

SUMMER 2016

# PainNews

News from **The Pain Center of Arizona**

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

*Fighting*

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**SUMMER FATIGUE**

Treating  
Neck  
Pain

*Without Surgery*

**AND**

Best Summer Footwear  
for Chronic Pain

**TPC**  
The Pain Center  
OF ARIZONA

# Fighting SUMMER FATIGUE



**W**hat do the sun and chronic pain conditions have in common? They both can cause fatigue! Have you noticed that you've gotten tired a lot earlier than normal lately? If so, you certainly are not alone. During the summer months, people are likely to feel more tired towards the end of the day than usual – and several chronic pain conditions already come with symptoms of fatigue, causing even more exhaustion by the end of the day.

## Why does this happen?

When people go outside during Arizona's scorching hot summers, the body has to work very hard to reach homeostasis, which means the body has to go into overdrive to keep cool by producing sweat. Without proper hydration, the body can't produce sweat and has to work even harder to cool down. The next line of defense is to widen blood vessels. As a result, blood pressure drops, resulting in low blood pressure. You may not be doing any strenuous activity, but on the inside, the body is trying to keep in balance, and doing it all together can be exhausting!

Fatigue is also an extremely common symptom of chronic musculoskeletal pain. It's reported that up to 94% of people suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome also experience muscle pain. There are some specific causes that may be responsible for increased fatigue. One possible source is pain medication, as many opioids have been known to leave patients feeling drowsy. Another reason is that chronic pain patients may experience more systemic stress due to their condition, which can lead to fatigue. Sometimes, the condition itself can cause fatigue. For instance, fibromyalgia patients experience what's known as "fibro fog," or a feeling of tiredness and the inability to concentrate, although we might not always understand why.

## What can you do about it?

Sleep is vitally important to people living with chronic pain. Getting enough sleep can improve mood, promote healing in the body, and leave people feeling more energized. Fortunately, there are many solutions to fight off feelings of fatigue during the day.

**CUT THE CAFFEINE** – It can be hard to resist grabbing a cup of coffee if you feel tired later in the day, but your body will be able to sleep better at night without the extra caffeine. A more restful sleep can mean less fatigue the next day.

**CHANGE YOUR MEDICATION** – If possible, ask your physician at The Pain Center of Arizona if he or she can recommend a medication that doesn't make you drowsy. If your current medication is working, he or she may be able to suggest a medication to decrease the side effects.

**EXERCISE** – When living with chronic pain, it can be hard to get up and get moving. However, not only can exercise decrease overall pain in the body, it can promote a regular sleep/wake cycle and allow you to leave feelings of drowsiness behind.

**LIMIT YOUR TIME IN THE SUN** – The Valley of the Sun has plenty of heat to go around, and you don't want to put your body through even more fatigue risk factors. If possible, limit your time outside and always be sure to drink plenty of water each day.

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**To make an appointment, call us today at  
1-888-PAINCENTER.**

# Treating Neck Pain

## *Without Surgery*

**N**eck pain is a common condition that affects more than a quarter of the U.S. population. According to the American Osteopathic Association (AOZA), neck pain is currently the third highest cause of chronic pain nationwide. Needless to say, this pain condition can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.

Many Americans have simply come to accept their neck pain because they believe it's either too mild to treat or it's normal with old age. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the AOA discovered one in two Americans believe pain is a part of life, and another 41% of people believe pain is a standard part of the aging process.

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**It's true your chance of developing neck pain increases with age, but that doesn't mean you have to live with debilitating discomfort.**

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The pain management specialists at The Pain Center of Arizona (TPC) meet with neck pain patients on a daily basis, and more often than not, these patients (figuratively) kick themselves for not seeking treatment sooner!

Pain is a nuisance, not a normal part of life, which is why the team at TPC is committed to providing all neck pain patients with the most effective and minimally invasive interventional pain therapies available today.

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**Fortunately, a large percentage of patients with mild neck pain do not have to undergo minimally invasive spine surgery for treatment.**

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If neck pain is caused by a minor strain, tear, or joint degeneration, it can usually be treated with interventional pain therapies such as:

- ***Steroid Injections***
- ***Nerve Blocks***
- ***Radiofrequency Neurotomy***

Patients with neck pain caused by an underlying chronic pain condition in the spine or separate part of the body may benefit most from:

- ***Intrathecal Pump Implantation***
- ***Spinal Cord Stimulation***
- ***Vertebroplasty***
- ***TENS Units***

Ultimately, treating neck pain without surgery is possible – it just depends on the patient's condition and symptoms. Having said that, patients should tell their TPC physician if they're beginning to experience symptoms of neck pain. Prolonging treatment could make things worse, causing serious complications that require surgical intervention. Don't put yourself in that position! Talk to your TPC physician about treatment options for your neck pain.

# Best Summer Footwear for Chronic Pain

It's officially summer in Arizona! Temperatures are rising, the pool looks inviting, and it's time to break out your best summer footwear. But before you slip on your favorite pair of go-to sandals, stop for a moment to consider how much support your shoes offer. Your feet are your foundation, and if they don't have the support they need, the rest of your body can shift into misalignment. This can be a problem for those with chronic pain conditions because, in many cases, your summer footwear may be the source of your increased pain.

## What to Avoid

**HIGH HEELS & FLIP FLOPS** – High heels and wedges can be the perfect addition to your summer outfit, but they have been known to exacerbate back pain. The heels put pressure on the toes and tilt the body forward, forcing you to lean back in order to stay balanced. This change in posture can put pressure on the sciatic nerve, cause muscle spasms, tissue damage, and more. Flip flops are easy because they can be slipped on in a hurry. However, many flip-flop styles provide hardly any cushion or arch support at all. Similar to heels, the alignment of your body changes when you wear flip-flops.

## What to Look For

### **SNEAKERS ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE GOLD STANDARD OF FOOTWEAR**

because they offer traction, padding, heel support, and ankle support. Patients suffering from chronic pain may benefit from specialized footwear, but patients can also modify their current sneakers with gel insoles to provide arch support and additional cushioning. Wearing sneakers can make patients suffering from joint pain and low back pain more comfortable during the summer months.

If you suffer from chronic pain due to any condition or injury, find hope at The Pain Center of Arizona! Our dedicated team of board certified pain management physicians will work with you to treat your pain, increase your functionality and quality of life, and get

you back into life! We have locations across Arizona, including the Phoenix metropolitan, Northern, and Southern areas! We take multiple insurance plans.

To make an appointment and take the first step toward getting back into life, **call us today at 1-888-PAINCENTER**. We hope to see you soon!

*The advice and information contained in these articles are for educational purposes only, and is not intended to replace or counter a physician's advice or judgment. Please always consult your physician before taking any advice learned here or in any other educational medical material.*

