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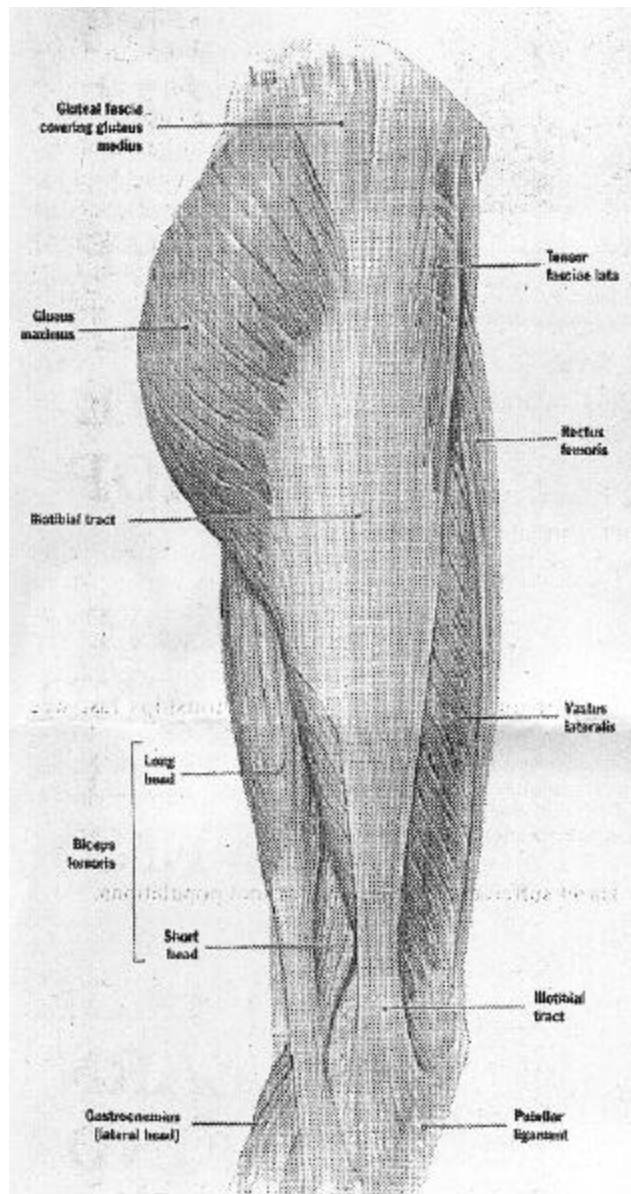
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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Biking Season Has Begun!

For all those people who have mild arthritic knees or feet that prevent them from jogging or hiking, cycling is a good low impact alternative. It will strengthen the major muscle groups of the legs, buttocks, and hips. This includes the quadriceps (one of which is the vastus lateralis), hamstrings (one of which is the biceps femoris), and the calves (one of which is the gastrocnemius).



When jogging or hiking at a brisk pace, the impact or pressure on your ankle, knee, and hip joints are quite high. Sometimes, these joints will become aggravated if they are already affected by mild or moderate arthritis. Cycling uses these same muscles and joints but does not involve the high impact associated with running.

Muscles that are exercised regularly remain stronger, more flexible, and are less prone to injury. The pressure exerted on the “hip bones” when exercising also helps prevent osteoporosis. The more your bones are challenged, the more calcium they retain and the stronger they remain. Participating in any activity that elevates your heart and breathing rate helps to increase your physical endurance. When you are using the large muscles in your body, they demand an increased amount of oxygen, which is carried by the blood. The heart and lungs have to work harder to supply this. The more you exercise the stronger and more efficient the heart and lungs become. As a person becomes in better physical condition, their coordination and balance has been shown to improve as well. Improving a person’s dexterity is particularly important for seniors who tend to fall more often and are at a greater risk of wrist and hip fractures due to a decreased bone density.

Cycling is not just for people who have arthritis, weak muscles, or decreased bone density. It is for anyone who enjoys getting out and taking in the great scenery we have in the Nicola Valley. For those of you who do not know, there is a “Merritt Mountain Bike Association” in Merritt that is presently marking out beginner to expert level trails for anybody who wants to go for a ride off the beaten path. These trails are all off-road and there is one for level of rider. Later this summer, a series of local trails will be marked out and maps will be printed. These will be available for the general public for a nominal fee.

This is just one of many types of exercise that not only make you feel good while doing it, but they play an active role in the prevention of other serious illnesses such as heart disease and osteoporosis. Preventing the disease from occurring in the first place is much less painful and debilitating than trying to deal with it after you already have it.