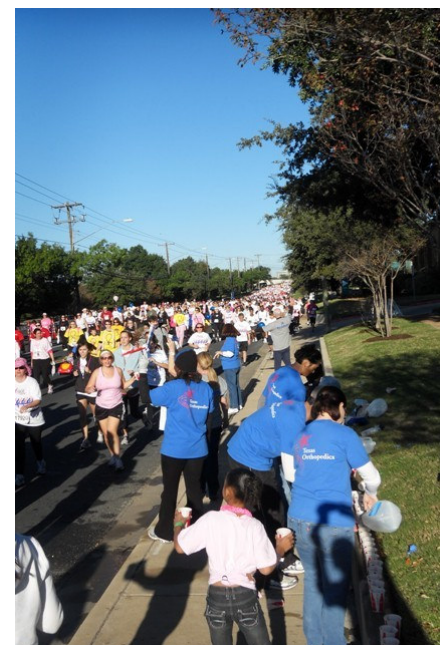
Our physicians not only educate patients in the community, but they enjoy offering medical education to primary care physicians on orthopedic issues. Several of our physicians will present at the University of Texas 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Sports Medicine in 2010.

Texas Orthopedics takes pleasure in being involved in the Austin community. If you would like one of our physicians to speak at your local club or event, please call our Community Relations department at 439-1100.



Adventures in Medicine 2009

Register for our FREE monthly arthritis seminar at [www.txortho.com](http://www.txortho.com) or call 439-1100



Race for the Cure 2009