



**Sharon Christie Law**

## In This Issue

<b>Oh My Aching Back!</b>	2
<b>Brief Exercise Sessions Good for Mind &amp; Body!</b>	2
<b>Crossword</b>	3
<b>Schedule of Free Seminars</b>	3
<b>Baltimore Events</b>	3
<b>Recipe: Twice Baked Potatoes</b>	3
<b>Sharon Christie Law</b>	4

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# The Christie Report

Social Security Disability

December 2014/January 2015

## Personal Message - from Sharon

### Shingle Bells! Shingle Bells!

So it is the holiday season and I have a case of shingles! Well, I am really getting over it now. My case did not last too long – only a few weeks. But it taught me a lot.

**First lesson:** Pay attention to TV ads, at least some of them. You have probably seen ads on TV for the shingles vaccine. If you had chickenpox as a child then you still have the virus in you. And as an adult it can cause shingles. The statistics are pretty shocking – 1 in 3 adults will get shingles sometime in their lifetime. I did not pay any attention to those ads because I thought you had to be older than I am to get it. And I really don't get sick very often, so I didn't think much about it. If you had chickenpox when you were little, do yourself a favor and talk to your doctor about the vaccine.

**Second lesson:** Pay attention to the directions on a heating pad. I had pretty severe pain around my chest. I thought it was a pulled muscle. What helps a pulled muscle? Heat. So I got out the heating pad. Since it was late at night I just used it while I was sleeping, even though the directions say not to do that. Why not, I thought. It is just heat. Well, I found out why not – you get burned! Not badly burned, but still burned.

**Third lesson:** If the strong painkiller and muscle relaxer aren't working, it is probably not a pulled muscle. I went to Patient First because I knew my doctor could not see me right away. The doctor at Patient First thought it was a pulled muscle too and gave me prescriptions for hydrocodone and flexeril and physical therapy. (I know that sounds familiar to a lot of you who have chronic back pain.) I took the pills at night – and they did not help. In fact, Advil was the only thing that even made a dent in the pain. What was going on? And then I saw the rash. Having been a nurse I knew right away what it was!

**Fourth (and most important) lesson:** Nerve pain really hurts. I have a new appreciation for how severe nerve pain can be. I learned firsthand about constant sharp, severe pain. I learned firsthand about skin that is so sensitive you can barely stand even the lightest and softest bit of clothing touching it. I learned firsthand about tossing and turning all night to try to find a comfortable position so that you can sleep. In summary, I learned firsthand about the symptoms that many of you live with day in and day out.

It is not easy to continue a normal day-to-day routine while in constant pain. One thing you can do for your disability case if you have chronic pain is to keep a list of how the pain limits your daily activities and what activities you can no longer do or cannot do without help. When we go to your hearing, these examples will really help to paint the picture for the judge of how your condition keeps you from doing even the most basic kind of work on a full time basis.

## Thanks for the Referrals

The greatest compliment I can receive is for clients and colleagues to refer new clients. Thank you to everyone who referred clients since our last newsletter.

<b>Ben Glass, Esq.</b>	<b>Ronald Grant</b>	<b>Susan Howarth</b>	<b>Christine Neilson, Esq.</b>
<b>Barbara Nock</b>	<b>Mary O'Byrne, Esq.</b>	<b>Chad Pierce</b>	<b>Natasha Rossback, Esq.</b>
<b>David Sanders</b>	<b>Robert Stahl, Esq.</b>	<b>Lupus Foundation—DMV Chapter</b>	
<b>Mosaic Community Services</b>		<b>Weinstock, Friedman &amp; Friedman</b>	

# Oh My Aching Back!

## How to Testify About Your Back Pain

Accuracy and clarity in your descriptions of your symptoms is crucial to your case. This is especially true in cases where pain is the disabling condition. There is no test that a doctor can perform to measure how much pain you are in, so you must be able to tell the judge precisely how your pain feels and how it affects you every day.

### Describing Your Pain

- What is the type, the location and the intensity level of your pain? On a scale of one to ten, with ten being unbearable and one being no pain at all, where would you place your pain most of the time?
- When did you first notice this pain and what was the cause?
- When something touches the area, is it sore?
- Is the pain constant? If not, how long is it gone and why does it stop? Are there times when it is less severe than other times?
- What activities set off or worsen your pain and what do you do to ease it?
- Does the pain travel? If it is joint pain, can you move the joint?
- Are you experiencing sudden spasms? Numbness? Tingling?
- Do you notice weakness, lack of interest in food or exhaustion? When you move, do your joints crack? Are they red, swollen or hot?

