



# The Arizona Quarterly Spine

Patient Edition

## What is the Arizona Quarterly Spine?

The Arizona Quarterly Spine is a quarterly publication designed to provide you information about SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy and other spine and physical therapy related news and information. You are receiving this because you are a valued patient and we care about your health. If you would like to be removed from our Arizona Quarterly Spine email list, please email Emily at [emily@spinescottsdale.com](mailto:emily@spinescottsdale.com)

## A note from Shane...

I agreed to let Brittney pick out my *Halloween* costume this year and she decided to dress me as a ballerina! Brittney made me wear a "Tutu", a pink tank top, and a crown. Brittney is no longer with the company (just kidding).

Emily and I want to thank everyone for their support this past year! We both enjoyed meeting new friends and we will continue to strive to provide each patient compassionate, individualized, comprehensive healthcare. We wish everyone a wonderful holiday and a healthy new year!



Winter 2010

## How Are We Different?

1. We are the only outpatient physical therapy clinic in Scottsdale that specializes in spine disorders.
2. You will be assigned to a physical therapist that has a doctorate in physical therapy.
3. You will be assigned to the only physical therapist in Scottsdale Certified in the McKenzie Method of Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy.

## Inside this Edition...

1. Information on low back pain.
2. Our new employee: Gina!
3. Physician Spotlight: Jeffrey Leitner, M.D.
4. Updated information on Emily's pregnancy



**Did you know...**

Although SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy specializes in spine disorders, Shane Sullivan is also Board Certified in Orthopedic Physical Therapy. To obtain board certification, candidates must successfully complete a rigorous written examination, demonstrating specialized knowledge and advanced clinical proficiency in spine and extremity orthopedic rehabilitation. The following is just a partial list of extremity disorders we provide rehabilitation for:

Rotator Cuff Tendonitis	Hip Pain	Knee Joint Pain
Frozen Shoulder	Bursitis	Osteoarthritis
Tennis Elbow	Overuse Injuries	Ankle Sprain
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	Groin Strains	Plantar Fasciitis
Hamstring Injuries	Achilles Tendon Injuries	Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

**What do all those letters mean?**

The owner of SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy, Shane Sullivan PT, DPT, CERT. MDT, OCS, ATC, CSCS, has more post-graduate credentials than any other physical therapist in the State of Arizona.

The following is a brief description of these credentials:

- PT: Licensed Physical Therapist
- DPT: Doctorate of Physical Therapy Degree
- CERT. MDT: Certified in Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy
- OCS: Board Certified in Orthopedic Physical Therapy
- ATC: Certified Athletic Trainer
- CSCS: Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist

**Moving in the Right Direction**

This section is designed to educate you about common orthopedic injuries. In this issue, I will provide you information on: Low Back Pain

**LOW BACK PAIN****What is low back pain?**

Low back pain is pain and stiffness in the lower back. It is one of the most common reasons people miss work.

Low back pain can occur if your job involves lifting and carrying heavy objects, or if you spend a lot of time sitting or standing in one position or bending over. It can be caused by a fall or by unusually strenuous exercise. It can be brought on by the tension and stress brought on by violent sneezing or coughing.

infection or an immune system problem. Arthritic disorders as well as some congenital and degenerative conditions may cause back pain.

**How does it occur?**

Low back pain is usually caused when a ligament or muscle holding a vertebra in its proper position is strained. Vertebrae are bones that make up the spinal column through which the spinal cord passes. When these muscles or ligaments become weak, the spine loses its stability, resulting in pain. Because nerves reach all parts of the body from the spinal cord, back problems can lead to pain or weakness in almost any part of the body.

People who are overweight may have low back pain because of the added stress on their back.

Back pain accompanied by loss of bladder or bowel control, difficulty in moving your legs, or numbness or tingling in your arms or legs may indicate an injury to your spine and nerves, which requires immediate medical treatment.

