



**BRAIN INJURY  
ASSOCIATION  
OF LONDON  
AND REGION**

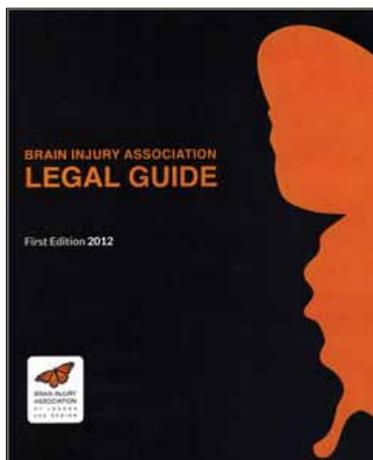
Spring Issue March 2014

# THE MONARCH

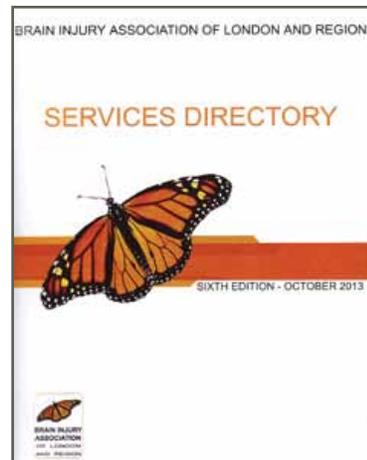
*Health And Fitness*



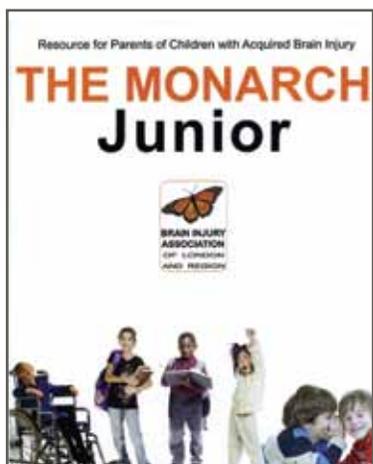
# Check Out These Great Resources!



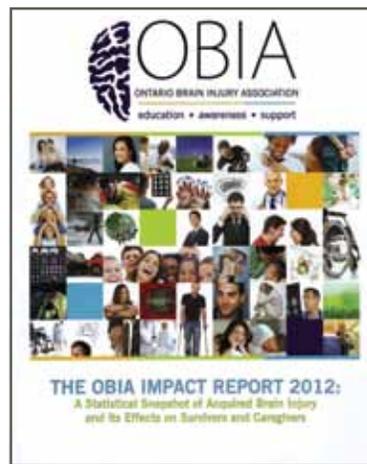
This legal guide is published by BIALR, in collaboration with Harrison Pensa, and is in its first edition. It is designed to provide straightforward accessible explanation of key legal issues and fundamental legal rights of those who have suffered brain injuries and their support teams. Print copies are available from the BIALR office and electronically on the website.



This directory is published by BIA London and Region and is in its 6th edition. It is designed to help individuals suffering from the effects of a brain injury identify and locate the services in London and Region. (Print copies are available from the BIALR office and electronically on the website.)



This resource is published by BIALR and is in its first edition. This compilation of articles is designed as an informational resource for parents of children who are suffering from the effects of an acquired brain injury. Print copies are available from the BIALR office.



The OBIA Impact Report 2012 is published by the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA), with support and funding provided by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation. It is designed as an easy to read statistical snapshot of acquired brain injury and its effects on survivors and their caregivers. Electronic copies are available on the OBIA website.

## Online Resources:

Brain Injury Association of London and Region - [braininjurylondon.on.ca](http://braininjurylondon.on.ca)

Ontario Brain Injury Association - [obia.ca](http://obia.ca)

Brainline.org, preventing, treating, and living with traumatic brain injury - [brainline.org](http://brainline.org)

Brain Injury Association of Queensland - [synapse.org.au](http://synapse.org.au)

National Resource Center for Traumatic Brain Injury ( Virginia Commonwealth University) - [www.tbinrc.com](http://www.tbinrc.com)

# In This Issue

## ABOUT US

- 2 - Brain Injury Resources
- 5 - Letter From the Executive Director
- 5 - Board of Directors
- 6 - Highlighting Our Volunteers

## SUPPORT

- 9 - Peer Support Coordinators Report
- 10 - Brain Injury Support Groups
- 11 - Stop The Broken Record
- 13 - Exercise And ABI



## ADVOCACY

- 23 - Ask A Lawyer
- 25 - Local Resources



## EDUCATION

- 15 - Simple Smoothies in 123..
- 16 - Buff Brain Healthy Body
- 19 - Fitness And ABI
- 21 - Aquatic Therapy



## AWARENESS

- 26 - Meditation And ABI
- 27 - From Mainstream To Brainstream
- 29 - Fuel Your Physical Activity

## EVENTS

- 31 - The London Nationals
- 33 - Up Coming Events
- 34 - Advertisers Index



## Seeing you through.

The Personal Injury Lawyers at Harrison Pensa are knowledgeable and experienced in all areas of personal injury law. If you have sustained an injury, we can help you to understand your options. Whatever your injury, we are committed to achieving the best possible results in the best possible way.

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*In any case.*

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# Letter from The Executive Director

Optimal health and fitness is key to living a good life at any time, but especially after a brain injury. This issue of the Monarch addresses several avenues to maintain health and fitness.

Since the beginning of this year, we have been busy securing funds to maintain our financial fitness for 2014. The Brain Injury Association of London & Region does not receive any public funding, therefore we need to constantly fundraise to continue providing the level of services we offer. One of the important financial streams is our signature Sponsorship Catalogue. We are now into our second year of this formalized sponsorship program and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the sponsors who have committed to supporting our organization again this year. We simply could not exist without your support!

The fundraising committee has planned an amazing evening of cocktails, appetizers, live & silent auctions and an outstanding performance of The Piano Men Show performed by Jim Witter. Guests will enjoy dancing to the sounds of Billy Joel and Elton John.

Our 17th Annual ABI conference is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9, 2014. The conference committee is currently working diligently to advertise 'Making the Difference'. The conference offers something for everyone, including a special afternoon break out session geared to survivors and family members.

The Helmets on Kids partnership is hard at planning for this year's kickoff event at Holy Family Elementary School on June 19, 2014. This year, the partnership has developed sponsorship levels. Over the past 12 years, we have distributed over 15,000 bike helmets to kids in our area. This is one of the few unique campaigns where 100% of the donations are used to purchase helmets. We are hoping to obtain another grant this year to continue to spread the 2-V-1 message.

The Association is pleased to be invited to join the See the Line Concussion Research and Awareness partnership. The See the Line Symposium held last August was a resounding success and we are truly honoured to be part of the movement!

Spring is a great time to renew your health and fitness goals. Take a daily walk with a friend to enjoy the beautiful blossoms on the trees, attend a yoga class, and commit to eating healthier.

Donna Thomson

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# Highlighting Our..... Volunteers

## Joanne Ruediger

### Tell us a little about yourself?

I am a Speech Language Pathologist who works with children and adults who have acquired brain injuries. Although my office is located in Stratford, I travel to many of the counties that the Brain Injury Association of London & Region also serves (and then some!) to see my clients and their families. My husband and I moved to Stratford "for a year" about twenty five years ago and we never left. We enjoy the Stratford Festival and Stratford Summer Music Festival. It has been a wonderful place to live and to raise a family.

