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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

December 2014

Marion Edition - Monthly

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**Better Health
for the Holidays**

**Achieve a
Positive
Self-Image**

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CONTACT US

REGIONAL SALES MANAGER
Michelle VanOstran
michelle@healthandwellnessfl.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sonny Gensing
sonny@gwhizmarketing.com

EDITOR - Lisa Minic EDITOR - Lorrie Ritchie



Publishing • Advertising • Web Design • Graphic Design

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OUR STORY

OFFERING ADVANCED TREATMENT OPTIONS AND MAINTAINING A COMMITMENT TO EXEMPLARY SERVICE. OUR DOCTORS FOCUS ON THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF EACH PATIENT WITH THE GOAL OF RETURNING THEM TO A HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

We all know how debilitating back pain can be. It can adversely affect our quality of life and sideline us from participating in our favorite activities.

Gulfcoast Spine boasts two physicians who are nationally renowned for their success in performing minimally invasive spine surgery. Those physicians are Dr. Frank Bono and Dr. James Ronzo. They offer the most advanced diagnostics and treatments for relief of back and spine problems.

The central focus of Gulfcoast Spine is an unrelenting commitment to explore every

possibility of improving patients' lives and helping them return to their prior level of functioning. Providing total patient-centered care in a compassionate, competent manner has and always will be of utmost importance to the entire GSI team.

When you visit Gulfcoast Spine, their medical providers make sure to listen to your questions and concerns, making a thorough list of symptoms before proceeding with a detailed physical exam. These nationally recognized leaders in spine surgery work with you to develop a plan of individualized treatment

to meet your needs.

With their state-of-the-art technology and personable staff, Drs. Bono and Ronzo are dedicated to building a sincere relationship with each patient they treat and doing whatever it takes to ensure your overall health and well-being.

Life doesn't have to stop when pain strikes. We understand how important it is to return to normal, fun-filled activities like hitting the golf course with friends or swimming with the grandchildren on the weekend. Everyone deserves to live a happy, healthy, and pain-free life!



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1%

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100%

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Ready to Say Goodbye to Varicose Veins? Know the facts.

Varicose veins can be a source of genuine physical and emotional discomfort. The good news is there are several safe, effective and lasting ways to get rid of unsightly and painful varicose veins without surgery. The bad news is that many marginally-trained "experts" have popped up to address the growing demand for these procedures. A weekend course does not make someone an expert, especially when it comes to medical treatment.

You've seen their ads: FREE VEIN

SCREENING! and other come-ons designed to lure you in. These are usually the same practitioners who have patients lie down for their leg vein ultrasound exams, which is something only a novice would do. Is this person truly qualified to be performing a specialized medical procedure? And if they do a poor job, are they capable of providing a remedy? Anyone who is using your case as part of a learning curve isn't someone to whom you should entrust your health and safety.

Don't be lured into getting unnecessary procedures.

You should know that most varicose veins DO NOT require invasive treatment. Most leg symptoms, including those caused by mild reflux, can be treated using simpler, safer (and cheaper) methods. Many practitioners mislead patients in this regard.

In fact, we frequently see patients who have had work done by other local physicians that was completely unnecessary.



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DOC TALK

We know all too well that heart disease is the leading cause of death for all Americans - men and women - claiming the lives of more than 616,000 annually, according to the most recent data.

“Recognizing and preventing men’s health problems is not just a man’s issue. Because of its impact on wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters, men’s health is truly a family issue.”

**Congressman
Bill Richardson**

**** Credits: CDC.gov/heart and
Heartbeat - A Blueprint for Men’s
Health.**

But fewer people are aware that men are more likely than women to develop the disease earlier and die at younger ages. Fewer still know that close to 90% of sudden cardiac events occur in men and that for half of the men who die, the first symptom of heart disease is death.

Let’s repeat that. For more than half of the men when die from heart disease, the **first** symptom is **death**.

One of the keys to improving the odds is simply awareness; for men to become better informed about managing risk and treating underlying conditions that lead such high death rates. And there’s no better time to start than National Men’s Health Week, June 9-15, 2014, celebrated each year the week leading up to and including Father’s Day.

Think you or a man that you love might be at risk?? Look at the list of statements below, published in *Heartbeat - A Blueprint for Men’s Health*. If any of them are true about you or your father, brother, son, cousin, husband or even friend, take note. Just one “Yes” answer means you are at risk. Two “Yes” answers doesn’t just double your risk — it actually quadruples it! Three “Yes” answers, 10 times the risk.

- I’m 45 or older. (your risk of developing cardiovascular disease doubles each decade)
- An immediate family member was diagnosed with high blood pressure or some other kind of heart conditions before age 55.
- I’m African American

- I get little or no exercise
- I’m overweight or obese
- I eat a lot of salty foods and/ or I add to whatever I’m eating
- My cholesterol is high
- I smoke (if you do you are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease than a non-smoker)
- I have high blood pressure
- I use recreational drugs, such as marijuana or cocaine
- I drink more than two alcoholic drinks per day
- I’m under a lot of stress, at work and/or at home
- I have diabetes (more than 80 percent of people with diabetes die of some kind of CVD)
- I’m taking prescription medications that affect blood pressure. This included Ritalin (drugs for Attentional Definite Disorder), steroids, migraine medications, any over-the-counter drugs than contain pseudoephedrine, and any medication that contains stimulants such as caffeine.



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I'd like to
dance at my
daughter's wedding.
-Samantha Q.

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Don't Forget Your Test - New Technology Reminds Patients to Get Important Diagnostics

By Dr. Harvey Kaufman, Senior Medical Director, Quest Diagnostics, the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services.



Three quarters of healthcare costs in the U.S. are attributed to management of chronic diseases. To a large extent, this is because chronic diseases, like cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, are prevalent. For example, 1.9 million adults were diagnosed with diabetes in 2010 alone.

Following your doctor's orders in terms of diet, exercise, taking your medicine and getting follow-up laboratory tests is often the key to control or prevent a chronic disease from developing further.

Reminder calls from pharmacies to patients alerting them that it is time to refill their prescription are quite common. These calls can help to keep patients from not running out of their medications.

What's relatively new is that now patients can also be reminded when it is time to get a follow up lab test. Lab testing is very important to quality, effective health care. Physicians use lab tests, along with medical history, symptoms, and other factors, to help catch disease in its early phases, adjust prescription medication dosages and monitor disease. Lab testing is important for caring for people with certain chronic diseases, like diabetes and heart disease, that require ongoing monitoring.



Although lab tests are often vital to healthcare, many patients don't get the tests they need or delay getting the tests. A study found that physicians who write orders for recurrent lab testing estimate that patients only go for the prescribed follow up tests about 80% of the time.

If your doctor determines that frequent testing is necessary, receiving reminders can help you stay on schedule, whether it's to monitor a condition or a drug that you're taking. Keeping your lab testing up to date and on time is important and will help you and your doctor to better manage your healthcare.

Quest Diagnostics, the leading provider of diagnostic information services, provides a free service called TestMinder(r) that helps to remind patients to be tested. A person can sign up at a local Quest Diagnostics Patient Service Center or through doctors who use the Quest Diagnostics electronic system for ordering and receiving lab tests. Reminders can be provided as emails (English or Spanish), text messages or phone calls. If preferred, reminders can be sent to a caregiver.

