

TBI Model System Updates

Summer
2024
Volume 22
Issue 3

Enjoying Summer and Staying Healthy

Summer is usually the time of the year when there is a lot of fun things to do. The weather is nicer, there are outdoor festivals and farmers markets, live music and of course sports and other recreational activities. If you live in a place like the Pacific Northwest, you know the sun won't last, so people tend to pack a lot into a few short months. The busy calendar can be overwhelming, especially if you have had a brain injury. In this issue, we'll highlight tips from the Staying Healthy factsheet for your physical and mental health. We also asked some of our therapists what advice they give people about staying healthy and enjoying the warmer weather. We also have a shared story from someone with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

We hope you find the information helpful, and go enjoy summer!

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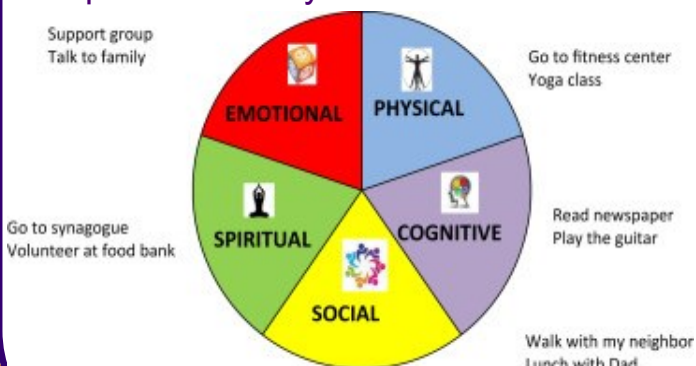


Tips from “Staying Healthy” Factsheet

Staying healthy after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) can be hard. TBI can cause negative changes in your physical and mental health and change how you think and feel. These changes can make it hard to take care of yourself and to prevent or manage other health problems.

Monitor your health

- Having tools to help you measure changes is important yet more difficult when memory or thinking has changed. Tools can be a scale, thermometer, or a blood pressure cuff. Apps on smart phones or watches can be very useful to track the information you collect
- Keeping a journal may help you notice changes in your body or behaviors that you need to pay attention to. Write down things like your water intake, medications you are taking, sleep patterns and how they affects you.
- Schedule regular check-ups with your doctor or health care provider. These are important to monitor your health and to identify potential problems early.



Maintaining your physical health

- Exercising– aim for getting 150 minutes of safe, moderate exercise in each week, as well as doing strength training exercises like weights or bands 2 times a week
- Eating well– Try to fill half your plate with fruits and veggies, a quarter with protein, and the last quarter with whole grains.
- Avoid Alcohol and Drugs– The impact is more pronounced for people who have had a TBI
- Sleeping well– Not getting enough sleep may affect our memory, thinking, energy and mood, which may already be impacted due to the injury. Aim for 7-8 hours each night
- Preventing another TBI– TBIs have a cumulative effect on how well our brain function. A second one would have a bigger effect

Maintaining Positive Mental Health

- TBI can cause negative changes in your emotions, which can make it harder for you to handle other types of stress caused by financial issues or stress with family and friends.
- Take frequent breaks, even 5 minutes to breathe, sit quietly or listen to music

An Interview with Harborview's Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Program (CORP) Therapists

We asked some of our therapists who see people in clinic to share tips and resources about staying healthy during the summer months.

Question: Tell us a little bit about what you do

Answer: We work as part of a comprehensive therapy team to evaluate and treat patients with neurological injuries. We see many patients with TBI.

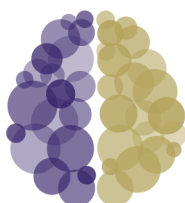
Question: From your point of view, what are things that people who have had a brain injury need to be more aware of during hotter months?

Answer: After a brain injury, people can find it hard to regulate their body temperature.

- ◇ Wear layers so you can adjust if you get cold or overheated
- ◇ Bring a water bottle with you to stay hydrated
- ◇ Consider using a cooling scarf or vest if you get easily overheated
- ◇ If you experience some sensitivity to light, remember to bring a hat or use sunglasses to feel more comfortable

Question: What are some things that people can do to help with challenges in getting back to being active?

Answer: It might be helpful to enlist friends or family to get back to doing activities



you enjoy. With any recreational activity, it's important to be safe. If wheels are involved, wear a helmet. Wear a life vest if you are doing water sports.

Question: Any other recommendations or resources you want to tell us about?