### How long have you been volunteering with the Brain Injury Association?

I have been participating in the monthly Brain Injury Support group for many years, often accompanying clients and families to their first meetings at the support group. I saw first-hand how much those meetings helped survivors and families, and I learned so much from them. From 2009-2013 I was on the Board of Directors and sat on several committees. In 2010, I helped get the first Social Leisure group up and running in Stratford. It meets weekly, and is called the Grateful Heads and was led by Jennifer Vanderkant, in partnership with Dale Brain Injury Services. Currently, I co-chair the Perth County Brain Injury Support group which meets the last Tuesday of each month, with John Diamond and Jessica Carman.

### Why did you choose to volunteer with the BIA?

I feel so privileged to be able to work with the families that I do, and I recognize that having a support system is essential to a good outcome, to learning to "live with" a brain injury, so volunteering seemed a natural thing to do. I have seen what an amazing job Donna Thomson does with limited resources, and an abundance of energy and commitment, and I wanted to support the organization that has helped my clients and countless others who don't have a full rehab team supporting them.

### What makes you come back to BIA year after year?

The need for services and support has only grown with the increased public awareness of concussion and brain injury, and I have seen how survivors and family members help each other work through problems, or just listen to one another, and what a difference it makes in their lives. I have learned so much from my clients and from other group members that I want to continue to be there, alongside them.

### Do you have a favourite moment from your time here that you can and would like to share?

In 2011, the Grateful Heads decided to make a video about their journey through brain injury. We partnered with the Communications Tech students from St. Michael's high school in Stratford...watching those high school students film our group members as they told their stories was more than inspirational...and it also provided lots of laughs and a few tears.

This year, Mike's Walk ended in Stratford at the Grateful Heads group and I was lucky enough to be invited...again, the group and students from St. Al's, the elementary school next door, made me proud to live in Stratford and volunteer with the Brain Injury Association. These kids waited outside with the Grateful Heads group, on a very hot day and gave Mike a rock star welcome. It was amazing.

### What would you say to someone that is considering volunteering with BIA?

You will never regret it! If sitting on a committee or running a group isn't for you, there are lots of other opportunities and "small" jobs that all need to be done. With no government funding, the Board has a huge job to raise the money needed to continue to provide services in the five counties. Sponsors have become increasingly important and play an essential role. And survivors know it – they appreciate the time and the money that goes into providing services, the annual conference and many other projects.

# Just A Note To Say Thank You!



## Janko Stukic

### Tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Janko Stukic and I am 29 years old and it has been 10 years since I acquired my brain injury. At the time of my injury, I was 19 years old and living in The Bronx, New York City. I was attending Fordham University on a full soccer scholarship! I came home for Christmas of my freshman year and I went out to visit some friends before heading back to New York. On the way home, we got into a single vehicle accident in the early morning hours of January 17, 2004.

Brain injury has completely changed my life! I was unable to return to Fordham University after my brain injury but I have since attended Fanshawe College (as a part-time student) and I graduated on April 30, 2009 with a certificate in general business. At present, I am a member of Cornerstone Clubhouse and I volunteer at the Brain Injury Association of London and Region (BIALR).

### How long have you been volunteering with the Brain Injury Association?

I first started volunteering at the Brain Injury Association 4 or 5 years after my brain injury. My Speech Language Pathologist brought the idea of volunteering to me and not long after that I was connected with the BIALR.

### Why did you choose to volunteer with the BIA?

I was really excited when I was first told of who was interested in my services because I felt a strong connection with the BIA seeing as I had a brain injury. To me, I was going to be able to help and give back to a cause that I was directly involved in!! Therefore, there was no chance that I was going to look somewhere else.

### What makes you come back to BIA year after year?

I look forward to each and every time I come to the BIA. I am someone that likes to be kept busy and always have something to do and this happens while I am at the Brain Injury Association. I enjoy the tasks that I am given to work on, the people I have met and the relationships that I have made since I started here. It's been a blessing for me!

### Do you have a favourite moment from your time here that you can and would like to share?

I cannot recall one specific moment from my time here, as I just enjoy coming each week and I am glad that I am wanted and welcomed back!

### What would you say to someone that is considering volunteering with BIA?

You will benefit from your time at the Brain Injury Association. If you give a lot, you will get a lot from your time here. It is a great place and the people associated with BIA are wonderful. I cannot say enough.

Thank you for everything you do for me and the rest of the brain injured community.



**DUAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Brain Injury Association of London and Region & The Ontario Brain Injury Association**

Invite you to belong to both organizations for one low fee!

Further information and the application form can be found at

[www.braininjurylondon.on.ca](http://www.braininjurylondon.on.ca) under "How to help"




**Cornerstone Clubhouse**



A Dale Brain Injury Services day and evening program for adults living with the effects of an acquired brain injury.

- A place to come and belong
- The opportunity for meaningful work
- The opportunity for meaningful relationships

**Supporting Success**

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**A Great Fit.**

McKenzie Lake Lawyers are proud to support The Brain Injury Association of London and Region.

Thank you for all that you do for our community.



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**DISCLAIMER:**

The Monarch is published by the Brain Injury Association of London and Region.

Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Board of Directors.

All articles remain in their submitted un-edited form to preserve the original views and intent of the author.

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Editors: Editorial Committee

**Layout and Design:**  
**Stephanie McGill**  
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# Peer Support Coordinator's Report

Once a person's life has been affected by an acquired brain injury their lives face many, often drastic changes. One of these changes is the transition from what was possibly an active, healthy way of living to a more sedentary one. The reasons for this change can be because the body is incapable of moving as it once did, it is almost impossible to find time to eat and exercise properly due to the demands of caretaking for a person with a brain injury, or quite possibly an "I don't care anymore attitude has been adopted. It is crucial to eat properly and get plenty of exercise after sustaining a brain injury because it is much harder to lose weight and remain fit for any of the reasons I have mentioned. Both my former partner and I were fit athletes before we acquired our respective brain injuries and we are much more unfit now due to the change in our lifestyles from active athletes to sedentary individuals. The Peer Support Mentoring Program is a great way to learn tips and strategies from others who have been there, done that and not just for keeping fit, but any issue or problem that you may be encountering. If you have ever uttered, "I just wish somebody would understand what I'm going through!", or, "I just want to talk to somebody who gets it"! The Peer Support Program is the right choice for you.



**Jamie Fairles**

Peer Support Coordinator  
519-642-4539

[editorial@braininjurylondon.on.ca](mailto:editorial@braininjurylondon.on.ca)

## Looking To Get Involved?

We are looking for individuals to become mentors in our Peer Mentor Program. Mentors provide support and share information and resources with partners who are coping with a similar ABI-related situation. We are in particular need of mentors who are family members and caregivers. Visit our website or contact our Peer Support Coordinator for more information.

[www.braininjurylondon.on.ca](http://www.braininjurylondon.on.ca)

# Brain Injury Support Groups

If you or someone you love has experienced a Brain Injury, you may benefit from participating in one of our many support groups. Groups meet either monthly or weekly and offer you the chance to learn more about living with ABI. Discuss common issues and problems or have fun in a positive environment.