Quest Diagnostics serves half of the physicians and hospitals in the United States. The company has more than 100 Patient Service Centers across Florida. For additional information regarding TestMinder visit www.QuestDiagnostics.com/Patient.

Remember, lab testing is vital to healthcare, and can be especially important for those patients with a chronic condition. A reminder system, like TestMinder, can help you stay on track of your healthcare.



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NOT READY FOR SURGERY?

New Non-Surgical Options to Permanently Alleviate Pain and Improve Movement!

By Craig Chappell, DO

Whether you are a professional athlete, a sports minded student, a tri-athlete or an active adult, Dr. Chappell specializes in activity related injuries and nonsurgical orthopedics.

Dr. Chappell provides treatment for the following conditions:

- Sports Injuries
- Chronic Pain
- Overuse injuries (tendonitis, plantar fasciitis, tendonosis and stress fractures)
- Acute injuries (sprains, muscle strains, joint injuries, and fractures)
- Trigger point injections for pain control
- Arthritis treatment and bracing
- Nerve blocks for pain control
- Unstable and loose joints
- Headache treatments
- Back and Neck pain
- Concussion care

Have you or someone you know ever heard these words?

"Come Back When You're Ready for Surgery..."

"My massage treatments or adjustments help initially but are short lived.."

Did you know that there are non-surgical options to permanently alleviate pain, improve movement, function and quality of life? There's a good chance that surgery is not your only option. Have you ever heard the old saying, "don't judge a book by its cover"? The same could be said when looking at imaging studies. Lets take a simple Pop Quiz:

By looking at the x-rays below, can you tell which patient has more pain and dysfunction?



Give yourself a point if you determined that the x-ray is of a knee and the knee on the right has a significant amount of degeneration, as seen by narrowing of the joint space. Logically you may assume that the bad looking knee is also the one with more pain.

In recent studies the conclusion is that knee pain, stiffness, and duration of disease are more predictive of dysfunction than x-ray. Therefore, it is better to consider a person's functional status in addition to radiological findings while planning the treatment of knee pain.

This same process is also carried over to all other joints in the body. The trick is in determining the **MAIN PAIN GENERATOR**. So if the bony changes seen on x-ray are not the cause of pain, what is? Theoretically, if I were to make a small incision on the inside of your knee there are several structures that I would pass through on the way to the bone. These may include, skin, subcutaneous tissue (fat), muscle, tendon ligament, capsule, cartilage and finally bone. So when one points to the inside of their knee to describe their pain, it could be a number of anatomical structures that they are pointing at and only one or two of them possibly could be helped by surgery. This is why determining the main pain generator is key. *Using this as an example there are several non-surgical options we offer to locate and address the pain.*

Non-surgical options offered by Dr. Chappell include the following treatments:

Regenerative Injections

Regenerative injections are a rapidly emerging technique and are showing exciting potential where surgery was once the only option. Painful conditions frequently treated with regenerative injections include osteoarthritis, knee, shoulder, hip and spine, rotator cuff tears, plantar fasciitis, anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries, hip/pelvic pain and instability, back and neck injuries, tennis elbow, golfers elbow, ankle sprains, tendonitis, and ligament sprains/laxity.

The basic intent of Regenerative Injections is to intentionally create a small injury to initiate a healing response. This can be accomplished in several ways, from aggressive physical therapy techniques to injections. Substances used in injections can include Prolotherapy (hypertonic dextrose), Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) and Stem Cells.



Prolotherapy

Prolotherapy is a regenerative injection treatment used to stimulate the healing mechanism to repair damaged or injured areas by injection of a hypertonic dextrose solution which in turn stimulates an inflammatory response and leads to healing. Prolotherapy is a viable alternative to surgery and an alternative option to pain medications and anti-inflammatory injections such as cortisone. Prolotherapy is a safe and affordable option that allows the patient to keep working and/or training during treatment.



Platelet-Rich Plasma Therapy (PRP)

Most people associate platelets with clot formation. While that certainly is an important function of platelets, they are also very much involved in injury healing. Platelets are extremely rich in connective tissue growth factors. Injecting these growth factors into damaged ligaments, tendons, and joints stimulates a natural repair process. But in order to benefit from these natural healing proteins, the platelets must first be concentrated.

PRP works by recreating and stimulating the body's natural healing process. Several conditions that benefit from PRP include:

- Shoulder pain and instability, including rotator cuff injuries
- Tennis and golfer's elbow
- Quadricep/Hamstring strains
- Knee sprains and instability
- Patellofemoral syndrome and patellar tendinosis
- Ankle sprains
- Back, Neck & Hip Pain

Stem Cell Injections

An exciting addition in the field of regenerative medicine is the introduction of Stem Cell Therapy. This is the use of a person's own cells from bone marrow, fat, and blood (alone or in various combinations) which is then injected into the area which has a cellular deficiency. These immature cells have the ability to become tissues like cartilage, bone, and ligaments. Like Prolotherapy and PRP, the goal of stem cell injections are the same: to stimulate the repair of injured tissues.

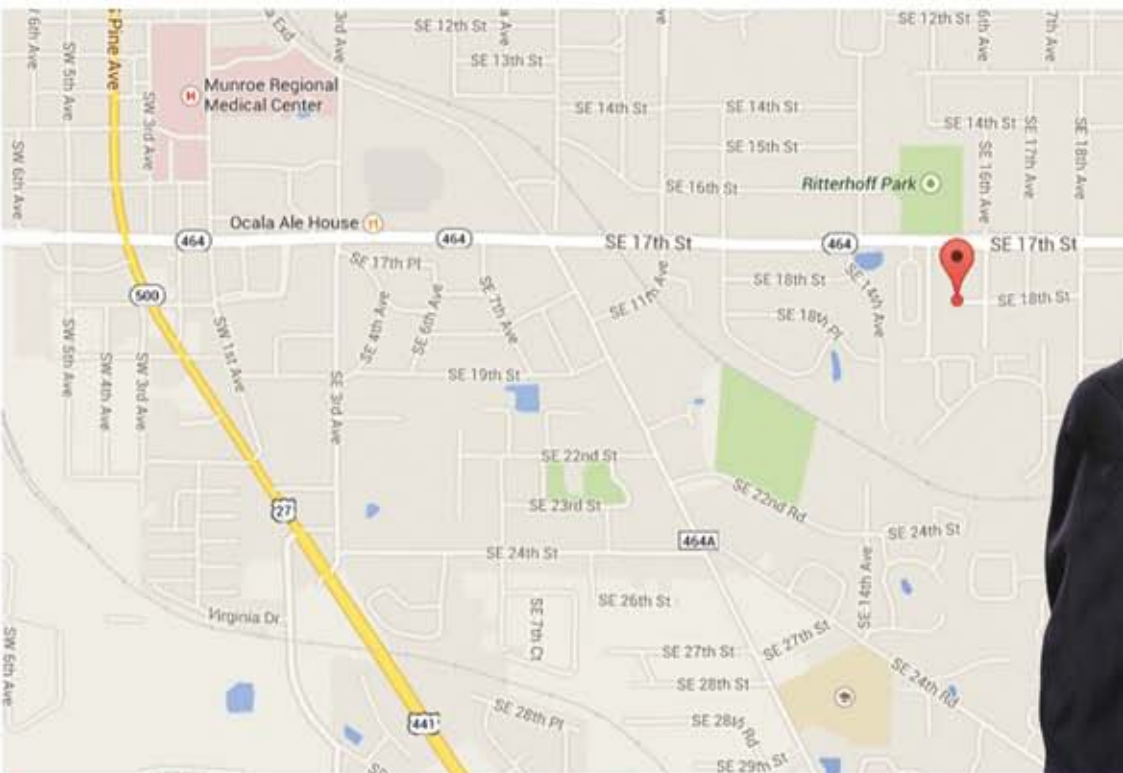
Dr. Chappell has been performing regenerative injections with the use of ultrasound guidance for the past 5 years and has taught regenerative injection technique nationally and internationally.

