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paragenix systems

## NICHOL'S FIVE CENTS

A monthly e-newsletter dedicated to helping you **Go Further, Move Faster & Be Stronger!**

# Paragenix Systems Newsletter

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**Matt Nichol Podcast**

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For creative ways to incorporate the gluten-free lifestyle, recipes or resources, I recommend you check out the

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*by Matt Nichol*

Dear Matt,

I'm Back!

I hope that all of you had a fantastic summer. I am excited to get back into writing my newsletter and doing my [podcasts](#). I actually miss it when I don't write to you monthly...but if you saw a typical work day for me in the summertime I think you would forgive me. My job is a little hectic at times, but it is truly the best job in the world and I love every second of it so you are never gonna catch me complaining...still...its nice to be able to get back in touch with all of you and share my insights and experiences with you again!

As always, if you have any questions, comments or suggestions for next month, please let me know!

Yours in Health!

Matt Nichol  
Head Strength & Conditioning Coach  
Paragenix Systems Inc.

## Introducing the Executive Program

*"Age does not matter!!! If there is something you want in this life be it the chance to get healthy enough to get down on the floor and play with your grandchildren or run a marathon, go for it. Don't let age hold you back, life is too short for "I regret" or "I should have." You can do anything you want, whether you are 22 or 92. This I learned from Matt."*

*-Doreen Bonnell, after training with Matt*

following websites:

<http://www.glutenfreeliving.com/>

<http://glutenfreegirl.com>

<http://www.celiac.ca/>

**KEEP IN TOUCH**



Just because you are not a professional athlete doesn't mean you should have to settle for second rate training from the gym down the street.

The executive program is designed to help you achieve your personal ***health and fitness goals as efficiently as possible***. This program utilizes the same unique scientific system that Matt's professional athlete clients have benefited from for years. **[Click here for Fitness Testimonials and for Before and After stories.](#)**

Matt Nichol and the Paragenix Team provide a variety of individually tailored programs designed to help you achieve the highest level of health and performance including:

- Comprehensive Musculoskeletal Functional Assessments
- and Lifestyle Goal Setting
- Personalized Performance Enhancement Programs
- Private Training
- Nutritional Planning
- Injury Rehabilitation Programs

**Please e-mail all inquiries in regards to Evaluations, Programs and Packages to Ilianna Givelos at [admin@paragenixsystems.com](mailto:admin@paragenixsystems.com) or call at 416-302-0061 or you can Ask Matt a question via his website, [click here.](#)**

[Want to learn more about Matt Nichol? Click here for more information.](#)

## **Fall: My Favourite Season**

Last week marked the *Autumnal Equinox*...which is officially the end of the summer season and the beginning of fall here in North America. It's a little darker when I climb out of bed every morning at 5:30 and a little colder as I make my



way into work. My gym which is normally bursting to life with the sounds of metal clanging, hip-hop blaring from the stereo



speakers and chalk dust filling the air is now eerily quiet. Just as the

birds have begun to fly south, my athletes have all departed for their winter homes in the respective cities that they play in.

This may all sound a little depressing, but the truth is, fall has always been my favourite season for a variety of reasons

- While a large percentage of my time in the summer is spent on the field or the track under the blazing sun, it's really not an ideal climate for a Ginger like myself. I love this time of year because I am able to go outside without having to lather every inch of my body with SPF 6000. I marvel at the show that mother nature puts on for us this time of year here in Canada. The forests are bursting with vibrant colors. Even in a city as big and congested as Toronto, it only takes me 5 minutes to walk from my front door to a forested ravine where I can find some quiet seclusion and I am able to sit back and just take it all in. When is the last time you took a walk in a forest? When is the last time you stopped your busy life for 5 minutes to sit and appreciate the beauty of a tree in autumn?
- ***Being in nature*** - even if it is only for a few minutes a day - is extremely therapeutic. Research has shown that looking at scenes of nature (even if only in a picture or video) can reduce stress, increase work capacity, speed recovery from injury or surgery and increase your overall sense of well-being. These results are amplified further when you are actual in the presence of nature. So maybe a little stroll to enjoy the fall colors is just what the doctor ordered!
- **Hockey season** - I spend all day, every day, from June to September at my training facility with my hockey players. For those 3 months I spend more time with those guys than I do with my friends and family combined. We put in a lot of hard work and there are a lot of long, hot days...but there are also a lot of laughs too. As tiring as my summers are, they are extremely rewarding for me. I am inspired by my athletes on a daily basis. The work ethic they bring to their off-season preparation is



incredible and I feed off of their energy every day. When our summer training



wraps up in September and they all head back to their teams it is always with a bit of sadness on my part. Probably akin to a parent watching their child head off to the first day of Kindergarten. How will they do at testing? Will they make it through the season healthy? Will they outperform their previous seasons? Will my young guys make the cut at camp? Will that older veteran player be able to hang on for another season or two? I really look forward to watching them play and try to take in as many games as I can. Truth be told, I don't have a favourite team and I don't even really care about the outcome of the games. I have to be impartial when it comes to that stuff. I just enjoy watching these guys out their performing, showcasing their skill and benefiting from all of the hours of preparation they have put in over the summer.