 <p><b>Huron County Support Group</b>            Meets the last Monday of each month            At the Huronview Home for the Aged            77722A London Road            Clinton, On. N0M 1L0            7:00 - 9:00pm</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Your logo could be here</div> <p><b>London Social Leisure Group</b>            Meets the first Thursday of each month            Cornerstone Clubhouse            781 Richmond Street            London, On            6:00 - 8:00pm</p>
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Your logo could be here</div> <p><b>Perth County Support Group</b>            Meets the last Tuesday of each month            Zehrs Markets            2nd Floor Community Room            865 Ontario Street            Stratford, On            7:00 - 9:00pm</p>	 <p><b>Oxford County Support Group</b>            Meets the last Tuesday of each month            Dundas United Church            285 Dundas Street            Woodstock, On            6:30 - 8:30pm</p>
 <p><b>Perth County Social Leisure Group</b>            Meets every Wednesday of each month            Central United Church            194 Avondale Avenue            Stratford, On            1:00 - 4:00pm</p>	 <p><b>Elgin County Support Group</b>            Meets the second Wednesday every month            At the Real Canadian Superstore            2nd Floor Community Room            1063 Talbot Street            St.Thomas, On            6:30 - 8:30pm</p>
 <p><b>London/Middlesex Support Group</b>            Meets the last Thursday of each month            First Baptist Church London            568 Richmond Street (parking in rear)            London, On            7:00 - 9:00pm</p>	<p><b>Elgin County Social Leisure Group</b>  <b>Cancelled</b>            We apologize for any inconvenience</p>



# STOP THE BROKEN RECORD

Written By: Stephanie Hutton

**Before my acquired brain injury (ABI) you would have needed roller blades to keep up with me. Between marathon and triathlon training, teaching 6 spinning classes a week, weight training and fitness competitions plus two full time jobs I barely had time to eat!**

**And then BAM. A bike crash halted a busy schedule and left me in the dark with only a yoga mat.**

**Yoga came into my life many years before the injury as a method of healing my overworked body but after it became an important tool I reach to daily along my journey to recovery. As you may already know anxiety is a large part of brain injury. Anxiety presents in brain injured people not only from the physiological changes in the brain due to the actual injury or trauma but also the emotional response from not feeling like “you”. Thoughts like “When am I going to feel like me again?” Or “Why did this happen to me?” can plague the brain injured mind at all hours of the day like a bad ipod playlist on repeat. How can someone be expected to rest, relax and heal with this going on?**

**Through yoga I am able to stop the broken record in my mind using asanas (poses) and pranayama (breath exercises) to take back control of my breath relieving anxiety. Not convinced? There’s even science to back me up!**

**Timothy McCall MD, author of Yoga as medicine, says yoga induces a relaxation response by first stimulating the sympathetic nervous system with active poses and then using more calming poses to activate the parasympathetic nervous system producing a rare moment of quiet to heal the anxious mind. In a 2007 study researchers in Boston found that doing yoga increases levels of GABA, or gamma-aminobutyric acid, a neurotransmitter that may help reduce anxiety.**

**You don’t have to have had a brain injury for this to help. Try it with me....come on!**

**Close your eyes. Take a deep breathe in through your nose to the count of four. Hold it for four. Exhale to a count of four. Hold for four. Do this a few times anytime during your day and enjoy the benefits of a more calm, focused mind.**

**For more information about specific yoga poses to help with your ABI feel free to contact me at [mrsstephhutton@gmail.com](mailto:mrsstephhutton@gmail.com).**



# HELMETS ON KIDS

*a Community Partnership*

We are now accepting donations to our 12th Annual Helmets On Kids Campaign

Donate Now!  
Go To

[www.helmetsonkids.ca](http://www.helmetsonkids.ca)



If you've been seriously injured we can help. Our focus is on your needs - there's no reason to go through a major trauma alone.

At some point, everyone can use a hand.

Motor Vehicle Collisions  
Traumatic Brain Injuries  
Orthopaedic Injuries  
Spinal Cord Injuries  
Wrongful Death Claims  
CPP & Disability Claims  
Dangerous Premises  
Product Liability

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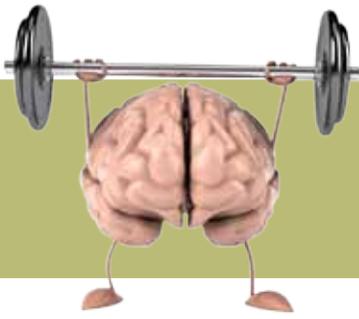
## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE



OBIA continues to conduct research on ABI in Ontario and in 2012 released **The OBIA Impact Report 2012: A Statistical Snapshot of Acquired Brain Injury and its Effects on Survivors and Caregivers.**

Through your participation in our Research Study, you provide us with the information needed to report on brain injury statistics across the province, allowing us to better inform policy makers, government officials, service providers and the general public.

For information about our Research Study or to request an OBIA Research Questionnaire, please contact: Katie Muirhead at 1.800.263.5404 ext. 229 or [kmuirhead@obia.on.ca](mailto:kmuirhead@obia.on.ca)



## Exercise Improves Quality of Life for Persons with Acquired Brain Injuries

Written By: Lesley Fairles

Exercise can positively affect the lives of those who suffer from a acquired brain injury . A regular exercise program has been shown to improve mood, cognitive functioning and increased energy, which are imperative in the rehabilitation of brain injury. In addition, cardiovascular exercise, such as walking, swimming and cycling will lower the risk of heart disease and diabetes. A strength-training program of light weight-lifting can strengthen muscles and bones while lowering the risk of osteoporosis.

While it may seem challenging for persons with brain injuries to embark on an exercise program, a unique program can be designed for each person to match their specific needs and challenges. Some ways in which to start exercising in a safe and effective manner is to enlist the help of an experienced Personal Trainer. A trainer can work with you and your team of therapists to provide you with exercises which can optimize your rehabilitation. There are various ways of modifying exercises to ensure the client is able to perform the exercises, as exercise should be fun too!

As a Personal Trainer, I have worked with 2 clients with acquired brain injuries, my brother and his wife. My brother, Jamie, has specific mobility issues with the left side of his body, making exercising quite challenging for him. I designed a unique program for him, which focused on strength-training exercises to help improve his overall fitness, but recognized the fact he has little balance and can fall easily. Training clients with ABIs is very different from working with other clients, as the body is not physically capable of the movements, but rather the brain will not send the signals to get the body moving in the desired range of motion. I found it helpful to support and encourage the client, and continue to modify the exercises to my brother's specific needs and limitations.

My brother and his wife are able to exercise together , which is a great way for persons with brain injuries to start an exercise program. Having a friend, relative or care-taker begin a fitness routine with you; start by walking together. If walking is a challenge, perhaps swimming or another form of aerobic activity can be done together. Regular exercise will help integrate the person back into the community, while providing a sense of accomplishment. This is not to say that starting an exercise program will be easy. Attempting to try new physical feats can prove to be difficult, so patience and positive reinforcement is important. This is true for all people starting a new exercise program!

Most importantly, exercise should be done frequently (3 to 5 times a week) in order to reap the benefits.

For people with acquired brain injuries, including exercise in a weekly routine can assist in ensuring the exercises are completed regularly. After 2 to 3 months of consistent exercise, you can expect to notice improvements in your quality of life!