Dr. Chappell specializes in understanding and identifying your pain generator. This is accomplished by performing a thorough history and physical exam. Frequently diagnostic ultrasound is used to pinpoint the dysfunctional or injured area. Ultrasound allows for dynamic visualization and comparison without the side effect of ionizing radiation or uncomfortable positions. Ultrasound is also used to guide injections which allows absolute accuracy with the first stick and virtually eliminates the need to reposition the needle which happens with other forms of guidance. Less needle sticks and repositioning also results in less pain.

Please feel free to call our office and we will be happy to review your medical problems and assist you in making a decision for an appointment.

Dr. Chappell's office is located in Ocala at:
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Craig Chappell, DO
Board Certified Sports Medicine,
Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine,
Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine,
and Family Medicine

TIPS FOR **HEALTHY** EATING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

THE OLD SAYING IS TRUE, TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING CAN BE BAD.

You know you're full. Close to bursting, actually. You never would have piled your plate like that on a regular day, and you certainly wouldn't finish it off.

But it's the holidays, and it would be rude not to try every dish, and it all tastes so good, and some of it is healthful, and what the heck — pass the pie!

Research has proven what we already know: our brains can easily override our bodies' signals to stop eating, even when we know the consequences will be unpleasant.

We're not even talking about obesity, heart disease, diabetes or effects of long-term, habitual overeating. This is about the short-term awfulness that can follow a high-fat, high-calorie holiday free-for-all.

There is no such thing as an average dinner, but a varied meal of 600 to 800 calories fits nicely into the 2,000-calorie daily diet referenced on nutrition labels.

But a holiday dinner can easily approach or exceed 2,000 calories by itself, especially if you dig into the appetizers before dinner and wash it all down with a couple of glasses of wine. One estimate put a typical holiday dinner as high as 4,500 calories, but that would be extremely difficult for most stomachs to stomach.

Even nutrition-conscious dieters tend to give themselves a pass at the end of the year.

How the foodfest sits with you depends on your genes, your body composition, your system's response to certain hormones and your regular eating and exercise habits, said McDaniel.

For instance, regular exercisers who work out 12 or fewer hours before a big meal fare better than others. Their bodies tend to have a more sensitive insulin response, allowing them to more efficiently process the excess carbs, and a more robust circulatory system to weather the influx of fat circulating in blood. What can you do after the deed is done? Don't lie down, or many of these problems may be exacerbated. Helping to clean up the post-dinner mess would be a 170-calorie-per-hour head start on recovering from the feast.



Below are some easy tips to implement to help keep those big holiday mealtime favorites healthy and tasty!

- Using coconut oil to replace butter for both stovetop cooking and baking. Coconut oil is one of the few foods that can be classified as a "superfood." Its unique combination of fatty acids can have profound positive effects on health. This includes increasing energy to help you burn more fat, killing bacteria, viruses and fungi, helping you maintain healthy blood cholesterol levels, and increasing better function and various other amazing benefits.

- Using spices such as clove, cinnamon, and ginger in your recipes. Adding clove to recipes is easy and the benefits are numerous: reduces risk for diabetes, helps eliminate free radicals, is known for its anti-fungal properties, and eating clove leaves is good for your oral health. Cinnamon is another natural ingredient that is easy to incorporate into many dishes and drinks during the holidays. Cinnamon has outstanding antioxidant and antimicrobial properties, is good for your heart because it lowers triglycerides, increases brain function, reduces risk for developing diabetes, and has even been known to protect against Parkinson's disease. Increasing your consumption of ginger can help you maintain normal blood circulation, improve absorption of essential nutrients, prevent cold and flu viruses, reduce pain and inflammation, fight common respiratory problems, and offer other health benefits.

- Use real ingredients for the things that you're cooking to avoid unnecessary additives in prepackaged foods.

- Instead of bottled salad dressing, make your own dressing using citrus and olive oil.

- Add body to soups and sauces with pureed vegetables instead of heavy cream, evaporated milk, butter or cheese.

- Make your own marinade. Marinate lean meats in vinegar and citrus combos (with a bit of oil added) rather than a pre-made oil-based dressing.

- Use whole grains in baked goods instead of all-purpose flour to add fiber and nutrients.



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SCHUYLER GROVE, DC

Dr. Schuyler Grove is an Ocala native who has returned to his hometown to bring optimal health and wellness to the community.

Dr. Grove takes a "whole person" approach in chiropractic care, looking for the underlying causes of disease, discomfort, and pain, as opposed to just treating the symptoms. Dr. Grove also has training in the use of supplementation and nutrition to better assist his patients in their pursuit of health.



Achieve a positive self-image

Dr. Rich Castellano of ImageLift has spent his entire career helping clients obtain a younger, more vibrant look. Throughout the years, this double board-certified facial plastic surgeon has achieved stellar results because he genuinely cares about each patient who walks through his door.

Why does he genuinely care about each patient? The answer is simple. Dr. Castellano takes great pride in enhancing his patients' self-confidence. He understands that beauty is about being self-assured, and when you are confident it is incredibly attractive. Conversely, when your reflection in the mirror returns results you do not recognize ("Is that really me?"), then he is happy to discuss what options are available to help you look your best.

Of course, Dr. Castellano would like to offer some tips on how you can make improvements yourself. Yes, this is actually possible — you just need a little attitude.

"Your body language conveys a great deal about how you feel regarding your appearance," says Dr. Castellano. "Fortunately, there is a whole lot of appeal you can turn on with your smile, your stride, and your silhouette."

Wear it

There are endless benefits to a good smile. A brilliant smile will change our mood, keep us positive, relieve stress, and, perhaps most importantly, make us feel much more attractive. A smile is our first and best facial transformation.

"An unsurpassed smile makes you feel better inside and shines that wattage out into the world," Dr. Castellano says. "You'll more easily win friends and influence clients when you can convince yourself and others how good it feels to smile. Try it!"

Walk it

We convey quite a lot about ourselves by the way we walk. For instance, stooped shoulders express a non-verbal message that translates into a reluctance to socialize. In addition, your stance and stride may express shyness or insecurity. On the other hand, walking with your head high and accompanied by a self-assured saunter will make you stand out in a crowd.

"You'll exude assurance and poise; both traits that beckon success," Dr. Castellano says. "Yet, have you ever seen Superman walking with slumped shoulders? Don't treat yourself any less than

the best; hold your shoulders back and head high and celebrate who you are."

Work it

Many of us have body concerns; we may dislike certain physical features or are unhappy with our dress size. Taking a shortcut, you may opt to wear oversized clothing to cover yourself up. The downside of that fashion choice is you are likely hiding some glorious curves! Be smart and find the styles that fit you. Plus-size clothing lines have come a long way and can help you boldly style your silhouette instead of hiding your body in a shapeless garment.