Back pain may occur when the may occur when the muscles, joints, bones, and connective tissues of the back become inflamed as a result of an

**What are the symptoms?**

Symptoms include

- Pain in the back or legs
- Stiffness and limited motion

The pain may be continuous or may occur only in certain positions. It may be aggravated by coughing, sneezing, bending, twisting, or straining during a bowel movement. The pain may occur in only one spot or may spread to other areas, most commonly down the buttocks and into the back of the thigh.

A low back strain typically does not produce pain past the knee into the calf or foot. Tingling or numbness in the calf or foot may indicate a herniated disk or pinched nerve. Be sure to see your doctor if you have weakness in your leg, especially if you cannot lift your foot, because this is a sign of nerve damage. New bowel or bladder problems related to your back pain may indicate severe injury to your spinal cord, and you should see your doctor. Pain that increases despite treatment indicates a more severe problem, which should be evaluated.

#### **How is it diagnosed?**

Your doctor will review your medical history and examine you. He or she may order x-rays. In certain situations a myelogram, CT scan, or MRI may be ordered.

#### **How is it treated?**

The early stages of back pain with muscle spasms should be treated with ice packs or 20 to 30 minutes every 4 to 6 hours for the first 2 to 3 days. You may lie on a frozen gel pack, crushed ice, or a bag of frozen peas.

The following are ways to treat low back pain:

- After the initial injury, applying heat from a heating pad or hot water bottle.
- Resting in bed on a firm mattress. Often it helps to lie on your back with your knees raised. However, some people prefer to lie on their side with their knees bent.
- Taking aspirin, ibuprofen, or other anti-inflammatory medications; muscle relaxants; or other pain medications recommended by your doctor.
- Having your back massaged by a trained person.
- Having traction, if recommended by your doctor.
- Wearing a belt or corset to support your back.
- Talking with a counselor, if your back pain is related to tension caused by emotional problems.
- Beginning a program of physical therapy, or exercising on your own. Begin a regular exercise program to gently stretch and strengthen your muscles as soon as you can. Your doctor or physical therapist can recommend exercises that will not only help you feel better but will strengthen your muscles and help avoid back trouble later.

When the pain subsides, ask your doctor about starting an exercise program such as the following:

- Exercise moderately every day, using stretching and warm-up exercises suggested by your doctor or physical therapist.
- Exercise vigorously for about 30 minutes 2 or 3 times a week by walking, swimming, using a stationary bicycle, or doing low-impact aerobics.

Participating regularly in an exercise program will not only help your back, it will also help keep you healthier overall.

#### **How long will the effects last?**

The effects of back pain last as long as the cause exists or until your body recovers from the strain, usually a day or 2 but sometimes weeks.

#### **How can I take care of myself?**

In addition to the treatment described above, keep in mind these suggestions:

- Use an electric heating pad on a low setting ( or a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel to avoid burning yourself) for 20 to 30 minutes. Don't let the heating pad get too hot, and don't fall asleep

with it. You could get a burn.

- Try putting an ice pack wrapped in a towel on your back for 20 minutes, 1 – 4 times a day. Set an alarm to avoid frostbite from using the ice pack too long.
- Put a pillow under your knees when you are lying down
- Sleep without a pillow under your head.
- Lose weight if you're overweight.
- Practice good posture. Stand with your head up, shoulders straight, chest forward, weight balanced evenly on both feet, and pelvis tucked in.
- Pain is the best way to judge the pace you should set in increasing your activity and exercise. Minor discomfort, stiffness, soreness, and mild aches need not interfere with activity. However, limit your activities temporarily if:
  - Your symptoms return
  - The pain increases when you are more active
  - The pain increases within 24 hours after a new or higher level of activity.

### **When can I return to my sport or activity?**

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon

you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport will be determined by how soon your back recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better. It is important that you have fully recovered from your low back pain before you return to your sport or any strenuous activity. You must be able to have the same range of motion that you had before your injury. You must be able to run, jump and twist without pain.

### **When can I do to help prevent low back pain?**

You can reduce the strain on your back by doing the following:

- Don't push with your arms when you move a heavy object. Turn around and push backwards so the strain is taken by your legs.
- Whenever you sit, sit in a straight-backed chair hold your spine against the back of the chair.
- Bend your knees and hips and keep your back straight when you lift a heavy object.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects higher than your waist.
- Hold packages you carry close to your body with your arms bent.
- Use a footrest for one foot when you stand or sit in one spot for a long

time. This keeps your back straight.