Parkwood Hospital invites those who have survived a brain injury, their partners, parents, family members, and friends to their

## 2014 Acquired Brain Injury Survivor and Family Education Series

The goals of this series are to share information, provide opportunities to meet other individuals and family members affected by brain injury, and to encourage peer support.

The sessions are held on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Parkwood Auditorium on the main level of Parkwood Hospital. See dates and topics of sessions below.

The sessions are also video-conferenced each Tuesday evening to participating sites throughout Southwestern Ontario, including:

- Chatham New Beginnings Club
- Grand Bend Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre
- Owen Sound Home and Community Support Services office
- Sarnia Community Living Sarnia-Lambton
- Stratford Stratford General Hospital
- Windsor Windsor Regional Hospital – Oullette Campus

Please note: Additional sites may be added prior to the beginning of the series

<b>March 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Brain Injury 101 – Part 1</b> Speakers: Kelly Williston Wardell & Lisa McCorquodale
<b>April 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Brain Injury 101 – Part 2</b> Speakers: Kelly Williston Wardell & Jill Bowen
<b>April 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Practical Strategies for Managing Your Life</b> Speaker: Amy Abbruzzese
<b>April 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Psychiatric Aspects of Brain Injury</b> Speaker: Dr. Rebecca King
<b>April 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Community Resources</b> Speaker: Omer Vandevyvere
<b>April 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Role Changes Following ABI</b> Speaker: Bob Lomax & Jill Bowen
<b>May 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Vision, Vestibular &amp; Auditory Issues Following ABI</b> Speakers: Shannon McGuire & Patti Hinton
<b>May 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Survivors' Stories</b>

You are welcome to attend,  
one, some, or all of the  
sessions.

Please contact Wendy Davis at 519-685-4064 or toll-free at 1-866-484-0445 to reserve your place for each evening you choose to attend or to clarify location of other sites.



# Simple Smoothies In 1 2 3

A lot of people like smoothies, but few people bother to make them at home because of all the effort and the mess. But it doesn't have to be that way!

These recipes are perfect because they only contain three ingredients each. For an even easier solution hit the grocery store for your ingredients, and then make "smoothie packs" for the whole week. Place measured-out ingredients for each smoothie in a plastic bag. When you need to be refreshed, pull a bag out of the freezer, dump its contents in a blender and your ready to enjoy a healthy snack packed full of nutrients.



**Blueberries**  
**Almond Butter**  
**Almond Milk**

How to: Place 1 cup frozen blueberries, 1 tablespoon almond butter, and & 1 cup unsweetened almond milk into a blender.



**Bananas**  
**Peanut Butter**  
**Cacao Powder**

How to: Place 1 peeled frozen banana, 2 tablespoons peanut or almond butter, 2 tablespoons cacao powder, and 1/3 cup water into a blender.



**Bell Pepper**  
**Orange**  
**Coconut Oil**

How to: Place 1 red bell pepper (quartered, stem and seeds removed), 1 peeled navel orange, and 1 tablespoon coconut oil into a blender.



**Green Apple**  
**Avacodo**  
**Ginger**

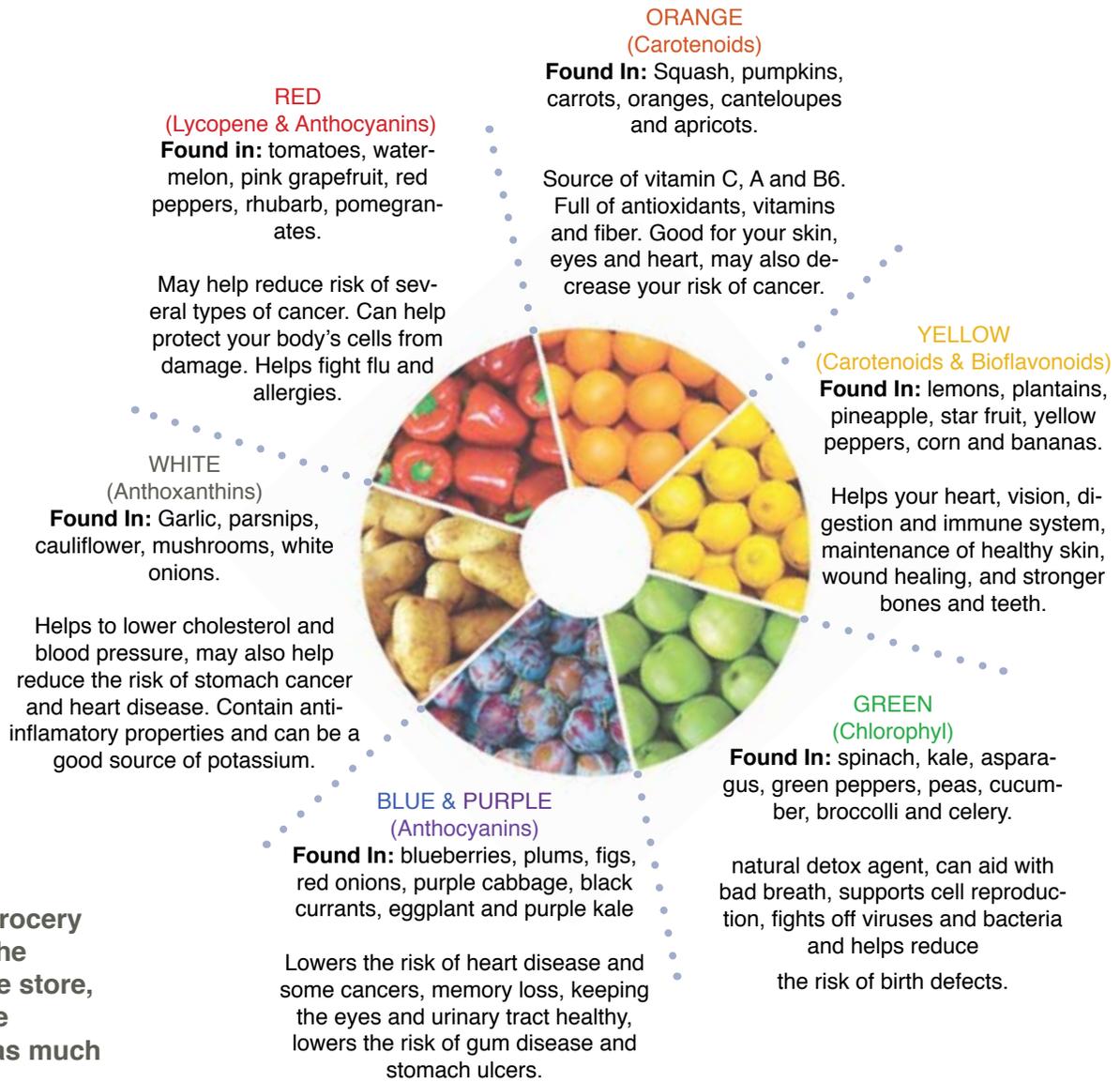
How to: Place 1 green apple (cored, and cut into chunks), 1 cup frozen spinach, 1 piece peeled, fresh ginger (cut into small pieces), and 1 cup water into a blender.