"Mindset over matter is transformative," Dr. Castellano says. "You can liberate your inner beauty simply by celebrating and emphasizing your unique qualities. Today's women and men are real and powerful. They also embrace alternatives offered by surgical and non-surgical enhancements and they look to themselves for that extra oomph that makes each endlessly beautiful."

Lift your image

For those of you who take these steps and still do not feel like your signs of aging match your lifestyle or how you feel, you can rest assured knowing ImageLift offers numerous innovative office-based cosmetic treatments to help you look your best.

You will talk to Dr. Castellano during your first scheduled consultation visit. And you will be in very capable hands, as the doctor utilizes the latest technologies in facial plastic surgery and also has a proven track record for providing clients with natural-looking results.

Want to learn more about this unique, cutting-edge practice? Then consider attending one of ImageLift's seminars, which are informative, educational, and fun. Below is a list of dates and times where seminars are being held during April.

Call now to receive a free pre-publication copy of ImageLift's new book, *"We Guarantee We Can Make You Look Younger,"* available while supplies last.



Liz chose Laser ImageLift.

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IMAGELIFT®

Free ImageLift seminars are being held at the following locations
in April. Meet the doctors and enjoy free food, free books,
drawings, and door prizes.

CALL NOW TO RSVP - LIMITED SEATING

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"HEALTH"

December 2nd	<i>Luncheon at The Villages ImageLift office: 11a.m. to 1p.m.</i>
December 11th	<i>The Waterfront Inn, The Villages: 1p.m.</i>
December 16th	<i>Holiday Appreciation Party at The Villages ImageLift office: 2p.m. to 6p.m.</i>

Dr. Castellano



THE VILLAGES // 8630 East County Road 466
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“Save a limb. Save a life.”

Limbstitute

Comprehensive Vein Care and Limb Salvage

The statistics are staggering: Almost one of every 200 Americans has suffered an amputation — about 97 percent of those to a lower limb.

The real tragedy? Many of those losses could have been avoided with swift and adequate intervention. Simply put, the Limbstitute Comprehensive Vein Care and Limb Salvage with offices located in The Villages, Summerfield and Tavares, was created to do just that.

The newest addition to the Institute of Cardiovascular Excellence family, the Limbstitute provides comprehensive vein care and incorporates the latest technologies — closing off veins with radio waves for example — to get the best results. The staff members there are also wound care specialists and experts in artificial skin grafts. Their mission is to do whatever it takes to save a limb and give a patient their life back.

Indeed, the key to the success of the Limbstitute is that all of the many specialties involved with reversing the declining health of an arm or leg have been gathered together under one roof. Inside its 4,000 square feet of designated examination rooms, labs, testing and treatment facilities, medical professionals and physicians have been hand-selected from various specialties to form a collective team dedicated to a singular goal: the treatment and management of peripheral vascular diagnoses.

In the past, patients in danger of losing a limb traditionally would have had to shuttle between various doctors in separate facilities: a cardiologist, medical internist, phlebologist, podiatrist and specialists in infectious disease and wound care to name just a few. Not only was it inconvenient, chances are that those specialists were not committed to a total focus on limb salvage.

The Limbstitute provides a better way, with all of the tests and treatments and physicians necessary to intervene and reverse the effects of critical limb ischemia on the same page — and under the same roof.



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Now Meet The Specialists

Tom Tran
PA-C, MPAS • Phlebologist



Mike Richards
PA-C, MPAS • Phlebologist

Member of the American College of Phlebology

The Limbstitute is fortunate to count Tom Tran among its staff of medical professionals. He brings a unique and lauded background to bear on the special challenges associated with venous disorders. He worked his way through college and went on to become a registered nurse in the ICU at Shands Hospital in Gainesville. Afterwards, he accepted positions with several emergency departments throughout Florida. Tom capitalized on his interest in venous health by inventing a medical device — the Transcatheter Extractor — and started his own company to sell his device throughout the U.S.

"I often removed a patient's catheter through surgery," Tran says. "This device allows for less down time for the patient and takes him out of the operating room and into the doctor's office."

He was named Physician Assistant of the Year in Florida in 2007 and appeared in numerous articles throughout the nation. He is actively involved as a Board of Trustees member of the Physician Assistant Foundation, and is an adjunct instructor for the NOVA University Physician Assistant Program.

Member of the American College of Phlebology Fellow Member American Academy of Physician Assistants and Member Florida Academy Physician Assistants

Mike Richards sees patients every day whose problems could have been avoided or at least minimized with a little forethought.

"Certain things we do to ourselves on a daily basis can lead to long-term issues," he says. "Something as simple as wearing high heels can cause damage over time to vein valves and lead to venous insufficiency, varicose veins and worse. The opposite is also true. Patients who are aware, who have proactive habits and recognize potential problems early almost always have better outcomes."

Mike is proud to be a part of the Limbstitute family.

"What's important with The Limbstitute is that we are able to assess and treat all of a patient's limb issues at one location," he says. "Arterial problems such as PAD, venous reflux that can lead to leg ulcers, wounds that just won't heal. We have it all under one roof, along with specialties like cardiology, phlebology (vein care) and internal medicine. Even nutrition consultation, which can be critical to healing and a positive long term result."

Save a limb. Save a life. It's a prescription written daily at the Limbstitute. Certainly the statistics can be daunting. But for the professionals in limb salvage who take it one limb/one life at a time, every good outcome is a victory that spurs them on to the next challenge. The arms and legs of the people in Central Florida are all the healthier because of it.



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Holiday Shopping Safety Tips

According to experts, the highest crime rate of the year is during the holiday season. Consider the following safety tips this shopping season to better protect yourself:

Leave your purse at home. Take a small amount of money or 1 credit card with you and your ID. Place these items in a small wallet and tuck them safely inside your pants pocket. This will help keep them out of the eyes of people that are watching for their next easy target. If you must take your purse make sure to hide your purse inside your jacket and shorten the strap. This makes it harder to see and you less of a target.

Write down your credit card number you are taking with you and the customer service number. Place this information inside your glove box in your car in case your card becomes lost or stolen.

Beware of people around you.

There is safety in numbers. If possible, shop in a group or with another person. Thieves often times work in groups. One thief will distract you by bumping into you and the other will rob you. If you are shopping with a group of people, it's more difficult and less likely for a robbery to occur.

Don't talk to strangers. We tell our children this, but as adults we should also follow this rule. As mentioned earlier, thieves will try to distract you. They often do this by asking you questions or for help while their partner in crime is stealing your belongings.

Have your keys in hand. When you are walking to your car make sure you already have your keys handy. Muggers count on people being distracted as they're fumbling for their keys. Walk with confidence and be very alert of anyone walking up on you. Prior to getting in your car be sure no one has broken in and climbed in the back seat. And, once you get in your car, immediately lock the doors.

Trust your intuition. If you are getting a bad vibe from someone, trust your instinct. Don't get into an elevator alone with someone if it doesn't feel right. Be aware of anyone who might be following you or seems suspicious.

Sources: www.homesecuritysource.com,
www.tipsforholidayshopping.com



Try to park as close to the store as you can and in a well lit area, if shopping at night. If you are particularly nervous, go to the security office and ask someone to escort you to your car.



