



Joe Steckler



Take Care of Yourself

Dear Friends;
Over the years I have written about keeping fit, taking care of oneself, and managing pain. Now, I must admit that I have failed to follow my own advice. I could blame it on getting older, because it is more difficult to get to the gym or exercise without it hurting, but regardless of the reason, I do need to develop a physical fitness program that works for me.

I am encouraged in this endeavor by other seniors who are coping with problems of aging that many readers would not believe. For the past nine months I have served as the education specialist for Helping Seniors. Doing so has introduced me to some pretty tough senior citizens.

Many callers are living on a nearly impossible financial margin. Would you believe I talked to three people in one day who could qualify for Veteran's aid and Attendance and double their monthly income? Some people are coping with the loss of a spouse, others are taking large doses of over-the-counter medications to ease their pain problems because they cannot afford the medication or the doctor will not prescribe it.

These stories of resilience have made me painfully aware of my resolve to take better care of myself. For starters; I need to get more sunshine. I need to walk. I need to use these weights I keep beside my chair. A certain level of impact work

is essential to a well rounded exercise program. Most importantly, I need to do things I am capable of doing.

Then there is pain management. Years ago I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Little is understood about this disorder, which seems to be a catch-all for difficult or unsolvable symptoms (remember I am a non-medical person). Fibromyalgia affects the young as well as the old. Imagine a 15-year-old telling her parents she hurts so bad she can not walk, go to school, or continue as a star goalie for her soccer team.

There is no immediate answer for all the problems which I am discussing, but it is very important for you to listen to what your aches and pains are telling you. Your doctor or PA can only hear what you are describing to them. Do a little research on your own to become better informed about your specific symptoms. You might be surprised at what you are able to discover, and help your doctor in diagnosing your problem.

I learned the hard way to be better informed. The internet is a great teacher, just don't become your own doctor. We do plan to form a Fibromyalgia Support Group once we settle into our new offices at Zon Beachside Assisted Living this month, so stay tuned.

Contact Helping Seniors at (321)473-7770 or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937. The current endowment level is \$900, and we welcome all donations.

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