



# Your PHYSIOTHERAPIST

**WINTER 2011** 

### **HERE ARE 7 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE YOUR INJURY ASSESSED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

See your physiotherapist for a quick recovery

It is surprising how many people put up with injury without having any formal assessment or treatment. They hope or think the injury will improve on its own. If you are injured, here are some things to consider.

- 1. Missing a more serious injury. It is very important that you don't miss a more serious injury. For example, you may think you have a simple sprained ankle, but how do you know you haven't sustained a small fracture? Dealing with a more serious injury inappropriately can have dire consequences.
- 2. Untreated injuries may become chronic or **recurrent problems.** This is especially the case if you don't regain your full pain-free range of movement or you don't regain muscle strength. It is common to see simple injuries, such as a sprained ankle, left untreated. It is also common to see these untreated injuries giving rise to ongoing weakness, stiffness and pain. This is also the case with more complex problems such as back or neck injuries.
- 3. Early treatment will lead to quicker resolution. Improving your range of pain free movement, increasing your muscle strength and learning how to perform activity (without aggravating your injured part) are important goals of treatment. Achieving them will help you feel better again and enable you to start getting back to work or sport as quickly as possible.
- 4. Injury affects your performance. You may have a minor injury that doesn't stop you performing activity, but stops you performing at your peak. For example, that stiff neck stops you serving with your normal power during tennis. Fixing your neck can result in you playing better again.
- 5. Ongoing injury can make you feel "blue". Some of the by-products of injury include; ongoing pain, reduced fitness, inability to work (and earn income), inability to reach your sporting goals and inability to participate in social activities. These can lead to a negative mental state and even depression. Having treatment to overcome injury as quickly as possible can "short circuit" the development of other problems in your life.
- 6. You may have underling biomechanical problems that need to be addressed.



An injury may be the by-product of long standing biomechanical problems. If left unaddressed, these problems can lead to ongoing problems or injuries in other parts of your body. For example, fallen arches can lead to foot, ankle, shin, knee, hip and back problems. The onset of your shin pain may lead to the discovery of your "flat feet". Correction of this can help you overcome your current injury, but also it may help prevent future problems elsewhere.

7. Learn what you can be doing to overcome your injury faster and how to manage the injury yourself. One of the important aspects of physiotherapy management is helping you to learn self-care. This may be in the form of exercises, strapping/ bracing, learning how to modify your activity to reduce overstressing your injured part and learning self treatment strategies (such as ice application or trigger point release).

If you have an injury, even a minor "niggly" injury, have it assessed by your physiotherapist as soon as possible.

### Dear Patient,

Welcome to our newsletter and thanks for coming to see us for your physio needs.

Your ongoing health is very important to all of us here at the clinic. We hope that this newsletter will help keep you up to date with information about physio-related health matters that may be of interest to you and people you know. We hope you enjoy it!

If you have any queries, please call us. If you, or someone you know, have a physio related problem, please call us. We would be more than happy to help you out in any way we can.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to your family and friends.

With kind regards

The Physiotherapists and Staff at

### PHYSICA SPINAL & PHYSIOTHERAPY CLINIC

### **PHYSIOTHERAPISTS**

The physiotherapists working at this clinic are:-

**Warwick James** 

Dip. P.E., Dip. Phys, Grad. Dip. Manip. Therapy

### **Gregory Collis-Brown**

B. App Sc (Phty) M. Manipulative Phty.

### **Darren Ross**

B. Phtv. M. Manipulative Phty.

### Andrew Seymour

B. Phty, M. Manipulative Phty.

**Chris Tubb** B. Physiotherapy M.Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy

### Anthony D'Aloisio

B. Physiotherapy

### **Carlos Bello**

B. Physiotherapy

### **Kate Walters**

Massage and Myotherapy

### **Daniel Zwolak**

B. Physiotherapy M.Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy

### **Daniel Geilings**

B. Physiotherapy

### Sian Percy

B. Physiotherapy

### **Brendon McCarthy**

B. Physiotherapy



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# Rehabilitation after injury What is it and why you should have it

Physiotherapists are often involved in rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is returning someone to normal activities after an injury or illness.

MUSCLE FUNCTION: Restoring muscle function is an important part of rehabilitation. Physiotherapists are skilled in assessing



muscle function and designing exercises that will improve your muscle strength and control. Having an in depth knowledge of factors such as the healing process and how to work your muscles without aggravating your problem are important.

MOVEMENT: Restoring the movement in an injured joint is also very important. It is very common for joints to seize up after injury, surgery or disuse. This can lead to tissue contracture, adhesions and arthritic changes in the joints. Again, physiotherapists are very adept in helping with this.

FUNCTION AND SKILL: Regaining your function such as returning to walking, running, throwing, kicking, lifting etc. are all part of the rehabilitation process. This needs to occur in stages and without re-injury.

HEALING: Early controlled movement actually helps the healing process after injury. The body lays down scar tissue and remodels tissue along lines of stress. Targeted exercises will actually lead to a better outcome. Again, knowing how to apply these exercises safely and effectively is important.

GYM EXERCISES: Very often your physiotherapist will utilize gym based exercises as part of rehabilitation. They may need to be carried out under close supervision initially but you may be able to become more independent as times goes on.

HANDS-ON THERAPY: Sometimes your physiotherapist will employ targeted hands-on therapy (stretching, massage, manipulation) to achieve some of the goals of rehabilitation

**HYDROTHERAPY:** Carrying out exercises in a pool can help if working on dry land is too difficult, especially in the early stages of rehabilitation.

