

## Acute vs. Chronic Pain

**Dr. Rob Skleryk, D.C.**



In this edition of the LaserHealth® Solutions newsletter we wanted to focus on explaining the difference between Acute versus Chronic pain and injury. Acute and chronic injuries are at the opposite ends of the spectrum. Acute injuries, such as a sprained ankle, strained back, or fractured hand, occur suddenly during activity. Chronic injuries usually result from over using one area of the body while playing a sport or due to performing a repetitive physical activity over a long period.

### Signs of an acute injury include:

- Sudden, severe pain
- Swelling
- Inability to place weight on a lower limb
- Extreme tenderness in an upper limb
- Inability to move a joint through its full range of motion
- Extreme limb weakness
- Visible dislocation / break of a bone

### Events in Acute Inflammation

Acute inflammation begins within seconds to minutes following the injury of tissues. The damage may be purely physical, or it may involve the activation of an immune response. Three main processes occur:

- Increased blood flow due to dilation of blood vessels (arterioles) supplying the region.
- Increased permeability of the capillaries, allowing fluid and blood proteins to move into the interstitial spaces, which is the space that surrounds the cells of a given tissue.
- Migration of neutrophils (and perhaps a few macrophages) out of the venules and into interstitial spaces.

<http://courses.washington.edu/conj/inflammation/acuteinflam.htm>

### Signs of a chronic injury include:

- Pain when performing activities
- A dull ache when at rest
- Swelling

[http://arthritis.about.com/od/sportsinjuryandarthritiss/s/sportsinjuryqa\\_10.htm](http://arthritis.about.com/od/sportsinjuryandarthritiss/s/sportsinjuryqa_10.htm)

The term chronic refers to an injury, illness or disease that develops slowly and is persistent and long-lasting. Because many chronic injuries have mild symptoms, they are often ignored or simply overlooked for months or even years. Chronic injuries are sometimes referred to as cumulative trauma or overuse injuries.

Again, overuse injuries tend to have subtle or vague symptoms that develop slowly. They begin as a small, nagging ache or pain, and can grow into a debilitating injury if they aren't treated early. Overuse

injuries are the result of repetitive use, stress and trauma to the soft tissues of the body (muscles, tendons, bones and joints) without proper time for healing.

#### Examples of chronic injuries include:

- Tendonitis (tennis elbow or rotator cuff injuries)
- Bursitis
- Shin splints
- Stress fractures

[http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/glossary/g/chronic\\_def.htm](http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/glossary/g/chronic_def.htm)

Chronic inflammation is different from acute inflammation in that chronic inflammation is a disease. The body is in a constant inflammatory state which can then contribute to the progression of many chronic degenerative diseases such as osteoarthritis for example.

#### What Should I Do If I Suffer An Injury?

Whether an injury is acute or chronic, it is **never** a idea to try to “work through” the pain of an injury. When you have pain from a particular movement or activity, **STOP!** Continuing the activity only causes further harm.

You should call a health professional if:

- The injury causes severe pain, swelling, or numbness
- You can't tolerate weight on the area
- The pain or dull ache of an old injury is accompanied by increased swelling or joint abnormality or instability

[http://arthritis.about.com/od/sportsinjuryandarthrit1/ss/sportsinjuryqa\\_10.htm](http://arthritis.about.com/od/sportsinjuryandarthrit1/ss/sportsinjuryqa_10.htm)

Laser therapy is an excellent way to treat both Acute and Chronic injuries. Low intensity laser therapy has been documented to speed up healing by 60%, therefore getting you back on the field or back in the work force sooner. Laser therapy aids the body in the healing of acute injuries by accelerating the body through the inflammation stage. This helps minimize the formation of adverse scar tissue and thus can help prevent acute injuries from becoming a chronic long lasting problem. During the treatment of chronic conditions with laser therapy, something different happens. The laser stimulates healing that has become stagnated by the chronic condition. It moves the chronic inflammatory state back into an acute state, increasing the metabolism of the cells. Once the condition is back in its' acute state, the laser can then facilitate the body to accelerate through the acute inflammation state and start healing. Once the inflammation is gone, pain is reduced, muscle guarding is eliminated and a greater range of movement is achieved. This enables the patient to return to their daily physical activities... pain free!

## Have Questions? Call us today!

### Burnaby

Dr. Gohar Sheikh, D.C. & Dr. Steven Mew, D.C

**604-293-2273**

### Calgary

Blaine Skleryk, RMT & Cheryl Salverda, PT

**403-235-2737**

### Calgary

Amparo Calma, RMT

**403-452-0233**

### Surrey

Dr. Rob Skleryk, D.C. & Dr. Yuen Yee Ng, D.C.

**604-575-1331**

### Winnipeg

Diana Mason, RMT

**204-255-7779**

### Vancouver

Dr. David Wang, N.D.

**604-739-1815**