### Treating Your Pain

- How frequent are your doctor visits?
- Are you on medication, and is it helping? Are there any side effects?
- Are you using or have you tried alternative medical care or home remedies? What types, and have they helped?
- Will a change in position or motion bring you relief?

### Living Your Life:

- Does your pain prevent you from performing daily tasks or pastimes?
- Do you need equipment or adaptive modifications?
- Is your mental outlook affected? How?
- Has it impaired you on the job? How?

These are just some of the questions that you must be prepared to answer at your hearing. Preparation for the hearing is crucial to a successful outcome. For more information about Social Security disability claims and to order a FREE copy of my book, **Unofficial Guide to Social Security Disability Claims**, visit my website: [www.SharonChristieLaw.com](http://www.SharonChristieLaw.com) If you need help with your disability claim, contact my office today at 800-218-7062.

**"My idea of Christmas is very simple: loving others.  
Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"**

**~ Bob Hope**

## Brief Exercise Sessions Improve Memory in Older Adults

Daily exercise is good for your body AND your mind! Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, conducted a test of more than 50 adults between the ages of 50 and 85—half of whom had memory deficits. The participants were divided into two groups: one group exercised on a stationary bike for six minutes at 70% of their maximum ability, and the other group did not exercise.

Before any exercise took place, all participants were given a memory test. An hour after the exercise group worked out, all the volunteers were given another memory test.

All of the exercisers showed significantly improved memory. The exercisers who had memory deficits showed the biggest improvement!

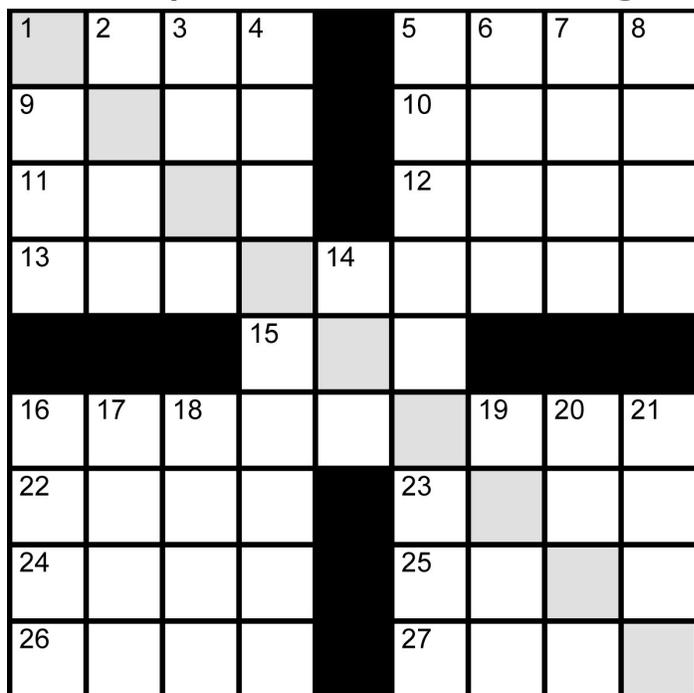
## Brief, Intense Exercise Sessions Best for Our Bodies, too?!

A study published in *Diabetologia*, showed that one minute of exercising at an intense level (90% of maximum heart rate) before eating, dropped blood sugar in participants after breakfast and dinner by more than a 30 minute exercise session at moderate intensity! AND, their blood sugar remained lower for at least 24 hours.

This trial was small but showed some very intriguing results! You can be sure there will be more studies along these lines soon.

In the meantime, though, it seems that brief, rigorous exercise sessions are good for us.  
Do check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program!

