



IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Exercise is medicine for **Dr. Michael Montgomery**, the head of the new **Priority Care Clinic at South Texas Bone & Joint**.

By: REBECCA ESPARZA

SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL INJURIES DON'T HAPPEN ON A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE. UNFORTUNATELY, THEY CAN HAPPEN ANYTIME, AND SOMETIMES, WAITING SEVERAL WEEKS FOR AN

appointment just isn't an option. Thanks to the new Priority Care Clinic at South Texas Bone & Joint, Coastal Bend-area residents have another choice besides a traditional hospital emergency room visit.

Opened in September, the Priority Care Clinic sees those who need concussion evaluation and treatment, high school, collegiate and professional sports injuries, muscle tears, overuse injuries or sprains and fractures. Ap-

pointments are not mandatory, and the clinic is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dr. Michael Montgomery, who is fellowship trained in primary care sports medicine, oversees the Priority Care Clinic and cautions against not seeking medical care for serious injuries. Even if the injury seems minor in nature, it may still require immediate attention.

"If you feel like something is off to the point where you can no longer enjoy certain activities, or the pain won't allow you to do something you want to do, it might be time to see a doctor," Montgomery says. "And taking over-the-counter pain relievers is not a long-term solution. Taking certain types of pain relievers for a long period of time can damage your kidneys or create stomach problems."

Medicine is not always the first treat-

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ment plan for a patient with a sports medicine injury. Physical therapy is often the key to healing, depending on the injury. "We also consider traction for back pain, massage therapy, electrical stimulation and most simply, rest," Montgomery says. "Letting the body heal works in many cases. Also, we might recommend exercises that strengthen the part of the body that was injured."

Montgomery says preventing injuries in the first place not only saves time and money, but aggravation and suffering, too. "There are so many benefits of regular exercise, including injury prevention," he says. "I believe exercise is medicine. Even moderate physical activity like walking is better than nothing."

Studies have proven those who exercise reduce their risk of heart disease

and diabetes, Montgomery notes. Exercise can also help alleviate symptoms like anxiety and depression. Those who lead more physically active lifestyles are at decreased risk for developing certain types of cancer, including breast and colon.

"It doesn't even have to be long amounts of exercise," Montgomery says. "We now know getting at least 30 minutes of exercise, five times a week can make a tremendous difference in a person's overall health."

He adds that those 30 minutes don't have to be consecutive, either. "Park further out, and enjoy the long walk to and from the car. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. It's the little things that add up and give you tremendous health benefits over time."

Exercise can also help prevent certain types of sports injuries by improving range of motion and strengthening core muscles in the body.

Montgomery, born and raised in Longview, Texas, says he's always been fascinated by medicine, even as a young child. "I can remember being fascinated with science class in sixth grade. When I started figuring out how the human body works, everything made sense to me. I knew this was where my passion was."

After earning his degree in biology from Texas A&M-College Station, he earned his

master's degree in business at LeTourneau University in Houston. After working several years in the business private sector, he realized he needed to continue his studies in medicine, so he went to the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston for his medical degree. He finished his residency at the University of Texas in Houston and then completed a fellowship in sports medicine at the University of Texas in Tyler.

Now Montgomery says he feels lucky to do something he loves while helping people at the same time. Not only does he see patients every day at the clinic, but he also goes into the community, lending his medical expertise to young football athletes.

"I attend Miller and King High School football games to be available onsite for any injuries," he says. "I love working with high school athletes ... they are so enthusiastic about their love of sports. It's a lot of excitement and adrenaline – a wonderful way to give back a little of myself to the community, which has welcomed me with open arms." Montgomery says the best part of his job is seeing his happy and grateful patients.

"It's the most rewarding feeling to see patients I've helped feel better and recover from their injuries. It makes all those long hours and nights of hard work worth it."



For more information about the services at **South Texas Bone & Joint**, visit www.southtexasboneandjoint.com, or follow the group on Facebook and Twitter. And to make an appointment at **Dr. Michael Montgomery's new Priority Care Clinic**, call 361-854-0811. The clinic is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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