

LIBERTY NEWS  
**REAL CARE. REAL RESULTS.  
FOR REAL LIFE**

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**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

1. MEET PRINCE CHARMING, OUR RESIDENT THERAPY DOG
2. HOW A HEALTHY CORE AFFECTS EVERYTHING YOU DO
3. THE BEST GENRE OF MUSIC TO COMBAT DEPRESSION
4. EXERCISE YOUR WAY TO A CLEAN HOME
5. WORLD'S BEST VEGAN CHIMICHURRI
6. ARE YOUR THRIFT STORE DONATIONS BEING THROWN AWAY?



**MEET OUR RESIDENT THERAPY DOG**  
PRINCE CHARMING MELTS HEARTS AND LIFTS SPIRITS

If you've been in to see us at Liberty Rehab, you might have been lucky enough to come on a day when we had a special visitor. Our entire team here is wonderful with each of our patients, but no one quite captures their attention (or hearts) like Prince Charming, our resident therapy dog.

in ways that do wonders for the recovery process. Prince is naturally affectionate and social, so putting him through the proper training and certification programs to get him registered as a legitimate therapy dog was a no-brainer for Therese.



Prince Charming, or Prince for short, has been coming in to visit with our patients and staff for a little over a year now. He's a labradoodle, a mix between a Labrador and poodle, which means he's way too smart for his own good. But that also means he's incredibly affectionate. So when Therese, our VP of operations, got Prince as a puppy a couple of years ago, it became clear pretty quickly that he was destined for more than chasing balls around the house.

After achieving his certification, Prince would come into our office primarily to assist with senior exercise classes. Under the supervision of the instructor, Prince would help with physical activities by chasing down balls they'd throw for him, or they'd play catch and keep away using his favorite toy. Playing with a dog can be great exercise, and it doesn't even feel like exercise when it's so much fun!

go wrong by tossing him a ball. Prince's absolute favorite thing is chasing a ball, no matter what size. You can toss a tennis ball any direction you want, and he'll find a way to catch it. You can kick a soccer ball into the air, and he'll use his front legs to catch the ball and kick it back!

These days, Prince spends every Tuesday and Thursday with us. He mostly greets people as they come through the door, and he is the welcome recipient of pats on the head from patients who need a little extra emotional support. He's become so popular that many of our patients ask for him by name and are sad on the days when he's not around. We're sad on those days, too!

Therese is currently working with Prince on gaining more therapy certifications so he can help even more people. He's currently training to visit hospitals and doctor's offices so he can interact with sick patients who need a furry friend to lift their spirits. Even though we'd love to have Prince Charming all to ourselves, we're so excited to see him learn and grow in ways that allow him to help others. He really is an incredible dog that has done so much for so many, so be sure to give him a well-deserved pat on the head when you see him.

Dogs have been used to support patients going through recovery for a long time. Sometimes they have ways of helping out physically, but a lot of the time, just having an animal nearby to interact with can boost a patient's mood and outlook



Prince Charming is the smartest dog I've ever seen, especially when it comes to patient interaction and playtime. We understand that not everyone is a dog lover, and somehow, Prince is aware of that too. He has this incredible intuition about who would like a greeting from him when they walk through the door and who would rather pass. For those who like to visit with him, you can never

*Dr. Mary Lou Lugo*

**ARE YOUR THRIFT STORE DONATIONS BEING THROWN AWAY?**

Are you thinking about donating your kids' old clothes or that slow cooker you haven't used in months? Though donating your unwanted items is a great thing to do, amid the pandemic, many people have not considered the future of secondhand shopping and charity-based thrift stores like Goodwill. In 2018, Goodwill funded nearly \$5.3 billion in charitable services, like educational assistance, job training, and work placements. But now, Goodwill and similar organizations are facing a unique problem: They're receiving *too many* donations. To prevent your items from ending up in a landfill, consider the following before you donate.

Under the circumstances, this situation is understandable. Thanks to nationwide stay-at-home orders, many took advantage of their newfound spare time to spring-clean and

subsequently donate unwanted items to charity. However, with the confusion about how long the COVID-19 virus can live on clothing, secondhand shoppers have been staying home, worried about the health risks of buying used goods.

Famously, thrift stores still keep unsold goods out of landfills. Up to 75% of Goodwill's merchandise, for example, isn't sold in their stores. Instead, it's sent to discount outlets and then into global markets. However, Mexican traders, who account for 30% of business at thrift stores close to the U.S. southern border, and Kenya, the world's largest buyer of unsold secondhand clothes, have stopped buying during the economic shutdown.

Meanwhile, some good-intentioned Americans are leaving their goods outside thrift stores' front doors, not



realizing that without enough space to house the excess donations, many of these thrift stores will have to pay disposal fees, costing the business potential revenue and sending your items into local landfills.

However, Goodwill still wants your donations! You just might have to hold on to your items for a little bit. Check to see if your local thrift stores are open for donations. Many recommend waiting until the influx slows down, but others have expanded their inventory storage and are ready to keep up. Just make sure to follow their guidelines on acceptable items because any broken or worn items only add to their costs. Happy donating!

# YOUR MIDSECTION MATTERS

## HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY PROMOTES A HEALTHY CORE

When you think of the word “core,” you probably picture rock-hard abs, but there’s so much more to this group of muscles than that. Your core is made up of 29 different muscles in the middle and lower back, pelvic floor, buttocks, and hips, and they all work together to support your body’s movements. No matter where a motion starts, it either originates in the core or eventually moves through it, which means if your core is compromised, then a lot of other activities are compromised. Luckily, you can strengthen your core in many ways.