Marathon Runners Over 30: The Unheard of Advantages

By Curt Davies - curt.davies@marathondriven.com

When you're over the age of 30, running marathons can bring many benefits that are often not the case when you're younger. Whether you're aware of the advantages or not, they do exist, and is exactly what I'm going to be going through in this article. Sit back, relax, and enjoy reading some of the many benefits you get when running and training for marathons.

1. Healthy body and mind

The first and often considered the most evident point is that when you run marathons, you become more physically and mentally healthy. You've also probably heard that the key to a good race is a healthy mind, correct? Nonetheless, running changes you for the better. When you first begin to run marathons, you'll find it to be particularly hard as you don't have much experience. As you become more qualified and experienced as a marathon runner, you'll notice how much easier it is to run a marathon in comparison to when you just started. You'll also begin to notice how much better you feel for doing so. Your mind will be clear, and your body will be capable of doing things you never thought were possible! Not to mention you'll look and feel younger the more fit and healthy you are.

2. More energy for important things

When you're over 30, you begin to cherish the more important things in life you never really appreciated. This includes your siblings, family, friends, spouse, and other significant others. When you have children, it can be draining to spend a lot of time with them. They can be high-maintenance and a handful at times, but that's the joys of being a parent (you'll be more appreciative of this when they grow up and won't want to spend as much time with you, trust me!). When you run and train for marathons, you begin to feel more motivated and energized to playing and spending time with those who you consider to be important. This isn't restricted to children: it can be pets, hobbies, travelling, and whatever else you sometimes don't have the energy to do.

3. Meet awesome people

If there's one thing I love about marathon running, it's all the awesome people I get to meet. From

all ages, races, sexes, heights, personalities (you get the point) it really allows you to open your mind which helps you become a better person. Marathon running is a community event – everyone is there for one another, supporting each other from start to finish. I have known strangers helping strangers push through the race, with encouragement, whether it is through words or actions. I find that some of the most positive people are marathon runners, and we're all in it together!

4. Rewarded with a medal at the end

This may not seem like a big deal to many people, but to me, it is – for psychological reasons. Receiving a medal at the end of a long, exhausting marathon is a huge moment, and one you should remember for the rest of your life. The weeks of training put into the marathon, and you're rewarded with sentimental value at the end (it's shiny and looks cool, also). It is proof you finished a marathon. When your friends and family are over, you can wear that medal around your neck with pride – after all, you earned it!

5. Travelling experiences

No matter where you live or what your background is, when you become enthusiastic about running marathons, it opens doors to many different travelling experiences. This gets you outside of your own country or state, and allows for you to experience the cultural differences of the location you're travelling to. Through this, it'll you'll inevitably meet people from all over the world who are there for the same reasons as yourself, and is an ideal way of making new friends with similar interests as you. And at the end of your travel, you'll have an abundance of memories, pictures and videos to share with others for the rest of your life. Just imagine travelling from America to, say... Buenos Aires Marathon in Argentina. What a story that'll be for the rest of your life! I can guarantee you your grandchildren would love to hear that one.



6. Running is an antidepressant

The main issue with medication antidepressants is it can be a risk when consuming the medication. Depending on your health status, age and many other factors, you could be putting your body in potential danger. For example, if you're over the age of 65, you're more likely to be prone to falls, fractures and loss of bones caused by an antidepressant. However, running is a natural, healthy antidepressant and can be done by almost anyone completely free. If you look back at point #1, you'll notice this point isn't exclusive to that point. However, on the topic of depression and antidepressants, running is a proven method of receiving a dose of natural antidepressants, and is recommended by all renowned, credible psychologists.

Conclusion

If you're over 30 running and training for marathons like never before, then I bow down to you, and congratulate you for bettering yourself and your life. It takes heroism to fight against the grain to change your life, and that needs to be acknowledged.

Author Bio

Curt Davies is a marathon enthusiast and has built his own website located at www.marathondriven.com. It's stacked with information and other goodies regarding marathon running and training for those over the age of 30. If you want to find out more about Curt and what he writes about, open the link mentioned earlier.

Marathon Driven
www.marathondriven.com



Dr. Anand Kesari Offers Innovative Full Spectrum Endoscopy Procedure for Improved Early Detection of Colon Cancer

Gastro-Colon Clinic is one of the first in the nation to use EndoChoice's Fuse™ endoscope system to reduce the 'miss rate' of lesions during colonoscopy



Although colonoscopy exams prevent many colon cancer deaths¹ and are the gold standard, for detecting colorectal cancers,² the procedure is not completely effective in preventing cancer cases.³ For this reason, Gastro-Colon Clinic has invested in an innovative technology that significantly improves the accuracy of colonoscopy exams and can greatly reduce the number of potentially pre-cancerous lesions missed by standard, forward-viewing endoscopes.

The Fuse™ endoscope system from EndoChoice®, Inc. uses three small cameras at the tip of a flexible GI endoscope. "Unlike standard, forward-viewing endoscopes that use a single camera, the Fuse system lets doctors see nearly twice as much surface area," said Dr. Kesari.

"The Fuse endoscope is all about seeing more of the GI tract. It projects the expanded view on three screens to give physicians previously unseen views, such as behind colonic folds and difficult anatomy. We are pleased to offer this important new technology to our community."

1 Zauber AG, Winawer SJ, Waye JD, et al. Colonoscopic Polypectomy and Long-Term Prevention of Colorectal-Cancer Deaths. *N Engl J Med* 2012; 366:687-696

2 Rockey DC, Paulson E, Niedzwiecki D, et al. Analysis of air contrast barium enema, computed tomographic colonography, and colonoscopy: prospective comparison. *Lancet*. Jan 22-28 2005;365(9456):305-311

3 Brenner H, Chang-Claude J, Seiler CM, Stürmer T, Hoffmeister M. Potential for colorectal cancer prevention of sigmoidoscopy versus colonoscopy: population-based case control study. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*. Mar 2007;16(3):494-499.



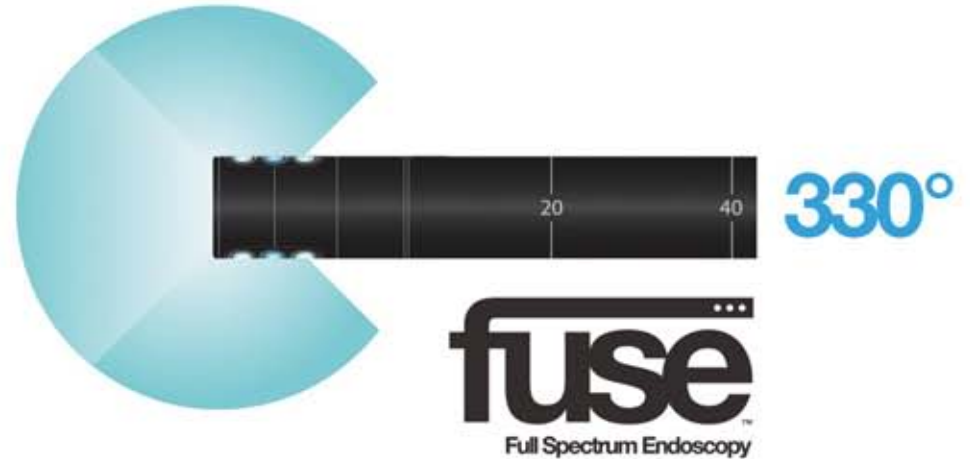
Dr. Anand Kesari



Standard Colonoscope Limited 170° Field of View



Fuse™ Colonoscope Panoramic 330° Field of View



The Fuse system recently received FDA 510(k) clearance for marketing in the U.S. "As an early adopter of the innovative Fuse system, Gastro-Colon Clinic is at the forefront of U.S. healthcare providers offering the best technology and procedures for detecting colorectal cancers," said Dr. Kesari. "Our team is proud to be using the new system in our ongoing effort to reduce cancer and provide the highest quality care to our patients."