- Bend your knees when you bend over
- Sit close to the pedals when you drive and use your seat belt and a hard backrest or pillow
- Lie on your side with your knees bent when you sleep or rest. It may help to put a pillow between your knees.
- Put a pillow under your knees when you sleep on your back.
- Raise the foot of the bed 8 inches to discourage sleeping on your stomach unless you have other problems that require that you keep your head elevated.

To rest your back, hold each of these positions for 5 minutes or longer:

- Lie on your back, bend your knees, and put pillows under your knees.
- Lie on your back, put a pillow under your neck, bend your knees to a 90-degree angle, and put your lower legs and feet on a chair.
- Lie on your back, bend your knees, and bring one knee up to your chest and hold it there. Repeat with the other knee, then bring both knees to your chest. When holding your knee to your chest, grab your thigh rather than lower leg to avoid over flexing your knee.

**Have you been to our website?**

[www.spinescottsdale.com](http://www.spinescottsdale.com)

This is an opportunity for new patients to learn about us and previous patients to stay in contact with us. We update our website often, so please check back!

- [Learn about the staff at SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy](#)
- [Learn about all the services we provide](#)
- [Get directions to our facility](#)
- [Read testimonials from previous patients](#)

**Brittney's section...**

Brittney has been with SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy since May 2010. We recently had our patient's vote on whether or not I should give Brittney a raise. Brittney received an overwhelming 20 votes for "Yes" and 1 vote for "No." (I provided the only "No" vote). I decided to go with the majority vote and Brittney received a raise this December.

Brittney quote of the Quarter: After I mentioned to Brittney that our clinic space is so small...she asked me if I was getting "Valley Fever"...after laughing I said "No", but I'm getting "Cabin Fever!"

**Our new employee...**

SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy is proud to announce the hiring of Gina Mannino! Gina will be replacing Emily at the front desk while Emily will be working from home. Gina recently moved from Atlanta, Georgia and will soon be enrolled at ASU. If you are in the area, please stop by and welcome Gina to Scottsdale and to SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy!



**Physician of the Quarter**

SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy would like to recognize a local physician in every journal that has made significant contributions to the treatment of both spine and extremity conditions. This journal we would like to recognize: **Jeffrey Leitner, M.D.**



Stonecreek Medical Associates  
11209 N. Tatum Blvd., Suite 175  
Phoenix, AZ. 85028  
602-652-8900

We recently interviewed Dr. Leitner to find out more about his area of expertise: Family Medicine

**What Is Your Mission?**

My mission as a Family Physician is to provide quality care to my patients and their families. I believe it is essential to take a team approach to health care, which allows the patient to play an integral part in maintaining their optimal health care goals.

**What conditions do you provide care for?**

I provide care for many different conditions, from your common cold to complex chronic medical conditions. The conditions that I treat most often are diabetes, HTN, hyperlipidemia, as well as, many different urgent care issues. I provide care for patients of varying ages and believe that good health maintenance and screening is a crucial part of preventing future medical conditions.

**Why did you get in to family medicine?**

The reason I chose family medicine is because I believe in the family dynamic and the ability to prevent illness. I believe that good primary care is important in our aging population, both for continuity and overall community health maintenance. Being a family physician is extremely rewarding because I am able to not only treat individual patients, but their families as a whole.

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**Dr. Leitner is a physician at Stonecreek Medical Associates, P.C.**

**Stonecreek Medical Associates is located at 11209 N. Tatum Blvd., Suite 175. Phoenix, AZ 85028**

**To make an appointment with Dr. Leitner contact his office at: 602-652-8900**

## Using the Internet

SpineScottsdale is now using the internet to connect with the community. We are on Facebook, Twitter, Posterous, and Yelp! You can learn more about these internet sites below...