- **Football season** - When I was an athlete (about a thousand year ago) football was my passion. I loved all sports and tried my hand at several of them, but football was the only one that I really excelled it. I played football throughout high school and university and from the moment I stopped competing as an athlete I began coaching. I no longer coach a team but I still work privately with NFL and CFL players in the gym helping them prepare for their



season. While I was playing, I wasn't only passionate about playing the game, I was also passionate about my preparation. I

trained extremely hard all off-season, so while many of my teammates dreaded the rigours of training camp, I actually looked forward to it. Training camp for me was always a chance for validation of my off-season strength and conditioning methods. Pre-season fitness testing in the gym and on the field

was a chance to showcase the fruits of my labour in the gym. One of coaches used to have a saying that he was fond of and it has stuck with me through the years

## ***"The best sports psychology is good physical fitness"***

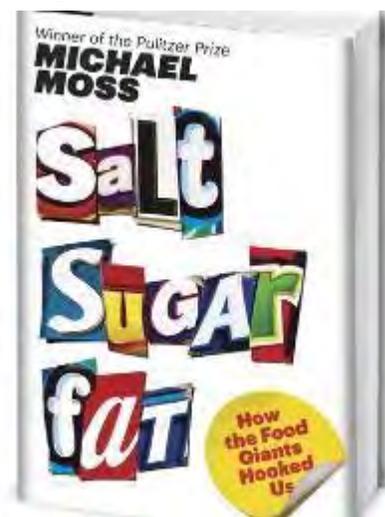
*Translation: If you train as hard as you can and make the necessary sacrifices before the season starts (following a proper nutrition and lifestyle plan) it gives you a higher level of confidence going into the season. Much in the same way that anxiety caused by academic tests is best relieved by a properly planned period of studying LONG BEFORE the day of test.*

I played a wide variety of sports as an athlete and as a Strength and Conditioning Coach I have trained athletes from nearly every sport or event you could think of....but for me there will always be something extra special about a College Football game on a sunny Saturday afternoon in Autumn.

Another thing I look forward to each fall is getting back into reading. During the summer, if I get a spare minute I usually use it to breathe, eat or go to the bathroom. Occasionally I will also sleep. I really neglect my reading and my continuing education (a MUST for all serious coaches out there). Now that I have time again, I will attack the

mountain on books I have in my MUST READ pile. I am currently reading "Salt, Sugar, Fat" by Michael Moss which was a birthday present from my brother Scott. I am only 50 pages in but I can't put it down! This book is an expose on the processed food industry and I can

assure you that you will never look at a nutrition label the same way again after reading it!! I will have a full report on it in next month's newsletter once I finish it



### ***What do I have on the go for this year?***

One area that I have been focused on lately is foot and ankle mechanics. More and more I am seeing this as a problem in my athletes and recently I have experienced some difficulties myself in this area. I am going to be delving deeper into this area and next month I will share with you some of the secrets I have used to improve the mechanics and function of my athletes by working on mobilizing and strengthening the musculature of their feet and ankles. Stay Tuned....

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### **Nutrition and Lifestyle: Don't wait for cold and flu season!**

**PROBIOTICS** - Also referred to as "good" or "friendly" bacteria are often the unsung heroes in the supplement world. They are not cool or sexy but could possibly be one of the most important supplements you could ever use.

*Recent research supports the use of probiotics to assist in dealing with the symptoms of several disease states, including:*

- Colds and Flus,
- Allergies,
- Celiacs disease,
- Acne,
- Dermatitis,
- Obesity,
- Diabetes,
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (I.B.S.)
- Heart Disease

Some of the ways they are thought to promote health include suppressing the growth of potentially harmful bacteria, improving immune function, enhancing the protective barrier of the digestive tract, and helping to produce vitamin K.

***Here is an analogy that I like to use..***

If your body is a city and your gut bacteria are its citizens.

Ideally everyone would be a good and hard working citizen. Unfortunately, sometimes some lazy people or even worse, some dangerous criminals can move into town. Anti-Biotics are the equivalent of saying 'We know that there are some dangerous criminals in this city, so lets bomb this city to the ground and I'm sure we will wipe them out!'