# Buff Brain Healthy Body!

## ADD SOME COLOUR

One of the best approaches to shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables is to remember this rule of thumb: eat from the rainbow. If you are wondering why your body has some mineral and nutrient deficiencies, it is because you have neglected to consistently add color to your diet. Each fruit and vegetable of different colours, adds a host of health benefits that are essential.

**Tip:** Shop When you are well fed. You will make smarter food choices when you are not hungry.



**Tip:** Try to grocery shop along the outside of the store, and avoid the center aisle as much as possible.

# What You Need To Know To Keep Fit Mentally & Physically

## 2 DITCH PROCESSED FOOD

There are certain things that you ingest, willingly and unknowingly, that directly affect the brain. Taking in neurotoxic substances is a form of malnutrition. These foods, additives, and preservatives can be toxic to brain cells, even in small amounts.

### Gluten

#### Negative Symptoms:

- Headaches or brain "fog"
- Joint and muscle pain
- Chronic fatigue and weakness
- Behavioral issues, seizures, depression

### High Fructose Corn Syrup

#### Negative Symptoms:

- Insulin resistance and obesity
- Elevated blood pressure
- Higher triglycerides and LDL
- Cardiovascular disease, liver disease

### Artificial Sweeteners

#### Negative Symptoms:

- Disrupts protein metabolism
- Disrupts neuronal functions
- Causes improper functioning of enzymes

### Refined Sugar

#### Negative Symptoms:

- Suppresses BDNF, a key growth hormone.
- Creates chronic inflammation, over time inflammation suppresses the immune system which negatively affects brain function.

### Partially Hydrogenated Oils

#### Negative Symptoms:

- PHO's are not metabolized in your body like natural fats, and can result in a deformed cellular structure.
- It is said PHO's may be responsible for as many as 30,000 premature coronary deaths a year.

### Artificial Dyes & Additives

#### Negative Symptoms:

- Blue #2 -Animal testing reveals evidence of brain cancer in male rats.
- Red#3 -Animal testing reveals this dye causes thyroid cancer in rats.
- Yellow#6 -Causes hyperactivity in children

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- Module 7:** Support Roles: Team and Family

**Date:** May 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (Tuesday and Wednesday)

**Location:** First Baptist Church  
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***For further information please contact:***

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***Email: [info@braininjurylondon.on.ca](mailto:info@braininjurylondon.on.ca)***

***Ontario Brain Injury Association at 1.855.642.8877***

***Email: [obia@obia.on.ca](mailto:obia@obia.on.ca)***



## **Fitness And Acquired Brain Injury**

### **steps to kick the sedintary life**

Written By Kris Oliveira, BCN, CPTN  
Rehabilitation Therapist/Personal Trainer  
Neuphysio Rehabilitation, Center of Excellence

Being physically active is essential to quality of life but for someone with an ABI, it may be difficult to be active on a daily basis. It is important to realize that there is great variation in impairments due to behaviour, feeling or moving. It should be noted that fitness and ABI has been associated with less impairment, elevated mood and perception of better overall health.

When planning a physical conditioning program, there are three main components to make it successful: a flexibility component, strength training and cardiovascular conditioning.

Individuals with ABI may suffer from ataxia, increased tone, spasticity and decreased range of motion. Stretching is beneficial and can increase range of motion, improve balance and coordination and decrease muscle soreness. There are three different types of stretching with respect to physical conditioning (static, dynamic, and PNF). Individuals with ABI will benefit most from a static or PNF approach rather than dynamic, which could increase risk of an injury. Static stretching is a type of stretching that involves slowly stretching a muscle to some discomfort and holding it for 20-30 seconds. In PNF (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation) stretching the muscle group to be stretched is positioned so that the muscles are stretched and under tension. The individual then contracts the stretched muscle group for 5 - 6 seconds while a partner applies resistance to inhibit movement. The contracted muscle group is then relaxed and repeated. Note that PNF stretching should only be done with someone who is properly trained.

Strength training will increase muscle endurance and muscle mass, increase body awareness, and allows integration into the community and other health benefits. In developing a total body program, the most popular scenario is a three-day per week program, with one exercise for each body part. Do only one set of each exercise to start. Perform eight to 12 repetitions during each set. Perform each repetition through a full range of motion. Gradually progress to three or four sets of each exercise. The speed of the repetitions should be 2 seconds positive motion, 2 seconds negative motion. Breathe normally; do not hold breath.

Remember that one set of one exercise may be all that can be accomplished the first time.

Typically, individuals with a head injury lead a sedentary lifestyle. Therefore, precautions must be taken when developing an aerobic program. There are a number of different ways to improve cardiovascular fitness levels. These include: walking, bicycling, and swimming. The easiest way to achieve aerobic fitness is walking or using the recumbent bike. It is efficient, relatively safe, and progress can be measured easily.

Start slowly and gradually increase your distance.

Incorporating these three components into a fitness program will allow someone with an ABI to get the most out of their physical conditioning and ultimately increase quality of life.



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## The Wonderful Benefits Of Aquatic Therapy

An abridged copy of Why Aquatic Therapy? By: Sandy Overman - [www.brainline.org](http://www.brainline.org)

People with disabilities are often caught in a cycle of pain, depression, and stress. Disability can lead to social isolation, an external locus of control (believing that one does not have choice or possess control of one's destiny), and the belief that exercise and fitness is impossible for them. Aquatic therapy is able to break this chronic pain cycle largely because of the unique properties of water.

Individuals with acquired brain injury (ABI) or other special populations may be unable to exercise on land, but often can do so comfortably in the water. The buoyancy of water causes the individual to feel an upward thrust when submerged. This force acts in the opposite direction of gravity. Buoyancy allows for a variety of exercises to be performed in the pool with minimal equipment. In addition, people with balance deficits may experience less fear of falling while walking and exercising in the pool.

Submersion decreases weight bearing by up to 90% when submerged in neck deep water, so an individual who is unable to support their body weight on land is often able to walk with minimal support in the pool.

Hydrostatic pressure is a wonderful benefit of aquatic therapy. It is the force exerted on the immersed body by fluid molecules. Hydrostatic pressure decreases pain and edema, which in turn increases range of motion. It also increases venous return and circulation by assisting the heart and decreasing blood pooling in extremities.

The water also provides excellent resistance for toning exercises. The higher viscosity of water makes muscles work harder when compared to the same exercises on land. Viscosity can be described as the way the water molecules stick together when you try to move through them.

Resistance can be used to create wonderful progressions for individuals at different levels of fitness. Decreasing the speed of movement decreases the resistance. Inversely, increasing the speed of movements will make the exercise more difficult.

The natural resistance in the aquatic environment may be beneficial for individuals with neurological impairments because the water will dampen involuntary spastic movements and tremors. The resistance of the water provides people with cognitive deficits extra time to respond because the body will naturally move slower in the water. When people with TBI have extra time to process their body's movements, the body is more aware of how it is moving; therefore, aquatic exercise is wonderful for muscle reeducation.

Aquatic therapy can reduce stress and anxiety, increase one's ability to concentrate, enhance a feeling of well-being and confidence, and allow a person in pain to find their center of calm. The pool atmosphere often seems less clinical than a P.T. gym, and most people equate the swimming pool with fun!