### **Facebook: Are you a fan?**

Perhaps you have heard of this social networking site that is gaining popularity...FACEBOOK. Well, SpineScottsdale has decided to be a part of the trend. You can find a link at our website, [www.spinescottsdale.com](http://www.spinescottsdale.com), to become a fan. You can post comments, view pictures, read articles, and tell your friends.



### **Twitter: Providing your patients tips on how to keep your spine healthy**

Every day, millions of people use Twitter to create, discover and share ideas with others. Now, SpineScottsdale is turning to Twitter as an effective way to provide you and members of the community tips on how to keep your spine healthy. You can find a link to our Twitter page at: [www.spinescottsdale.com](http://www.spinescottsdale.com)



### **Posterous: Evidence-based blog designed for health care professionals**

Are you interested in medical spine research? If so, I've created a blog page. I will be posting a weekly blog discussing the most recent evidence-based material on spine related issues. You can view this blog by going to: [spinescottsdale.posterous.com](http://spinescottsdale.posterous.com) and read my blogs that talk about the most recent evidence-based material on spine related issues.



### **Yelp: The purpose of YELP is to connect people with great local businesses.**

1. Yelp was founded in 2004 to help people find great local businesses.
2. As of May 2010, more than 32 million people visited Yelp in the past 30 days.
3. Yelpers have written over 11 million local reviews.
4. You can find out what other patients are saying about their experience at SpineScottsdale Physical Therapy at [www.yelp.com](http://www.yelp.com)



**New Patient Referral Program**

We appreciate the time you spent with us and for giving us the opportunity to provide you physical therapy. We would greatly appreciate if you would let others know about the service we provide and the results we can deliver.

As a token of our appreciation, when a new patient begins treatment as a result of your recommendation, we will contact you and you will receive one free item from the list below:

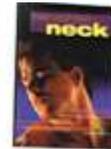
Lumbar Roll



Treat Your Own Back Book



Treat Your Own Neck Book



**Congratulations to Emily!**



Emily is pregnant and is due January 24<sup>th</sup>. We decided not to find out the gender of our child. Emily will continue to work from home and raise our first child. I'm so proud of Emily and I will personally miss her making my roast beef sandwiches at work.



### What are our patients saying?

"I want to express how satisfied I am with Shane's care and treatment protocols. He has demonstrated an innate ability to provide the most effective rehabilitation program while having a genuine concern for my well being. I am feeling almost 100% in less than a month from seeing Shane."

-George

"This was my first experience with physical therapy. Shane communicated very clearly which led to a relaxed and positive experience."

-Marcia

"Shane is fantastic. Not only did he correct my immediate problem of lower back pain, he has taught me how to be proactive in maintaining back health. I highly recommend him."

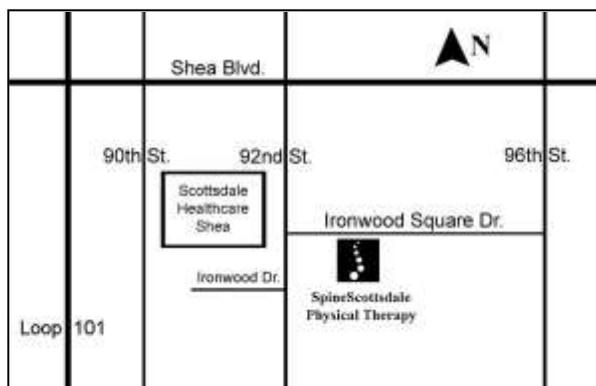
-Denise

"This has been a great experience and the results have been outstanding. Thank you for giving me my mobility back and relieving my pain. I would recommend Shane without exception!"

-Stephanie

"I have been coming here for a few months. I could hardly stand when my therapy started and had major pain in both legs and lower back. Within a short time the pain in my legs is gone and the back feels great. Everyone on staff is friendly and makes it a fun time. I have been to other doctors for physical therapy and Shane and the staff has helped more than anywhere else."

-Jason



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Shane Sullivan  
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Licensed Physical Therapist  
 Doctor of Physical Therapy  
 Certified in Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy  
 Board Certified Orthopedic Clinical Specialist  
 Certified Athletic Trainer  
 Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist