



December
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Physiotherapy and Injury Healing

ESSENTIAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

There is no doubt that the human body can be very resilient. Short of regenerating new limbs, the body is capable of recovering from amazing amounts of damage, including broken bones. Many people may feel that physiotherapy treatment will only speed up recovery and if they are not elite athletes then simply letting nature take its course is the best, and most cost effective choice for them.

Speed of recovery, however, is only one very small measure of physiotherapy success and fails to fully represent how important proper treatment is. Here are a few things about injury healing you may not have been aware of.

1. Scar Tissue is more likely to form without treatment.

Scar tissue can cause ongoing pain and stiffness in skin, muscles and ligaments. Physiotherapy can prevent excess scarring through advice regarding movement, massage and other hands on treatment.

2. Your ability to sense the position of your body, known as proprioception, is often damaged after an injury and can be retrained.

Impaired proprioception is a major factor in reinjury. If you've ever heard someone say "my knee/ankle/shoulder still doesn't feel 100%" then this could be why. Physiotherapy treatment will aim to restore proprioception as a part of standard rehabilitation.

3. Once healing has finished, your body may not be exactly the same as before.

Ligaments may be looser, muscles and joints may be stiffer and almost always weaker. While the pain may be gone, there may still be some issues that need to be addressed to prevent ongoing and more complicated issues in the future.

4. You may have picked up some bad habits while waiting for the injury to heal.

While in pain, we often change the way we do things, this can lead to the development of poor movement patterns and muscle imbalances. Even though the pain has gone, these new patterns can remain and create further problems down the road.

5. Injuries don't always heal completely.

On rare occasions, circumstances may prevent an injury from healing fully. The most serious example of this would be a fracture that cannot heal if the bone is not kept still enough. Other factors that may prevent an injury from healing include poor circulation, diabetes, insufficient care of the injury and poor nutrition.

Your physiotherapist can assess your injury and develop a treatment plan that will both restore you to the best possible function and prevent further injuries.

BRAIN TEASERS

1. Solve these Christmas themed anagrams:

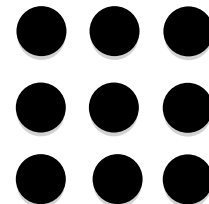
mtasishcr

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neserpts

ireeerdn

2. Connect all of the nine dots below by drawing one line consisting of four straight segments. You are not allowed to lift your pen from the paper, backtrack over a line or go through a dot twice. *Hint: You need to think outside the square for this one.*



Answers next page...

Jumping For Healthy Bones

Here's a quick and easy way to help combat osteoporosis.

New research has found that premenopausal women who jumped daily were able to actually increase their bone mass while women who didn't exercise lost bone mass during the same time frame.

The study recommended jumping as high as you can, ten times with a thirty second rest, twice a day for best results.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

WHAT IS IT?

Carpal Tunnel syndrome is a progressive disorder caused by compression of a key nerve in the wrist. The carpal tunnel refers to a space or "tunnel" at the front of the wrist where tendons and nerves pass from the wrist to the hand. The median nerve is most commonly affected. This nerve controls sensation to the palm, side of the thumb and fingers, (excluding the little finger). The median nerve also sends impulses to some of the small muscles that allow the fingers and thumb to move.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually begin gradually with frequent burning, tingling or itching/numbness in the palm of the hand and fingers, especially the thumb, index and middle fingers. Your fingers may feel fat and swollen, even if they aren't. Symptoms are often relieved by shaking of the wrists, even if only temporarily.

These symptoms may show up during the night as many people sleep with their wrists bent. Gradually, tingling symptoms may increase and grip strength may begin to weaken, which can affect your ability to form a fist, grasp small objects or perform other manual tasks. Left untreated, carpal tunnel syndrome can result in permanent nerve damage.

WHAT CAUSES CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

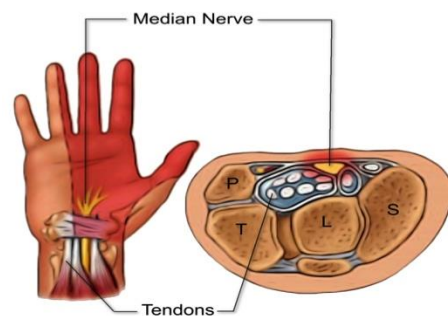
Because this tunnel is made from the ligaments and bones of the hand, it is quite rigid, and any thing that causes the narrow space to be taken up can compress the structures that sit within. Often the tendons that pass through the carpal tunnel will become thickened or swollen through overuse, resulting in compression of the median nerve. People who suffer from thyroid or pituitary disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, wrist dysfunction, work related stress or use of vibrating tools are more likely to develop this disorder.

Women are three times as likely to develop carpal tunnel syndrome as men, this is thought to be due to smaller wrist dimensions.

HOW CAN PHYSIOTHERAPY HELP?

Your physiotherapist or doctor can diagnose carpal tunnel syndrome with specific tests. Neck pathology can mimic carpal tunnel syndrome and it is important that a correct diagnosis is made. In many cases, symptoms can be resolved with physiotherapy, where you will be advised of rest, wrist splinting, exercises, manual therapy, dry needling and postural changes to prevent further injury.

Physiotherapy treatment is almost always recommended before considering other treatments such as surgical release or cortisone injection and is often very effective, particularly in mild and moderate cases. For more information, don't hesitate to ask your physiotherapist.



Q. What did Santa say to the smoker?

A. Please don't smoke, it's bad for my elf!



Christmas Cashew Truffles

These delicious snacks can also be used as a great Christmas gift idea.

Combine cashew nuts, coconut and salt into a food processor and pulse until a fine crumb forms.

Add remaining ingredients and process for two minutes until combined and sticky.

Roll into balls and refrigerate to set. Cover in coconut if desired.

Makes 15-20 balls | cooking time: 15 min

To find more healthy recipes like this go to www.drlibby.com.

- 1 cup raw cashew nuts
- ¼ cup desiccated coconut
- ¼ tsp. vanilla paste
- 5 Medjool dates, pitted
- 1 tbsp. tahini
- 1 tbsp. water
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup
- pinch of salt



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Answers: Christmas Anagrams:

Christmas Mistletoe
Presents Reindeer

2.

