



December 9, 2009 – Grand Rapids, MI

Mechanical Issues

I get asked many questions in the course of a day. One of the concepts difficult for many people to understand is that diet, exercise, or supplements won't fix every health challenge we face. This is especially true for body parts that have been broken or torn such as ligaments, disks, or cartilage in joints. Using fish oil can reduce inflammation and taking glucosamine can provide the nutrients that the tissues need to repair themselves, but unless things that are torn are surgically repaired, no amount of supplements will help. For example, I tore the long head of my bicep several years ago. I look like I have a golf ball in my left bicep when I flex my arm. The only solution is surgery. But since the arm still works fine, and I can still lift weights, I'm in no hurry. On the other hand, when Paula tore up the ligaments in her foot and they didn't heal on their own, surgery was the only answer.

Exercise can help a great deal. For example, if you walk upright and you're all grown up, you have bulging disks in your back. That's part of the deal walking on two legs. But not everyone who has bulging disks has pain. That's because strengthening your core—the abdominals, lower back, and legs—will help keep your spine in line, but it won't repair the disks. Exercise and physical training can go a long way to strengthening supporting tissues in many areas of the body. But if it's a mechanical issue that needs to be repaired surgically (and you have the medical coverage), do it. Then take the right supplements and do the physical therapy you need to get back to 100%.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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