### BALANCE

Your core muscles serve as your body’s natural stabilizers and make constant adjustments in response to nerve cells called proprioceptors, which help with your sense of spatial awareness. When your core becomes weak, it’s more difficult to balance yourself in your center of gravity, which increases your risk of falls and affects upper and lower body movements. Standing on stability boards, which are flat boards with

curved undersides, is a great way to work on improving your core balance. You can even practice maintaining your stability by standing on one leg.

### STRENGTH

Core strength is different from core balance: Strength determines how well your muscles produce functional movement. An array of both static (nonmoving) and dynamic (moving) exercises are great for any level of physical fitness. Static movements include exercises like planks or bridges, while dynamic movements include situps, pushups, and crunches. More gentle dynamic exercises for those just starting out, like leg lifts or pelvic tilts, can also help strengthen your core muscles.

### ALIGNMENT

Achieving a healthy core can also improve your posture, which relieves stress on the spine and encourages proper alignment overall. Address your posture by standing up straight and



rolling your shoulders back. When you first begin training to strengthen your core, it’s also essential to establish proper pelvic alignment. Try rocking the pelvis forward and backward in a full range of motion until you find a comfortable middle portion of the movement. Many additional practices, like yoga and tai chi, can also help improve core alignment.

When it comes to physical therapy sessions, you’ll find that even if you’re there to address pain in your arms, neck, or legs, your therapist will often include core movements in your regimen because the core is such an integral part of everything we do. Whether you’re lifting a bag of groceries, practicing your golf swing, or recovering from an injury, strong core muscles are the support system your body needs to get the job done.

## DEPRESSED, ANXIOUS, OR ANGRY? TRY LISTENING TO ROCK ‘N’ ROLL!

### THE POWER OF MUSIC TO SHIFT YOUR MOOD

2020 has been a difficult year. If you’re feeling frustrated, angry, or depressed right now, you’re not alone! All over the world, people have been trying different strategies to cope with their feelings, including yoga, meditation, exercise, binge-watching their favorite TV shows, and even baking banana bread. But perhaps the most universal outlet and cure for pent-up emotions is music.

Do you remember the clip that went viral in March of Italians in quarantine, singing together from their balconies? If you do, that’s probably because it made you smile. TIME heralded it as proof that “the country’s spirits are still strong,”

and it’s just one small example of how music uplifts people. This isn’t just an anecdotal effect, either. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, music can help us process emotions and fight mental health conditions like anxiety, dysregulation, depression, trauma, sleep disorders, schizophrenia, and more.

So, how can you take advantage of music’s power to turn your mood around? One option is to create music of your own, but another is simply to listen. When it comes to flipping a bad mood on its head, a survey conducted by the Family Center for Recovery (FCR) suggests that rock is the genre of choice.

“During any given year, depression affects approximately 5%-8% of Americans,” FCR reports. “According to our survey participants, the vast majority — around 89% — turn

to music in order to feel better. The top genre for depressed listeners is rock, followed closely by alternative, pop, and hip-hop/rap.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the blues came in last on the list.

To put the power of music to work, create playlists for each mood that you want to turn around, like “Anger,” “Frustration,” “Sadness,” “Anxiety,” or “Grief,” and fill them with songs from genres associated with fighting that feeling. According to FCR, rock is the most popular antidote to sadness and anxiety, and it’s also high on the list for anger, along with pop and country. Frustrated people opt for variations of rock, pop, punk, and heavy metal, and those stricken by grief turn to soft rock or soul. The artists are up to you, so fill up your lists, press play, and let the music do its work.



# YOUR ‘CLEAN’ WORKOUT ROUTINE

## TURN HOUSEHOLD CHORES INTO EFFECTIVE EXERCISE

Everyone knows how labor-intensive cleaning can be. A long day of scrubbing down your house is a great way to work your muscles and get your blood pumping, so crank up some tunes, grab a mop, and get ready to transform your cleaning routine into a great workout.

To get physical benefits from cleaning, you need to turn up the intensity of your methods. Exaggerate your motions, pick up your pace, and keep your abs tight and knees flexed. Nearly any chore can be turned into an exercise, but here are some ideas to get you started.

- **Vacuum:** Vacuum briskly nonstop for at least 20 minutes, switching arms as you go. For an added challenge, do lunges as you vacuum and remember to keep your toes pointed straight ahead and your knees bent at 90-degree angles.
- **Pick Up:** Instead of simply bending over to pick up toys or clothes, do a squat with every item you grab. Remember to use your legs, not your back. You can also do squats while unloading the dishwasher or with any other chore that involves repeated bending.
- **Wipe Down:** Whether you’re wiping windows or scrubbing appliances, do big, exaggerated arm circles until your muscles start to burn and make sure you’re switching arms as you go.



- **Cook:** It’s not cleaning, but it’s still a chore with useful downtime. While food is simmering or thawing in the microwave, do some pushups, situps, or planks to get your muscles moving.

You can implement dozens of exercises to turn mundane activities into beneficial workouts. Some chores will burn more calories than others, but every bit of activity helps. Now’s the time to work your way to a cleaner house and a healthier you.

## TAKE A BREAK!



## WORLD’S BEST VEGAN CHIMICHURRI

Inspired by Simple Vegan

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup oil (extra-virgin olive oil recommended)
- 1/4 cup vinegar (apple cider vinegar recommended)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp salt (Himalayan pink salt recommended)
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- Cayenne pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, add all ingredients except cayenne and whisk until well mixed. If desired, add cayenne pepper a little at a time until you reach your preferred level of spiciness.
2. Serve immediately or, for an even better taste and texture, refrigerate for 1-2 days.
3. You may increase the batch size, but keep the ratio of oil and vinegar the same — 2-to-1. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 months.