Unfortunately, if you follow that plan, you will do a lot of structural damage to the city and worse, you will wipe out a lot of good people too and when the bombing its over there will be no good people left to rebuild the city. The better strategy is to first attempt to ensure that the city contains as many good hard working people as possible and then if you do need to go in and wipe out some of those criminals, be sure to re-populate your city with good people as soon as possible to help you rebuild!

Probiotics are good to take as a general preventative measure year round (especially for those of you who are travelling in-season and frequently eating out in restaurants/hotels or even worse, eating the slop they feed you on the airplane) and for any of you who have taken any prescription antibiotic products within the last 3 months these are a MUST! I generally recommend trying to maximize your consumption of plain organic yogurt, plain Kefir or fermented foods but if you do not consume enough of these then a probiotic supplement is the way to go.

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## **Exercise of the Month: Side Bridge Progressions**

The **Side Bridge** is one the best "*Core Stability*" exercises that you can do. It has probably the best Risk vs. Reward ratio of any exercise for your "Core" musculature (abdominal, quadratus lumborum, lats, etc) in that it effectively stimulates the abdominal and lower back musculature without being traumatic to the discs/facets of the lumbar spine.

When I was coaching in the NHL I performed a two year study on my players and correlated the results of their performance on the ice including injury rates ("Man Games Lost") and their performance on this exercises. I found there to be a strong correlation between an athletes performance on the side bridge

and their incidence of injury...more than almost any other exercise or functional test we performed! Athletes who were unable to perform the side bridge for greater than one minute with perfect form were significantly more likely to be injured, played a lower number of minutes and had a worse +/- rating. This was also true for players that had more than a 10% difference bilaterally. Interestingly, there was no difference between players that could hold the exercise for 75 seconds and 3 minutes (we stopped the test at 3 minutes). For whatever reason, there was a sort of cost/return sweet spot between 60 to 75 seconds. Therefore, I generally make 60 to 75 seconds of total time under tension my goal for side bridging. I don't believe in doing 60-75 second continuous holds but instead will usually break this down into

- 3 sets of 5 reps with 5 second holds
- 2 sets of 6 reps with 6 second holds

Occasionally, I will do longer holds for variety and to re-test my athletes but the above is my standard prescription. I always include this exercise in my athletes programs in one form or another. We change the technique periodically and always play with the sets/reps/tempo to keep it interesting, but this is a mainstay in my programs. It is also a surprisingly challenging exercises and to be performed properly may require some regression for some clients. Below I have listed the three movement progressions for this exercise.

Typically I would start a client with the ½ side bridge. I will also regress my clients to the ½ side bridge occasionally, if the full side bridge bothers their knees or shoulders.

Once they are achieving more than 75 seconds without difficulty we will progress to the full side bridge.

### ½ Side Bridge (Level 1)



## **SIDE BRIDGE (Level 2)**



The next progression I use is the

### ***Rolling Side Bridge***

as taught to me by Dr Stuart McGill. This was hard to capture without video...so someday when my technology skills are better perhaps I will be able to show you some video. In this progression you will begin in a side bridge...after holding for 6 seconds you slowly transition into a front (prone) bridge (plank). You hold this prone plank for 6 seconds and then transition into a side bridge on the opposite side. You would continue to transition back and forth for at least 75 seconds or until perfect form can no longer be maintained.

Since the goal of the exercise is to enhance "Core Stability" it is imperative that you have no "dis-association" between the lower and upper body...or in plain-English, don't let your hips twist as you roll into and out of the front plank. Try to visualize your entire body being one rigid column...a concrete block that is incapable of twisting or bending and make sure you roll SUPER-SLOW, bracing your abdominals tightly as if someone were about to punch you in the gut!

### **Rolling Side Bridge (Level 3)**



The final progression shown here is the **Side Bridge with Leg Lifts**. Truthfully, I rarely use this version simply because its just too damn hard for most people! If you are able to do this exercise without compensating and letting your hips drop or low back hyper-extend then go for it! For most people, it is unrealistic to expect to be able to do more than 60 seconds worth of these!

#### Side Bridge + Leg Lifts (Level 4)



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**Matt in the Media**

Interested in reading some articles featuring Matt Nichol? Click on the following links:



[Biosteel featured in Forbes Magazine](#)

[NHL'er Biznasty and Matt talk about Off-Season Training](#)

[Tune in: "The Matt Nichol Show" available now!](#)

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Matt Nichol  
Paragenix Systems

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