*Holiday Gifts, small & large*



**Across**

- 1. Emollient
- 5. "Cast Away" setting
- 9. Hip bones
- 10. Castle defense
- 11. "\_\_\_ here long?"
- 12. Talking bird
- 13. Frames for the night
- 15. "Acid"
- 16. Like some magicians
- 22. DVR button
- 23. Wild ox
- 24. "\_\_\_ on Down the Road"
- 25. License plates
- 26. Porcelain piece
- 27. Heroic tale

**Down**

- 1. Kind of lettuce
- 2. On the safe side, at sea
- 3. Emulated Pinocchio
- 4. Murderer
- 5. Straightaway
- 6. \_\_\_ bean
- 7. Capture, as a fish
- 8. Flight data, briefly
- 14. Cooking meas.
- 16. Fencing sword
- 17. Cole \_\_\_
- 18. Beer buy
- 19. Become unhinged
- 20. Like some orders
- 21. Be rude to

**FREE Seminars**

**- Social Security Disability -**

See website for info & to register  
[sharonchristielaw.com/events/seminars](http://sharonchristielaw.com/events/seminars)  
 Or call 410-823-8200

**Dec. 10, 6-8pm White Marsh Library**  
**Jan. 27, 6-8pm White Marsh Library**  
**Feb. 9, 6-8pm White Marsh Library**

**Baltimore Events**

**Miracle on 34th Street**

Through Jan. 1, 2015 | 5-11pm  
 700 Block, 34th Street, Baltimore, MD  
 In their 67th year! Christmas lights on between 5 & 11pm daily.

**Christmas Village**

Last day Dec. 24th  
 Sundays thru Thursdays | 11am to 7pm  
 Fridays & Saturdays | 11am to 8pm  
 501 Light Street, Baltimore, MD 21230  
 443-760-0686  
 An authentic German Christmas market at Inner Harbor.

**New Year's Eve**

Inner Harbor | 9pm to 12:30am  
 Fireworks at 9pm  
 Music at Inner Harbor Amphitheater.  
 Event extends through Fell's Point, Harbor East and Federal Hill.

**Fridays After Five National Aquarium**

Through March 27, 2015 | 5-8pm  
 501 East Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21202  
 410-576-3800  
 Every Friday evening explore the aquarium for a reduced rate of \$12.

**Christmas** <sup>Dec. 25</sup> **Hanukkah** Dec. 16 to Dec. 24

**Holiday Dinner Side Dish—Twice Baked Potatoes!**

This delicious side dish makes any meal special. If you prepare more than you need, you can freeze them for up to 3 months!

**Ingredients:**

- 4 large baking potatoes
- 4 tbl butter
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 8 green onions, sliced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake potatoes for 1 hour.

When done, let cool then cut baked potatoes in half lengthwise. Scoop potato out, leaving a thin layer attached to the skin. Place skins back on the baking sheet. Add the scooped out potatoes to the sour cream, milk, butter, salt, pepper, 1/2 cup cheese and 4 green onions and mix until creamy. Fill skins with mixture, sprinkle with shredded cheese and rest of onions. Return potatoes to oven and bake 15 to 25 min, until hot and cheese is melted. Serves 8. (To freeze: before final oven time, wrap in plastic wrap and place in zip lock bags in freezer. To use, remove plastic wrap, thaw, then heat in 350 degree oven until hot & cheese is melted.)

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To receive a FREE copy of  
 Sharon Christie's

**Unofficial Guide to Social Security Disability Claims**

Call 410-823-8200  
 or visit our website at  
[www.SharonChristieLaw.com](http://www.SharonChristieLaw.com)

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The **Law Office of Sharon A. Christie** helps disabled workers get disability benefits from Social Security. It is a long and complicated process and you should not go it alone.

The firm's founder, Sharon A. Christie, is a nurse as well as an attorney.

**Sharon's clients receive the benefit of having their cases handled by a firm that knows the medicine AND the law.**

If you have applied for Social Security disability benefits and need help, call the firm today. If you need more information about the process, go to the website and order a FREE copy of:

**Sharon Christie's Unofficial Guide to Social Security Disability Claims**

or register for one of her upcoming webinars or seminars!

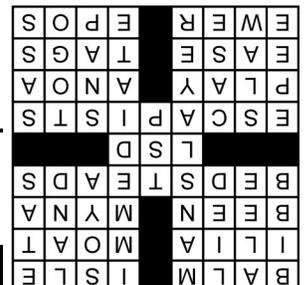
For more information, visit our website at:  
[www.SharonChristieLaw.com](http://www.SharonChristieLaw.com).

**Office Hours**

M-F 9am to 5pm

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