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Nga Dang  
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ATVs/UTVs – Insurance Issues to Consider Before Driving/Riding One

When I think about health and fitness, only fitness gyms come to mind. However, I know that as the snow melts and the weather gets warmer, many people get involved in outdoor recreational activities, such as going to the cottage, fishing, hiking, etc. What people may invariably use alongside any of these activities are All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) or Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs), whether to drive for fun or to help carry belongings off-road. As useful as they may be, they are also very dangerous and frequently cause catastrophic injuries.

What is the difference between an ATV and a UTV? An ATV runs on 3 to 4 wheels, contains 1 seat for 1 passenger, and has no frame surrounding the occupant. A UTV runs on 4 wheels or more, looks like a small truck, contains 2 or more seats and space in the back to put stuff. Regardless of which type you

are using, insurance coverage issues in the event of injury should be considered before you or others you know should drive or ride in these types of vehicles.

In Ontario, the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule provides injured insured persons access to accident benefits to fund treatment/therapy for injuries arising from automobile collisions. However, neither ATVs nor UTVs fall naturally under the definition of “automobile” of the Insurance Act, the way cars and trucks that we often see driven on public roads do. If the ATV/UTV is insured under a motor vehicle policy of insurance as an automobile, access to accident benefits is certain. Unfortunately, most of the time it is not. In those circumstances, and as a result of the complicated interplay between various legislations and judicial interpretations, the general rule is that the injured

person can access accident benefits for injuries resulting from an ATV/UTV if the ATV/UTV was being driven on land not owned by the owner of the ATV/UTV at the time of the incident. Despite that, there may be exceptions.

Ultimately, to ensure there is insurance coverage in the event of injury, it is best that you, your family, or your friends not operate or ride in the ATV/UTV unless it is insured by a motor vehicle policy of insurance, regardless of whether it is being driven on the road, in the woods, or on the owner’s property. Although compensation may be pursued against the owner of the property through the Occupier’s Liability Act, the circumstances surrounding the incident may defeat that avenue. If the ATV/UTV is not insured under a motor vehicle policy of insurance, seriously consider the disadvantages before getting on it.

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# Local Resources

## Physical Activity Programs

### 1. YMCA London

- Located at 382 Waterloo Street (London Centre Branch)
- Membership fees: Adult \$25.25, Youth \$19.75, family \$50.25 bi weekly
- Financial assistance available, fill out a form on the website
- Gives you access to all eight (8) YMCA's in Western Ontario
- Facilities/Programs: Pools, Gymnasiums; Running/Walking tracks; Latest Strength & Cardio Training Equipment; Child Minding Services for while you are using the facilities
- Call 519-667-3300

### 2. The Athletic Club London

- 2 locations: North (755 Wonderland Road North) & South (3198 Wonderland Road South)
- Youth and fitness memberships available
  - o Pricing varies based on length of commitment
- Include unlimited access to equipment, Group Fitness Classes, Women's Only Facilities, Aquatic Fitness Programs, Assessment & Consultation, Healthy Living Lecture Series.
- Call 519-471-7181

### 3. Boys and Girls Club London

- Located at 184 Horton Street
- For Children ages 7-18
- \$25-200/year for full youth memberships depends on number of children and income
- Facilities/Programs: After School Programs, Weekend Programs , Aquatics, Social Programs, Super Club, Day Camp Programs, Athletic Programs
- Call 519-434-9114

### 4. Stronach Community recreation centre

- Located at 1221 Sandford Street
- Fees:
  - o Daily passes: youth \$2.50, Adult \$4.00, Family \$6.25
  - o 20 admissions: youth \$45.20, adult \$72.09, family \$112.55
- Facilities: 2 Ice Pads (in the summer, floor pads), Large Outdoor Pool, Baseball Diamonds, Skateboard Park
- Programs: Dance, Sports, Exercise, Cooking, Art.
- Call 519-661-5575

### 5. UWO recreation centre

- Located at Western Student Recreation Centre, The University of Western Ontario
- Membership \$53/month, \$477/year
  - o Alumni, affiliates, spouses & family discounts available
- Includes access to Aquatics (Aqua Fitness, Fitness & Recreation Swims), Drop-in Gymnasia Activities, Drop-in Table Tennis; Fitness Centre (Weight & Cardio Training space), Fitness Classes, Squash Court Reservations, and Preferred Rates for various classes and programs
- Call 519-661-3090

### 6. Hutton House

- 3 locations in London, Ontario.
- Hutton house serves any with a physical, learning, developmental or mental health disability.
- Fees:
  - o Membership is \$10 per month, plus a \$35 Initiation Fee
  - o Fitness Classes are \$40 for 12 week sessions (membership not required)
- Members have access to a wide variety of equipment including Free Weights, Cable & Hydraulic Machines, Bands, Balance & Cardio equipment, stability balls and Wii Fit.
- Fitness Classes include Circuit & Sports Training, Yoga, Pilates, Dancing & more.
- Call 519-472-1541.

### 7. SARI Therapeutic Riding

- 12659 Medway Road
- SARI provides regular riding lessons during the school year as well as summer horse camp.
- The cost to riders is \$25 for a semi-private, half-hour lesson or a one-hour group lesson. The actual cost of the lessons is much higher and is subsidized by donations. Riders must pay per session (Fall, Winter or Spring). Each session includes nine to 12 lessons (School year sessions)
- Contact for Summer enrollment costs
- Call 519-666-1123



# Meditation And It's Benefits For People With ABI

Written By: Michele Meehan

The term meditation refers to a variety of practices (much like the term sports is used to describe different activities). Generally, meditation is used to describe techniques for relaxation, increasing internal energy or the life force (sometimes called qi, ki, prana, etc.) and to develop qualities like compassion, love, patience, generosity and forgiveness. Meditation may also aim to increase the ability to sustain single-pointed concentration meant to enable the practitioner to enjoy a sense of well being while doing any life activity.

Meditation has been taught in health settings to help people better with a variety of health conditions. Research has shown that when people learn meditation, they experience a variety of benefits;

- Increased sense of well-being
- Increased energy
- Feeling calm
- Decreased pain
- Decreased depression
- Improved sleep
- Improved concentration and memory

Research in mindfulness based reduction (MBSR), and mindfulness based cognitive therapy (MBCT) conducted with people with ABI has consistently shown that participants experience a reduction in depression. Anecdotal reports suggest many participants have developed greater acceptance of themselves and experience less stress and anxiety. In terms of brain function, research has found that participation in MBSR associated with changes in gray matter concentration in brain regions involved in learning and memory process, emotion regula-

tion, self-referential processing (e.g. self-awareness and insight), and perspective taking (e.g. compassion).

Some common ways of practicing meditation include focusing on the breath, on a word or phrase, or focusing on an image. The point of focus gives the meditator a place to start and return when the mind wanders. When I have introduced meditation to clients, they often respond by saying they aren't any good a meditation because they can't stop their thoughts. This is a common misinterpretation of the purpose of meditation. Meditation is really about cultivating the ability to be an observer of the stream of thoughts-not to stop the stream. It is the nature of our minds to think; but as we observe the thinking, with interest and non-judgment, the thinking begins to change.

He describes the importance of bringing these attitudes to the practice of meditation. He does not suggest the meditator needs to have mastered these attitudes, but rather, is willing to practice.