In a multi-center trial conducted in the U.S., Europe and Israel, researchers performed a series of colonoscopies comparing standard, forward-viewing endoscopes and the new Fuse system.

The endoscope used in the first examination was selected randomly. After the first inspection, each patient immediately underwent a second colonoscopy performed by the same doctor, but with the competing endoscope. The 185 patient trial showed standard, forward-viewing endoscopes missed 41% of potentially pre-cancerous lesions,

or adenomas, while the Fuse system missed just 7%. Additionally, Fuse found 69% more adenomas when compared to standard, forward-viewing endoscopes. The results of this clinical study were presented at a major medical society meeting earlier this year and recently published in The Lancet Oncology.

"Standard, forward-viewing endoscopes provide up to 170 degrees of forward vision. The advantage of Fuse is that it allows endoscopists to examine twice the anatomy with a wide 330 degree view. This is especially advantageous because adenomas can be missed in difficult to find areas of the anatomy," said Dr. Kesari. "The findings are compelling and support the data from previous studies showing the limitations of standard, forward-viewing endoscopes. EndoChoice's innovative Fuse technology dramatically improves the effectiveness of this life-saving procedure. And improving the effectiveness of every procedure we perform here at Gastro-Colon Clinic is what we're all about."

Patient scheduling with the new Fuse system is now underway at Gastro-Colon Clinic. More than 15 million colonoscopies are performed across the United States each year and most insurance companies cover the costs for those patients over age 50.



Gastro-Colon Clinic Dr. Anand Kesari

7535 SW 62nd Court,
Ocala, FL 34476

1400 US 441 N. Bldg. 930,
The Villages, FL 32159

1389 S. US 301,
Sumterville, FL 33585

7578 SE Maricamp Rd. #102,
Ocala (Shores), FL 34472

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Ask your Doctor to refer you to Dr. Anand Kesari of Gastro-Colon Clinic for all your GI and Colonoscopy needs. Get the best possible endoscopic evaluation around.



Better Health for the Holidays

Optimal Health is Achievable!

Written by, Carolyn Waygood, Certified Natural Health Professional

The holiday season is a joyous one, filled with gatherings of family and friends, festive parties, and delectable gifts! But for those who struggle with health challenges, be it excess weight, blood sugar management, digestive disorders, or painful inflammation, the holiday season is a time of anxiety. Temptations of over-indulgence lurk around every corner, and feelings of "failing" your health goals can darken this blessed and happy season! NO MORE!

Let me introduce you to an incredible line of natural wellness products formulated to help you achieve greater health and wellness! Plexus Worldwide, based in Scottsdale, Arizona, is a company committed to our health, the use of natural ingredients to help address America's most common health challenges, and specialize in life-changing products. Best known for their complete approach to weight loss, Plexus has grown 16,457% during the past 3 years, as worldwide sales QUADRUPLED in 2013! This incredible growth occurred, in part, because their wellness products are effective, and customers are seeing the results!

Their most popular product, Plexus Slim, is a powdered drink mix that helps people maintain healthy blood sugars, promotes healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels, increases willpower over food and reduces binge eating. Formulated using a proprietary blend of natural ingredients such as chromium, chlorogenic acid extract from green coffee beans, Garcinia Cambogia, and alpha lipoic acid, Plexus Slim helps the body drop excess weight naturally. "The Plexus Slim formula is so unique", explains Carolyn Waygood, Certified Natural Health Professional, "and I consider it the most complete approach to natural weight loss on the market today." It is also the simplest approach to weight loss we've discovered. Just mix the powdered packet into a bottle of water, shake it, and drink it 15-30 minutes before breakfast, and customers report feeling more energy and less hungry throughout the day. "Since Plexus Slim helps maintain healthy blood sugars, people enjoy an even level of energy daily, as well as reduce food cravings caused by drops in blood glucose", notes Carolyn.

Most people enjoy indulging during the holidays, which is a staple part of gatherings of family & friends. "I don't preach about eating a perfect diet", admits Ms. Waygood. "I help people balance real-life with better health." By helping the body better metabolize and utilize unhealthy substances such as sugary carbs and glucose-laden sweets, you can enjoy holiday fare without the guilt of gaining weight! Carolyn's suggested products for **HEALTHY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT during the holiday season** include Plexus Slim together with either Plexus Boost or Accelerator, and the optional BLOCK supplement formulated to help slow the absorption of starch & sugar for healthier glucose levels. Features and benefits of this powerful product set include;

- Vitamin B & Green Tea extract to aid in metabolism
- Yerba Mate shown to Increase thermogenesis
- Alpha Lipoic Acid helps turn glucose into energy
- Chlorogenic acid to help maintain healthy cholesterol/lipid levels
- Garcinia Cambogia to help control the appetite & cravings
- A proprietary seaweed blend to help slow conversion of starches/sugars to glucose
- Caralluma Fimbriata to help Improve endurance
- Supports overall healthy weight control



Having an excess of toxic waste can leave the body tired, achy, and bloated, with a low energy level and weakened immune system. Detoxification is a process



that expels excess waste and accumulated toxins from our body. Fortunately, Plexus has developed products to help the body detoxify and cleanse the gastrointestinal tract and arteries. Carolyn's suggested products for **HEALTHY DIGESTION & DETOXIFICATION during the holiday season** include Plexus Slim together with Plexus ProBio5, and the Plexus BioCleanse supplement. Features and benefits of this powerful product set include;

- Chitosinase supports Yeast organism (Candida) & fungal cleanse
- Lactobacillus Sporogenes helps provides proper probiotic balance in the intestinal tract
- A cleaner GI tract helps increase nutrient absorption
- Improves Energy Levels by Oxygenating the entire body
- Ascorbic Acid helps cleanse the GI tract & arteries
- Bioflavonoids enhance weight loss
- Magnesium helps relieve constipation & supports overall healthy weight control

With over 76 million Americans suffering from discomfort each day, finding relief from soreness can be a life-changing gift this holiday season! If you've been living with discomfort, such as back problems, muscle tension, and joint soreness, you may be searching for natural lasting relief. The good news is Plexus has developed Fast Relief™, a cutting-edge, three-product system with a proprietary ingredient blend that will help you live happier, healthier, and discomfort-free. "Pain is the body's way of signaling that something's wrong", explains Ms. Waygood. "And it's typically associated with inflammation – the body's normal response to injury. However, when the inflammatory process doesn't shut off, and chronic inflammation yields long-term pain – it's difficult to enjoy the holidays!"

