

In Touch



Fall, 2013 Above are some images of my recent kayak trip to South Moresby Island in Haida Gwaii Volume 3 Issue 1

It's that time: summer has departed and the season is changing. So, for my FALL 2013 NEWSLETTER, I thought I would share some information on staying fit and healthy this autumn. In this edition my three chosen topics can be related. After HIKING you may experience DELAYED ONSET MUSCLE SORENESS which may be relieved by an EPSOM SALTS BATH. I hope you find my thoughts and tips helpful.

Hiking

Fall can be a great season for hiking. Hiking can be enjoyable in good or inclement weather if you prepare for it. The Boy Scouts had it right with their motto, "Be Prepared". Here are some tips to help you hike safely and comfortably.

Remember not to hike after dark, never hike alone and stay on the trail to avoid poison ivy, brambles, and getting lost.

Be sure you are wearing appropriate shoes for your hike. Hiking boots should be well broken in; It's best to condition your shoes by wearing them for shorter periods of time before testing them on a longer hike. If you are buying new shoes remember that the old adage is true: If the shoe fits wear it. All the advice in the world from even the most knowledgeable of salespeople can not hold a candle to the opinion of your own feet. Try on several different pairs of boots to find out what feels the best. Common sense will likely guide you to a good fit.

Wear polyester liner socks (to wick away moisture) underneath a pair of wool or good quality socks. It's important to keep your feet warm and dry, so take an extra pair of socks in your pack.

Carry moleskin and check your feet for blisters periodically. It is also a good idea to carry some anti-chafing cream. Common areas that chafe are the arm pits and between the thighs.

Dress in layers so you can easily adapt to changes in climate and temperature.

Drink at least 4 ounces of water every 20 minutes to stay well hydrated. Be sure to carry enough food for the duration of your hike. Also bring a flashlight, a whistle, a first aid kit and of course a cell phone.

Hike quietly. Speak in low voices and turn your cell phone down, if not off. Enjoy the sounds of nature and let others do the same.

Hikers going downhill yield to those going uphill. Learn to use a compass. Use hiking sticks to protect your knees and help with balance.

Lastly, pack out your garbage and leave what you find. The only souvenirs a hiker should come home with are photographs and happy memories. (And maybe an improved fitness level!)

-Thanks to americanhiking.org-



Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness

The day after your hike, you may feel a little stiff or sore. It used to be believed that post exercise muscle soreness experienced after exercise, now referred to as delayed onset muscle soreness was caused by lactic acid. This is not accurate. Because lactic acid returns to normal levels within one hour of exercise, most experts now agree it does not cause the pain that occurs much later. Instead, it is now generally accepted that soreness that occurs 24 to 72 hours after exercise is due mostly to microscopic tearing of the muscle fibers, rather than an accumulation of lactic acid or lactic acid crystals in the muscle. These muscle fibers may be torn during unaccustomed “eccentric” motions such as the downward movement of a squat or a push-up. Damage to the muscle fibers occurs particularly in the muscle cell membranes and the bands that connect muscles. While different studies suggest a variety of specific causes, the secret to relieving the discomfort seems to be an increase in blood flow to the effected muscles.

Massage therapy is a wonderful way to increase blood flow, stretch and condition effected areas, and provide both relaxation and pain relief.



Epsom Salts Bath

Another option for releasing muscle tension may be an Epsom Salts Bath. Magnesium is known to have minimal muscle relaxing properties via skin absorption, but I have often wondered whether or not an Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate) bath really releases “toxins” from the body, or relaxes the muscles. In my research I have found that the likelihood of either effect is debatable.

All I know is that an Epsom salts bath feels good, and that is good enough for me.

In my many years as a practicing massage therapist, I have advised people with chronic muscle tension, to take Epsom salts baths because it may provide some relief from their pain. I believe it can be particularly helpful after a massage. So here is how you do it.

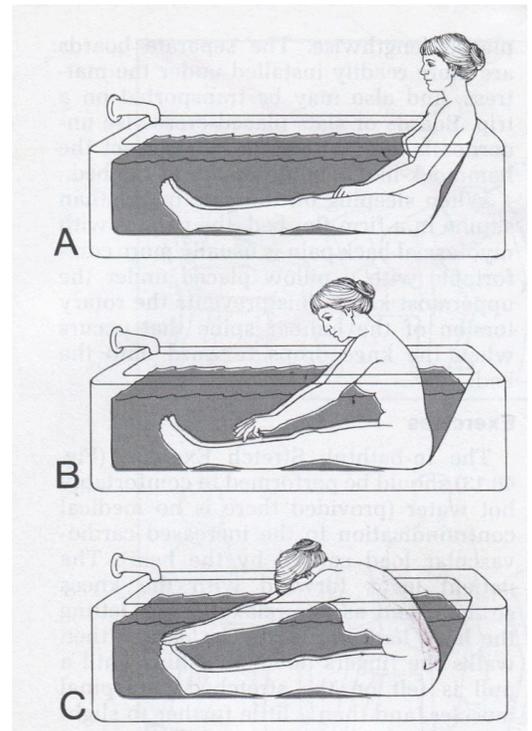
Pour 2 to 4 cups of epsom salts in the bathtub and run the water at a temperature which is as hot as you can comfortably tolerate. Soak in the bath for 15 or 20 minutes. Do not add any oils or use soap, as these chemicals can alter the chemistry of the water.

Keep a glass of cold water nearby and sip it as you bathe. You may also wring a towel in cold water and wrap it around your neck. If your pain is in your mid to lower back try the stretch illustrated at right. Keep the neck and back completely limp and relaxed. Hold the stretch for as long as is comfortable. This position puts a full stretch on both the hamstring and paraspinal back muscles. Make sure this stretch is absolutely pain free.

A note of caution: Do not take an Epsom salts bath if you have high blood pressure or heart or kidney problems.

Even if the deep feeling of relaxation you experience is just the result of the warmth of the water, an Epsom salts bath may add a little bit of joy to your life.

I hope you will find my suggestions useful.
I wish you and active, healthy and happy fall!



Travell & Simons 1983

References

[americanhiking.org/gear-resources/tips for your next hike](http://americanhiking.org/gear-resources/tips-for-your-next-hike)

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