If meditation is something you would like to explore, you can find more information about MBSR programs at <http://w3.unmassed.edu/MBSR/public/searchmember.aspx>. There are also many meditation groups from a variety of spiritual traditions in communities across Ontario.

So, take a slow breath in. Notice how it feels as you inhale; notice the movement in your chest and your belly. And, slowly exhale, feeling the breath as it leaves your body. Imagine what might happen if you practice that even a few minutes each day.

# FROM MAINSTREAM TO BRAINSTREAM:

## An Old School Tool For Optimal Health And Happiness After ABI

By: Jordan Kerr - Rehab Therapist, DMA Reability

Yoga has been present for thousands of years, though most recently has been found to be one of the fastest growing trends and is starting to gain its reputation in the Rehabilitation setting as well.

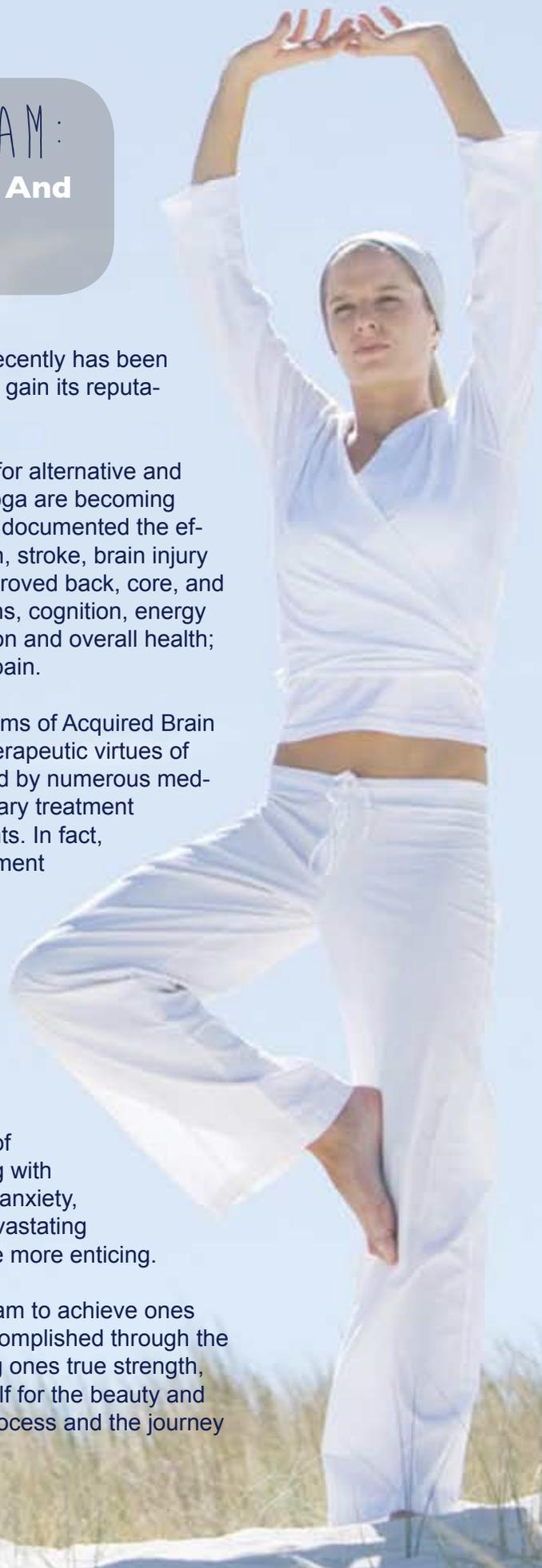
As yoga becomes more mainstream, and as research dollars for alternative and complementary health systems continue to grow, studies of yoga are becoming recognized worldwide. In just the last few years, research has documented the efficacy of yoga and its benefits for such conditions as back pain, stroke, brain injury and insomnia to name a few. The noted benefits included: improved back, core, and overall strength, flexibility, balance, proprioception, gait patterns, cognition, energy conservation, sleep patterns, breathing, mood, immune function and overall health; As well as, a decrease in stress, anxiety, blood pressure and pain.

For many, yoga is a trend, for others it is a way of life. For victims of Acquired Brain Injury, it is a valid medical and rehabilitation treatment. The therapeutic virtues of yoga as a complimentary treatment have now been recognized by numerous medical associations and are now recommended as a complimentary treatment in conjunction with other multidisciplinary therapeutic treatments. In fact, in Ontario, yoga has been recognized as a valid medical treatment within the context of the Statutory Accident Benefit Schedule (SABS). When found to be reasonable and justified, insurance companies are now accepting to fund yoga treatments as a medical benefit to assist in the recovery process of victims of motor vehicle collisions. Recent medical studies attest to the benefit of participating in yoga such as, reducing recovery times and providing a less stressful recovery period, thereby allowing for a faster and greater recovery.

It also assists the mental, emotional and psychosocial needs of said individuals. As it is a well-known fact that individuals living with acquired brain injuries may live with a great amount of stress, anxiety, fear, paranoia, and depression due to the effects of such a devastating injury, which makes the practice of yoga in rehabilitation all the more enticing.

It is the common goal of the individual and multidisciplinary team to achieve ones optimal level of health and independence, and this can be accomplished through the practice of yoga. By recognizing ones true potential, by honing ones true strength, by letting go of all that does not serve and by accepting oneself for the beauty and power that is. This will aid in the recovery and rehabilitation process and the journey into discovering true health, happiness, and love for oneself.

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# Fuel Your Physical Activity . . . . .

By Heather Thomas, RD, PhD  
Registered Dietitian, Novus Rehabilitation Limited

Heather Thomas is a Registered Dietitian in the London area who strives to find balance in her professional, academic and family life while enjoying the occasional chocolate chip cookie along the way! Heather provides dietary counselling for clients through Novus Rehabilitation Limited.

Physical activity has many benefits to both physical and mental health. In children, physical activity promotes healthy growth and development. For everyone, it helps prevent chronic diseases like cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. Physical activity makes you stronger and gives you more energy. On the mental health side of things, it decreases stress, improves self-esteem and confidence, and reduces depression. Physical activity also gives you an opportunity to improve social interaction and prolong your independence as you get older. Active people live longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

With all of these benefits, why is it so difficult to get started? Physical activity is a commitment and for those with an acquired brain injury, it also can be a challenge. But it is not impossible to engage in regular activity not only to keep in shape, but also to aid in your recovery. First and foremost, get approval from your physician and other members of your rehabilitation team to start exercising more. You may need to consider adapting activities to make it easier for you to do the work. Your kinesiologist or physiotherapist are experts in this area and can work alongside you to choose the activities that work best for you.

In terms of nutrition, it is important to fuel your activity with healthy eating. Of greatest importance is hydration. When you are active you need to drink fluids to replenish water lost through sweating and breathing. Get hydrated before your activity by drinking nine cups of fluid every day. Fluid includes water, 100% fruit juices, milk, the water naturally found in fruits and vegetables, and even soups. If you drink coffee or tea regularly, the fluid in these beverages can be included. If you just have coffee or tea once in a while, they don't count.