Carolyn's suggested products for **RELIEVING SORENESS & DISCOMFORT** during the **holiday season** include Plexus Slim together with Plexus Fast-Relief Cream, and the Plexus Fast-Relief daily supplement. Features and benefits of this powerful product set include;

- Anti-inflammatory benefits of ETArrol™ and Aloe
- Improved joint & muscle function from MSM
- Pain relief from cooling Menthol, as well as Turmeric, Serrapeptase, and Bromelain
- Joint tissue repair from Chondroitin, Glucosamine, and Hyaluronic Acid

"I have personally worked with dozens of people, and know of thousands of others, who have achieved greater health as a result of the Plexus products", Carolyn says. "The important thing is to make that initial step to address your personal health challenge, and then be guided by the experience of a wellness professional." Carolyn's wellness advice is FREE to Plexus customers, including a complementary 90-Day Challenge Program for customers who initiate their wellness routine during the month of December. For more information, contact Ms, Waygood at (941) 713-3767, or via email at Carolyn@LoseWeightFL.com. For more information about the Plexus products she refers to, visit www.Waygood.MyPlexusProducts.com today!



"I started taking Plexus Slim with Accelerator 4 months ago and I have lost 26 pounds. I went from a size 12 to a size 8. Even during the Holidays when the food craving was at its worst, I was able to enjoy and eat what I wanted without gaining a pound!" – Hope S.



"When I started taking the Plexus products I weighed 185 pounds and was wearing a size 14. I used Plexus for five months and lost a whopping 52 pounds. I am in a size 5 now. I feel great thanks to Plexus Slim. And the best part is that I haven't gained a single pound back. What an amazing product. I would recommend this to anyone." – Rochelle D.



"At first I was skeptical about the Plexus products. However, I went ahead and tried them and I am very blessed that I did. I have gone from a size 22 (211 pounds) to a size 14 (174 pounds). I have lost a total of 32 inches." – Brandi S.

Are you eager to see and hear MORE Plexus success stories? You can! An inspiring collage of Plexus customer testimonies can be viewed on You Tube by visiting <http://youtu.be/HWD9vLFjVcc>. If you are still skeptical of the amazing health benefits people have achieved with Plexus products, watch this brief 8 minute video and hear a compilation of life-changing Plexus testimonials from real people seeing real results!

This holiday season, give yourself the GIFT OF HEALTH, and learn more about how natural products from Plexus Worldwide can help you experience a healthy, more joyful holiday this year! Contact your local Plexus Ambassador today to discuss your personal health goals this season! These Independent Ambassadors are ready to support you in achieving optimal health now, and into the New Year!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Happy Holidays



Carolyn Waygood, CNHP
Plexus Ambassador # 91719

Tel. (941) 713-3767
Carolyn@LoseWeightFL.com

Other Local Ambassadors;

Jamie Brown
Tel. (941) 720-7075
Jamie@LoseWeightFL.com

Bonnie Duncan, LMT
Tel. (941) 879-2306
BDmedmassage@aol.com



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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“BRINGING CHARITABLE GIVING INTO YOUR ESTATE PLAN.”

Each year, as the holidays approach and the year comes to a close, the spirit of the season calls us into action to help those in need. For those fortunate enough to give to others, there may be advantages in addition to the altruistic and goodwill benefits. By incorporating charitable giving into your estate plan, any charitable contribution given to a charity of your choice may provide you with a steady stream of income and potential tax benefits.

There are several different methods for setting up charitable contributions through your estate plan. It is important to remember that charitable contributions are one hundred percent deductible from estate taxes. Often times, the most basic method of giving involves a simple bequest through your will. You should always make it clear which charity you want to receive your gift with as many specifics as possible.

While charitable giving through a simple will is an easier option, there may be a more financially beneficial method. A Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) offers flexibility, an income stream for a number of years, and significant tax benefits to you and your heirs. A CRT is an irrevocable, tax-exempt trust in which you place assets to provide income for you during a specific time (i.e. your lifetime). At the end of that period, the remaining assets will be turned over to the charity of your choice. The trust can be funded with a wide assortment of assets, including bonds, mutual funds, stocks and real estate. Put another way – a CRT lets you convert a highly appreciated asset like stock or real estate into lifetime income.

So how does a CRT actually work? You, acting as the Grantor, transfer an appreciated asset into an irrevocable trust. This removes the asset from your estate, so no estate taxes will be due on it when you die. You also receive an immediate charitable tax deduction. The trustee then sells the asset at full market value, paying no capital gains tax, and re-invests the proceeds in income-producing assets. For the rest of your life, the trust pays you an income. When you die, the remaining trust assets go to the charity or charities you have chosen. There are two choices for receiving your income: a fixed percentage of trust assets or a fixed income. The correct choice depends on your specific situation. You also have an option to postpone taking any income until later. You should consult with an attorney or tax professional before making any CRT decision.



There are multiple benefits to establishing a CRT, including no capital gains taxes on assets transferred to a CRT and the potential to generate income for the donor. A CRT reduces your income taxes now and estate taxes when you die. An important point to consider is that CRTs are irrevocable; meaning, you forgo the rights to any assets placed in the trust. Your trustee, who remains in control of the assets while you are living, must follow your instructions or you retain the right to change the trustee. Choosing a trustee and clearly stating your intentions in the trust document and to the trustee is extremely important. You also may consider selling the asset yourself and re-investing. This is an option, but you pay far more in taxes and there is less income to you. This option offers no protection from creditors and no charitable income tax deduction is available. With this in mind, you may ask yourself: what kind of assets are suitable for a CRT? The best assets are those that have greatly appreciated in value since you purchased them, specifically publicly traded securities, real estate, and stock in some closely-held corporations.



To set up a simple will, CRT, or other form of charitable trust you will need to work closely with an attorney, a financial professional, and the charity of your choice. The use of trusts involves a complex web of tax rules and regulations. By talking with a financial caregiver or estate planning attorney, you can determine what option is right for you. Taking the time to plan your charitable gifts allows you to take advantage of some unique tax benefits while also giving substantially to others, creating an ideal set-up this holiday season. The team at Family Wealth Guardians can help you set-up estate planning tools like these and help with many other aspects of personal finance management. Take advantage of our knowledgeable and experienced staff to better plan for your future.



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Ryan King, Esq. - President & CEO
Ryan graduated from the University of Florida's Levin College of Law. He completed the Florida Bar Exam and was duly admitted by the Supreme Court of Florida to the Florida Bar in 2013. Prior to joining Family Wealth Guardians, Ryan worked as an attorney and legal advisor serving clients with Accountants and Business Advisors, Inc. in Gainesville, FL where he assisted clients with a variety of legal issues. Using his experience in estate planning and corporate law, he continues to further his legal education in an effort to better serve the needs of all clients of Family Wealth Guardians.

Ryan completed his undergraduate work at the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in Sport Management and a minor in Business. While working on those degrees at Florida, Ryan was a member of the Florida men's basketball program. He spent nearly five years working under Coach Billy Donovan and his staff as a team manager and graduate intern. His time with the Gators included two national championship rings from the 2006 and 2007 season to go along with a lifetime of experiences. Outside of work, Ryan remains passionate about sports and spending time with his family. He devotes much of his free time to playing golf and visiting different stadiums and venues to watch his favorite teams.



Tina Pratt - Financial Caregiver & Office Manager

Tina recently completed her AA in Business Administration as well as an AS in Health Services Management, and is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Health Services Administration at Santa Fe College.

