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Inside This Issue

How to Protect Your Family
From the Opioid Crisis
page 1

Lowering Holiday Stress
page 2

Our Clients Say It Best
page 2

Overcoming the Impossible Task
page 3

Soul Snacks
page 3

Roasted Turkey
page 3

Physical Therapy Helped
Quarterback Alex Smith
page 4



Have you or a loved one become seriously ill from exposure to COVID-19 on the job? We are currently accepting COVID-19 cases of workers employed in certain occupations where new laws in Virginia and proposed laws in North Carolina cover workers who contracted COVID-19 in those occupations.



DETERMINATION THROUGH THE RECOVERY PROCESS

Physical Therapy Helped Quarterback Alex Smith

Earlier this year, Alex Smith retired from the NFL after helping the Washington Football Team achieve an NFC East title last year — but that's not what most people will remember him for. Rather, they will remember Smith for fighting through one of the worst injuries ever sustained by a player in the history of the game.

For anyone who might be unfamiliar with his story, here are a few of the basics: On Nov. 18, 2018, Smith sustained a spiral and compound fracture in his tibia and fibula in his right leg after getting sacked by Kareem Jackson. He was rushed to surgery immediately, but that was just the beginning. A serious infection in Smith's blood led to a series of medical complications and 17 more surgeries.

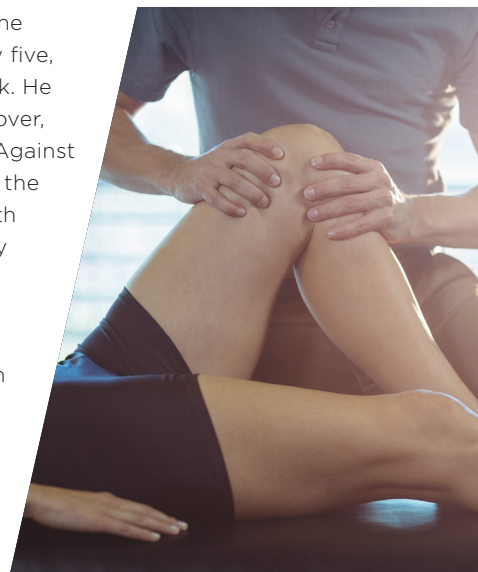
All of this should have meant Smith was done with professional football for good. After all, he nearly lost his leg! But thanks to his determination, and help from a qualified physical therapist, he was able to steadily recover.

In February 2019, Smith was cleared by the office of the secretary of defense to receive a medical consultation from the military at the Center for the Intrepid, a rehab center normally reserved for combat veterans. However, Smith's injuries were severe enough that they actually mirrored a lot of what the doctors at the facility were used to working with.

The Washington Team's physician, Dr. Robin West, made the visit possible after she contacted her friend Johnny Owens, a physical therapist who used to work at the Center for the Intrepid. He got Smith connected with the team of physical therapists at the facility. Then, he got to work.

According to Smith's wife, he was doing physical therapy five, sometimes six times a week. He seemed determined to recover, and in the end, it paid off. Against all odds, Smith returned to the field for his final season with the NFL, almost completely recovered from his injury.

In many ways, Smith represents what can happen when someone fully dedicates themselves to their recovery — a new life, where he could do things that no one thought would be possible for him again.



NEWSLETTER

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Hold Your Loved Ones Tight

The Opioid Crisis Is the Grinch at the Door

The holiday season should be a time to focus on the brightest parts of life: family, gifts, and all of the delicious food we can eat. But as our firm approaches these landmark days, my mind keeps going back to the empty seats we'll see at the holiday table.

This summer, someone close to our firm tragically lost a child to a drug overdose. It was a terrible incident that impacted everyone on our team. I once read that in the English language, there are orphans and widows, but there is no word to describe parents who have lost a child. That really sums up how rare this kind of grief should be.

Unfortunately, thousands of parents every year see their children fall victim to the opioid crisis. The situation is so bad that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is calling it a "drug overdose epidemic." In 2019 alone, overdoses involving opioids killed almost 50,000 people — then, in 2020, they killed nearly 70,000! The preliminary number the CDC reported was 69,710 deaths. That's 69,710 empty seats at Thanksgiving tables this year.

Of course, opioids aren't entirely bad. They can be a really helpful tool for pain management. I've even written in past newsletters about how new rules brought on by the opioid crisis are making it tougher for my clients with legitimate need to access medication. (You can read that full article by scanning the QR code.) But the problem of restricted access to opioids pales in comparison to the problem of young kids losing their lives to addiction.

There's no one thing that pushes someone to take opioids. It could be their mental health, a complicated family situation, or the influence of a peer. I once knew someone who married a casual drug user and got sucked into life that way. It's easy for something meant to be fun or a

temporary relief from pain to turn into addiction, and no one is safe from it. It's the Grinch waiting outside the door, even during the holidays.

I'm not sharing these statistics to ruin your day or to encourage you to stop taking opioids if you have a prescription. I just want to remind you to be cautious — and to check in on your friends and family. If you know someone who is going through tough times or spending the holiday alone, they might be vulnerable to an overdose. A cheerful visit, phone call, or text message could make all the difference! I plan to reach out to my friends this season. I also plan to donate to at least one organization working to fight the crisis. Here are a few you can look into if you're interested.