Before you exercise, it is important to eat something about two to four hours in advance of your activity, especially if it is going to last more than one hour. Drink plenty of fluids and try to eat a small meal that has lots of carbohydrates (e.g., grain products, fruits, vegetables) and a smaller amount of protein (e.g., chicken, beans, hummus), lower in fibre and low in fat. This type of meal will help give you enough energy for the activity, prevent hunger you may experience

if you don't eat prior to working out, keep you hydrated, and prevent you from "hitting the wall" or getting completely exhausted. If you find you get an upset stomach before having a long workout, perhaps a liquid snack such as a smoothie would be a better idea (recipe below).

During your activity, try to drink something regularly. If your activity lasts longer than one hour, you will need to eat some carbohydrate during your activity to help give you additional energy. You can achieve this by having small amounts of a sports drink (e.g., Gatorade® or Powerade®) every 15 to 20 minutes. If you are exercising for less than one hour, plain, cool water will be perfect for rehydration. For activities lasting longer than an hour or in extreme heat, sports drinks provide hydration as well as extra carbohydrate.

After you have completed your activity, it is very important to restore energy with carbohydrates, repair muscles with protein, and rehydrate with water. Try to eat something within 15 to 30 minutes of finishing your activity. A smoothie made with milk or yogurt, fruit, and ice is a perfect solution. Other choices could include meat or fish with brown rice and some vegetables; pasta with meat sauce and a garden salad; or vegetarian chili with a whole grain roll. Add in a glass of milk, water or 100% fruit juice and some fruit for dessert and you will replenish yourself while enjoying a balanced meal.

If you are active for less than an hour, or if you take part in a light to moderate level of activity, it is not necessary to eat afterwards. With lower intensity activity, you are less likely to have used up significant amounts of nutrients. However, it is still necessary to rehydrate your body, so enjoy a drink of cool water!

It is also important to avoid some types of food prior to your workout. Try to stay away from high fat, greasy foods. These take a long time to digest and will not fuel your physical activity. You will feel sluggish and will tire more easily if you have high fat foods before getting active. Also, try to avoid foods you have not eaten before. You may not know how your digestive system will handle something new so it is better to stick to the tried and true!

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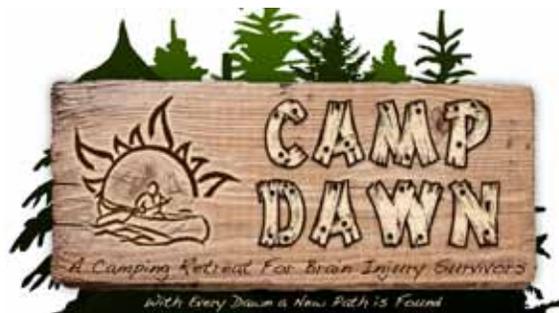
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## THE LONDON NATIONALS

taking pro-active measures to preventing and detecting concussions in hockey

Written By: Whitney Easnor

The London Nationals, 2013 Sutherland Cup Champions and back-to-back Western Conference Champions, know what it takes to build a winning team and nothing will stop them from pouring their heart and soul into a game. A stitch here and a cut there, nothing will stop them from getting back on to the ice. But when it comes to a head injury, the organization does not take it lightly.



After a head injury, a trained professional determines if the player is experiencing concussion or concussion-like symptoms. If there are any signs and symptoms, they are immediately sent to the hospital. Trainers and coaches within the organization receive annual training to be educated in detecting concussions.

If a concussion is diagnosed, orders given by the doctor are followed. Typically, the steps taken are: 1) to rest 2) to return to light activity (i.e. riding the bike) 3) to return to light skate 4) to skate with the team and 5) to skate with contact. Players are assessed at each step and if any signs and symptoms are present, they fall back to step 1. Players do not return to the ice without medical clearance from the doctor.

The London Nationals organization has taken the extra step to not only educate coaches and trainers, but most importantly the players themselves. "Before I joined the London Nationals, if I hit my head on the ice and could still skate, I didn't see it as a big deal. But after being educated on the consequences head injury could have on my life, I now recognize the importance in taking action and getting appropriate treatment before returning to the ice. I think that all players need to be more aware of this and receive the appropriate education," said Captain, Scott Lombardi.

The London Nationals coaches and ownership realize that a player's future is at stake. Their goal is to take all necessary precautions to prevent and detect a concussion and will remain pro-active to prevent injury.





**FORENSIC ACCOUNTANTS**

**Sheri Gallant**  
CMA | Partner / Senior Vice President

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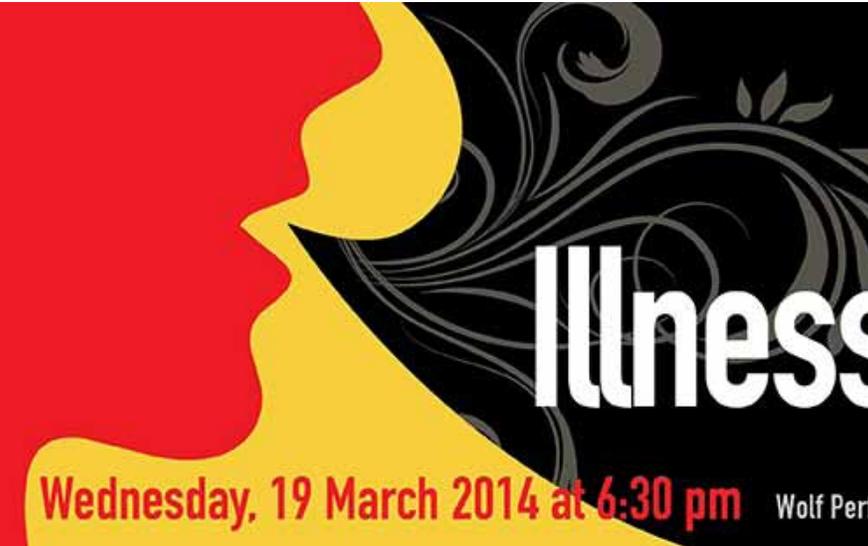
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# Up Coming Events

## **17th Annual Conference – Making The Difference**

Four Points By Sheraton

April 9th 2014

## **Peer Mentor Training**

Brain Injury Association of London & Region

May 7th 2014

## **Brain Basics Training**

First Baptist Church

May 13th – 14th 2014

## **Helmets On Kids Campaign**

Holy Family Catholic School

June 19th 2014

## **Camp Dawn**

September 11th – 14th 2014

## **2014 London Brain Injury Golf Classic**

Greenhills Golf Club

September 18th 2014

## **Casino Night 2014**

West Haven Golf & Country Club

November 15th 2014

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## Advertiser Index

- 4 - Harrison Pensa
- 8 - Cornerstone Clubhouse
- 8 - McKenzie Lake
- 12 - Judith Hull & Associates
- 20 - St. Josephs Health Care
- 20 - Neurotrauma Rehab
- 22 - Legate & Associates LLP
- 22 - Foster Townsend Graham & Associates LLP
- 22 - Lerner
- 24 - Bartimeaus
- 24 - Davis Martindale
- 28 - Cohen Highley LLP
- 28 - Bayshore Home Health
- 32 - MDD
- 32 - Wallace Smith
- 32 - Rehab Management
- 32 - St. Marys Community Rehabilitation
- 32 - Brainworks
- 32 - Dale Brain Injury Services
- 34 - Moving Towards Wellness Ltd.
- 34 - Saint Elizabeth
- 35 - Rehab First
- Back Cover - Siskinds



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