Tina brings 25+ years of accounting and administration experience to the Family Wealth Guardians team. She particularly enjoys her time spent visiting with clients in their homes and making sure they remain informed about, and secure with, their personal finances.

Tina remains very active in her community by volunteering with the Florida Chapter of The ALS Association. Over the past year, she served as the volunteer walk coordinator for Ocala's first Walk to Defeat ALS, the signature fund raising event for The ALS Association. She is hoping to develop another fundraising walk in Ocala in the near future, as well as one in The Villages. When not at work or volunteering, she spends a great amount of time with her three beautiful grandchildren.

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BEAT THE HOLIDAY BLUES

The holidays are supposed to be a joyful time of good cheer, parties and family gatherings, but it is not unusual for many of us to feel sad, lonely or even anxious during the holidays. This condition, which has come to be called "holiday blues," can occur with any holiday or vacation time. It commonly happens at the end of the year when it can seem that just about everyone is celebrating in some way. High expectations, loneliness and stress can lead to holiday blues during the season from Thanksgiving to New Year's. In most cases symptoms are temporary, but they can be serious if they last for more than two weeks, leading to clinical anxiety and/or depression.

Why are seniors susceptible?

Many factors can contribute to feelings of sadness that seniors may feel around the holidays. The holidays can heighten feelings of grief and loss for seniors adjusting to changes related to the process of aging, such as life without a loved one or close friends, ill health, or a move from a lifelong family home into a retirement home or senior community. They may feel guilty about having feelings of sadness which may in turn intensify those feelings of sadness.

How to manage the holiday blues?

The holiday blues can be a normal response to a stress-filled time of the year, but seniors don't have to suffer unnecessarily. Mental Health America, a non-profit dedicated to helping Americans lead mentally healthier lives, offers the following tips for coping with stress:

- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.
- Leave yesteryear in the past and look toward to the future. Life brings changes. Don't set yourself up in comparing today with the "good ol' days."
- Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some of your time to help others.
- Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at holiday decorations.



- Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
- Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends, or contact someone you haven't heard from in a while.
- Find a family member, friend, member of the clergy, or a physician or professional counselor you can talk with who can help you through this difficult time.



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When is it more serious than just the holiday blues?

While they may be intense and unsettling, holiday blues are usually short-lived, lasting for a few days to a few weeks prior to or just after the holiday. However, it is important for family members, physicians and other caregivers to be alert to signs of something more serious than just seasonal sadness. Many elderly individuals may feel that depression is a natural part of aging and may not seek treatment on their own.

Depression is a very real and serious disease that can be treated and managed, but can be life-threatening if left untreated. The signs of depression include: sadness that won't lift; loss of interest or pleasure; changes in appetite and weight; thoughts of death or suicide. If you notice that a loved one seems depressed, encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider.

How can Visiting Angels help?

The friendly, experienced, and knowledgeable Visiting Angels team members can help reduce your stress during the holidays by assisting with any home care services needed. During this time of year, we are often busy and having someone to help manage daily health activities can prevent stress and allow you to enjoy the festivities to the fullest.

If health issues prevent you from participating in social events, or if you are lonely and missing loved ones during this time of year, a Visiting Angel can keep you company and make ensure you are properly taking care of yourself to prevent holiday blues and worsening health conditions.

If diagnosed with depression, elderly patients may respond more readily when receiving care in the comfort of home, surrounded by their family and possessions. Interim Healthcare offers an in-home care program to assist patients, families and caregivers affected by depression and other behavioral health disorders to journey towards wholeness. Services include stabilization, medication management, family interventions and long-term management.

If you have any questions about the various home care services provided by Interim Healthcare, please call 352-326-0400 today. We are here to help in any way that we can.

The Gift Of Joyful Thought

By Alex Anderson, Senior Associate Pastor at Bayside Community Church

My Uncle Mutt always smiled. His real first name was Eugene, but everyone called him Mutt. Late at night, sitting around a pot of Maxwell House coffee, my Dad and Uncle Mutt would tell jokes and “side splitting” hunting and fishing stories until around 2:00 am. Glued to every word and facial expression these two giant storytellers would dish out, I would fight as long as a ten year old could, at the kitchen table to stay awake.

These men loved coffee and each other. For gifts, they would buy for each other the most ridiculous coffee cups they could find. Then when together, they would fill these goofy cups with boiling black coffee.

I remember one Friday night around 10:00 pm as my dad was pouring himself yet another cup he said, “Well Mutt, it looks like we have ran out of coffee.” I jumped to my feet to make a pot so they could keep the stories rolling. When the coffee was finished I poured some for Uncle Mutt and as he looked into the cup with a hairy wrinkled unibrow, he paused, then looked back at me and said, “Is this suppose to be coffee?” I said, “Yes sir” proudly and he said, “It can’t be.” I was deflated and asked, “Why not Uncle Mutt?” He said, “Cause I can see the bottom of the cup.” And he smiled his famous Cheshire Cat grin.

Back at the stove, and very determined, I dumped about ¼ lb. of Maxwell House Coffee grounds in the same pot while they turned back and continued laughing and chuckling. When the pot boiled I flooded my uncle’s cup again, held my breath and waited. He peered into the cup then poured a little of the scalding aromatic brew into a saucer. He gave it a fan with his hand then he raised the saucer to his lips and slowly sucked the coffee from the edge. Only after downing a couple of saucers did he then turn to me, cocked his head slightly, winked and said, “Now that my boy, is a cup of coffee.” I grinned from ear to ear. I loved my Uncle Mutt.

That memory is over 43 years old. I remember it like it was yesterday. I have many wonderful memories and many depressing ones. But I have



chosen to become the curator of this amazing library of my yester-years. I have learned to find the good and the cheerful. I have turned villains into heroes and monsters into saints.

Why would I do such a thing? Wouldn’t it make a lot of sense to be “real?” Well actually, I am being real. I have chosen to galvanize my mind to the thoughts that create true and admirable movies in my heart. Using my memories, I am the producer, the director and the screenwriter. Granted it’s been as tough as nails at times and I’ve wanted to send the heroes and saints back to the evil place I found them in my past. It also took a lot of hunting and pecking around my memories, but I found enough to create my version of *It’s A Wonderful Life*.

After I realized that I had the power, not the villains and monsters, to create my own blockbuster movies in my heart, I could choose to make a Jimmy Stewart, Oscar-Winner or a trashy “C” movie that’s a waste of time, with no life-giving value.

Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable.
~Philippians 4:8 NLT

It’s also to my advantage to nose around my memories and find something, even if it is small, to “fix my thoughts on.” I’ve known some pretty mean rascals, and yet every one of them had something admirable that I could pull off the shelf of my heart and put into my basket to create my Oscar winner. See ‘I become’ like the movies I watch over and over in my heart. Over time they shape my actions and I become either bitter or better.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. ~Proverbs 4:23 NLT

The movies I play in my mind affect how I feel. If I want to be depressed and unmotivated then I play the C movies of pain and shame. If I want to feel motivated and full of joy, I play my version of Jimmy Stewart’s, *It’s A Wonderful life*.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength ~Proverbs 17:22 New Living Translation

This holiday season give yourself “*The Gift of Joyful Thought*.” If you do, you’ll feel awesome and will have a Merry Christmas.

To your spiritual health, Alex E. Anderson
Author, *Dangerous Prayers*



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