- **Shatterproof (Shatterproof.org)**
A national organization working to end addiction by expanding treatment options, ending stigma, and promoting education
- **The Chris Atwood Foundation (TheCAF.org)**
A Virginia-based nonprofit that provides people struggling with addiction with naloxone, training, housing, peer support, and more
- **Recovery Communities of North Carolina (RCNC.org)**
A North Carolina-based nonprofit that offers skill-building courses, mentorship, job training, and more to promote addiction recovery

Please consider giving generously to one or more of these groups. It will only take a few minutes, and you just might save a life!

Wishing you a happy, safe holiday season,

Joseph Miller

P.S. If you or someone you know is fighting addiction, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline today at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). It operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If you belong to a union or other labor-related group and want to schedule my presentation at your group's speaking arrangement, you can do so by calling 888-667-8295. The presentation is free of charge, offers important information for taking appropriate action in Virginia workers' compensation cases, and everyone in attendance gets a free copy of my book, "10 Traps and Lies That Can Ruin Your Virginia Workers' Compensation Case." Education is the best way to protect yourself from making a mistake. Call now, before it's too late.

Have a Low-Stress Holiday

3 TIPS FOR A MERRIER TIME

The holidays are right around the corner, and while many people can't wait to eat turkey and swap presents, others only see stress on the horizon. Especially for those hosting parties, between decorations, big dinners, excited kids, and visiting family, it can all feel overwhelming. If celebrations are happening at your house this year, here are three tips to lessen the strain and keep up the holiday cheer.

Recharge First

Ensure you're rested and recharged before the holidays by taking time to relax, getting enough sleep, and engaging in activities that make you feel good. When you're rushing to get everything done, it can be tempting to skip self-care routines, but that will cost you in the long run. Your daily exercise and other health activities keep you balanced and ready to face challenges head-on.

Get Started Early

Holidays always arrive faster than we expect, so begin preparing early. If shopping for

presents is a pain point, don't wait until the last minute. Decorate earlier than you need to — or better yet, get the kids to do it for you. There's only so much cooking you can do ahead of time, but ensuring you have all of the equipment and nonperishable ingredients you need a few weeks in advance will reduce both your workload and anxiety.

Don't Expect Perfection

The sooner you let go of the idea of a "perfect" holiday, the sooner you'll be able to have a happy one. Face it: Something will go wrong. Whether it's an overcooked dish, a child throwing a temper tantrum, or your uncle talking politics at the dinner table, nothing will ever go just how you planned. So, embrace the imperfections.

Whether you're celebrating this year with a group of two or 20, holidays can be a stressful time — but they don't have to be. With these tips, your festivities may not be picture-perfect, but they will be a lot of fun.



Almost everyone at some point has encountered a task that is seemingly simple, but no matter what they do, they can't complete it. These tasks can be as straightforward as making the bed or something bigger, like cleaning an entire room. For many, this is an obstacle that they may want to do but can't, which weighs heavily on them and becomes detrimental to their mental health.

It's important to understand that the impossible task is not a sign of laziness; depression and anxiety can make any task feel much bigger and more difficult than it actually is. If you find yourself unable to do the things you need or want to do, try these techniques to help overcome your obstacles.

Break up the task.

When the overarching task feels daunting, breaking it up into smaller segments can help you manage it. If you're cleaning the

OVERCOMING THE IMPOSSIBLE TASK

Improving Your Mental Health One Step at a Time

kitchen, clean for only a few minutes at a time before taking a break. It might take longer, but the space will be clean at the end of the day.

Make the task more enjoyable.

Play music or involve your pet in some way to make the task fun or create a reward system for yourself. For example, tidying a specific area of the house or folding a basket of laundry may earn you time to play video games or watch TV. Alternating tasks and rewards is a great way to overcome any task, big or small.

It can help to consider why the task feels so impossible, especially if you used to enjoy it. Try to remember what made it enjoyable and see if you can return to that state of mind. If the objective is not so urgent, determine its importance and if the task can be saved for another day.

When all else fails, you can always ask someone for support or even pay someone else to do the task for you. No matter what you decide, there are ways to defeat the impossible task.

OUR CLIENTS SAY IT BEST

"Your work and assistance was outstanding. The staff was very professional and helpful. I could not have asked for better support, patience, and caring ... In the future, if I need assistance, I will look to you for help and support."

-Beatrice G., Winton, NC

"I feel that you all were outstanding and caring. There is no way I could have done it without you. Thank you so very much. Great job!"

-Danita H., Hampton, VA



Joe's Monthly 'SOUL SNACKS'

"Happiness is letting go of what you think your life is supposed to look like and celebrating it for everything that it is."

-Daniel Agalar

Roasted Turkey

Impress your Thanksgiving guests with this perfectly roasted — and easy — turkey!

Inspired by *TheKitchn.com*

Ingredients

- 1 whole turkey, thawed
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 450 F.
2. Remove packaging and giblets from inside of the turkey.
3. Place the turkey in a broiling pan breast-side up and rub it with salt and pepper. Pour the broth around the turkey.
4. Place the pan in the oven and turn the temperature down
- to 350 F. Turkey should cook for 12-15 minutes per pound, typically 3-4 hours.
5. Remove the turkey from the oven every 45 minutes and baste it with the broth.
6. Once finished, let the turkey rest for 15-20 minutes before carving and serving.