Answer: If you are interested in getting back to an activity that you have not done since your injury, you could meet with a Recreational Therapist to learn about adaptive strategies or find out more about community resources.

Click on these options to learn more

- ✿ [Outdoors for all](#)
- ✿ [Seattle Adaptive Sports](#)
- ✿ [Adaptive Yoga Northwest](#)
- ✿ [Footloose Sailing](#)
- ✿ [Access Tennis Seattle](#)
- ✿ [Path with Art](#)
- ✿ [Seize the Oar](#)
- ✿ [Seattle Community Centers](#)

Thank you

Fleur Godfried, MS, CCC-SLP, CBIS
(Speech Pathology)

Becky Hansen, PT, NCS (Physical Therapy)

Jenevive Obleada, OTR/L, CBIS
(Occupational Therapy)

Kristy Grant, CTRS/R (Recreational Therapy)

Getting back to being active after a brain injury with Tristan Todd

We spoke with Tristin to gain a little insight into how he stays active and share any words of advice to others about being active after a brain injury

Question: Tristin, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

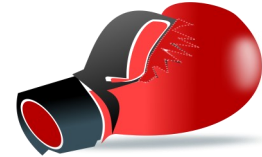
Answer: I'm a very motivated person who likes to challenge myself. I'm a friendly person who enjoys to travel.

Question: How long ago was your brain injury?

Answer: It was about 10 years ago.

Question: What things do you do to stay physically active?

Answer: I'm still into boxing, but I'm coaching instead of boxing myself. I teach youth classes for kids 8-17 years old as well as adult classes. The classes range in size from 6-10 people per class. I do the training with them and sometimes they like to challenge me because they don't think I can do it, so I have to show them I still got it. I do a lot of push up and sit ups for strength training as well as hitting the heavy bag.



Question: What activities changed after your brain injury?

Answer: I can't run anymore. I can run a little bit, but my foot feels like it's asleep or numb, so I don't go very far. I do jump rope and hit the heavy bag. I love boxing and wanted to go back, but I'm grateful that I get to coach and be a part of the training.

Question: Sounds like there are some things you couldn't do, but having some things that were familiar, or that you used to do was helpful. Right?

Answer: Yes, definitely

Question: Are there words of advice you have for others who are trying to get back to being active, or that you tell people in your classes?

Answer: I would tell them to continue to try. I know it's hard, but continue to push yourself and find different ways to do the things you used to do to stay in shape. Right after my injury I had balance issues, but they were gone by the time I left Seattle to come home. Stay focused, and try not to get frustrated when you can't do the things the way you want to do them. Keep a positive outlook. I also tell my students to push harder. When you hit that brick wall, you have to bust through.

Question: Do you feel like being physically active helped in your recovery?

Answer: I do think that staying active is important and helped in my recovery.

Shared Story Cont.

Tristin is a professional athlete that sustained a brain injury while competing in a boxing match here in Washington state.

He currently teaches both youth and adult boxing classes in Tennessee.

Thank you Tristin for telling us your story and sharing your positive message!

BIAWA Health and Wellness classes

2024 classes

March 22nd Advocacy Silas James

April 10th How to talk to others about your brain injury
Whitney Morean

May 9th Exercise and physical activity after brain injury
Charles Bombardier

June 27th Statistics of Research: The Why and the How
Andrew Humbert

July 10th Mindfulness and Relaxation Mary Curran

Click [Here](#) to find all the slides from past classes



Why Participate in Research?

Life can forever change after a TBI: Athletes, accident or violence survivors, our elders, Veterans, and many more. By taking part in research, you give the gift of hope to individuals with TBI and their loved ones, contribute to advances in the field, and help shape a future with new and improved therapies for generations to come.

TBIMS Updates

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UW TBIMS Equity Statement

The Traumatic Brain Injury Model System team does research to improve the health of people who have had traumatic brain injuries. Structural racism, which is any policy or procedure that contributes to inequality, can make people sicker, especially people who are Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, as well as LGBTQ+ communities, people with low income, and those with disabilities. We are committed to improve the lives and well being of people who have experienced traumatic brain injuries, and that includes using our research to increase awareness of the effects of racism.

If you would like to be added to the e-mail list for future publications and upcoming events, please email uwtbi@uw.edu. In the subject line, please type "subscribe newsletter".

If you would like a paper copy, contact us and we will send you a copy through the mail.

Do you have a story you would like to share?
We would love to hear from you! Please email us!
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