HOME EXERCISES: These are like "homework" and are given so that you can enhance your recovery on your own under the guidance of your physiotherapist.

# **Did you know?**The human body has over 600

The human body has over 600 muscles, 40% of the body's weight

## NECK RELATED HEADACHE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW.

## 1. Neck related headaches are a common and under-diagnosed source of headache

Whilst it is important to rule out serious disorders such as brain tumours and haemorrhage, most headaches have a non-serious cause. One of the common sources of headache is a problem in and around the neck joints. These types of headaches are often incorrectly diagnosed as migraine.

### 2. Headache can be related to dysfunction of the joints in the upper neck

The upper three segments of the neck can generate headache. The joints of the upper neck can cause headache if they are arthritic, have stiffened up, are placed under excessive loading or have been previously injured (such as an old whiplash injury).

### Neck related headache can be caused by trigger points in muscles associated with the neck

The muscles in and around the neck can generate headache if they are injured or placed under excessive strain. One common phenomenon is the development of persistent painful knots called trigger points in these muscles. Trigger points can cause local and referred pain. Pushing on a trigger point can often reproduce a person's headache.

### 4. Neck related headache can be related to poor posture

Poor posture has often been linked to neck related headache. Patients with a forward head posture, rounded shoulders and a rounded mid back are typically neck related headache sufferers.

### Neck related headache can be related to weakness in the supporting neck muscles

Weakness and poor endurance in the neck muscles responsible for maintaining optimal posture, have been implicated in the

development
of neck related
headache. This
means that many
neck related
headache sufferers
develop poor
posture or are
unable to maintain
optimal posture
over a prolonged



period of time. This places excessive stress on the upper neck structures.

### 6. Neck related headache can be relieved by physiotherapy!

It is an ongoing mystery why more people are not referred by their family doctors or do not, by their own volition, undergo a trial of physiotherapy for persistent and ongoing headache. This is especially so if more serious causes have been ruled out. Physiotherapy can very effectively address the various musculoskeletal (muscle, joint, soft-tissue) types of headache. Multitudes of patients who have suffered from ongoing headache, and have subsequently been relieved by physiotherapy. Very often they ask why it wasn't recommended earlier. Physiotherapists are usually at a loss to answer that question.

### 7. Seek help as soon as possible

As with most conditions, the sooner intervention begins, the sooner relief occurs. The longer a problem is present, the greater the resistance to improvement. If you suffer from persistent headache, speak to your physiotherapist.

# What types of conditions can a physiotherapist help you with?

Many patients are unaware of the many conditions that can benefit from physiotherapy. Below is a list of some of the common problems that we help deal with:-



- Back and neck pain ❖ Headaches ❖ Sprained ankles ❖ Injured knees ❖
   Arthritic pain and stiffness ❖ Shoulder pain ❖ Tennis elbows ❖ Tendon problems ❖ Muscle tears ❖ Hand and foot problems ❖ Bruising
  - ❖ Fractures ❖ After joint replacements ❖ After joint and bone surgery

If you have any of the above problems, and you want to improve as quickly as possible, have an assessment from one of the physiotherapists at this clinic.

# HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET BETTER?

The six million dollar question many patients ask when they have an injury or a painful condition is "How long will I take to get better?". This will vary from condition to condition; however, here are some things you need to take note of, so that you get the best possible outcome from having physiotherapy:-



## BE COMPLIANT WITH EXERCISES AND ACTIVITY MODIFICATION

Make sure you follow your home exercise program and follow any advice your physiotherapist gives you.

#### WHAT IF I DON'T GET BETTER?

Be patient. Often improvement can be slow to start off with. Discuss any concerns you have with your physiotherapist. Sometimes a number of different techniques need

to be tried before your physiotherapist finds the approach that will give you the most benefit.

### SEEK ASSISTANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Having early assessment and treatment will help you overcome injury or pain as quickly as possible. If you wait too long before seeking help, it will allow the body to develop muscle wasting, abnormal scar tissue and soft tissue tightening. These things may prevent you making a rapid recovery.

### HAVE A FULL COURSE OF TREATMENT

Many patients stop having treatment prematurely because they start to feel better. Ceasing treatment, before all of the aims of treatment have been achieved, can leave you with residual problems that may require more extensive treatment in the future. Once you start treatment, stick with it until both you and your physiotherapist are satisfied with the result.

### **CURE VERSUS MANAGEMENT**

Unfortunately, the hard reality is that some problems are not curable. This does not mean they can't be managed. Good management of a disorder, such as a chronic back problem, can help you remain mobile and maintain your function. It can minimise or reduce the frequency your pain if it is not possible to get rid of the pain completely. It may also stop you getting worse (see section on maintenance treatment below).

If treatment isn't helping, you may need to have further investigation or you may need to be referred to another health care professional, such as your family doctor, to try and determine what else can be done to help you.

# A regular "tune-up" can help you stay feeling better

If you have a chronic or recurrent problem, such as back pain, neck pain, headaches or arthritis, a regular "tune-up" may help you enjoy life more.

Most of these problems mentioned respond very well to a course of physiotherapy. In conjunction, your physiotherapist will usually give you self treatment exercises, to

help you improve your problem and maintain this improvement.

Unfortunately, spinal problems and arthritic pain can recur and can make your life miserable. If this is the case with you, or someone you know, then regular maintenance treatment (or "tune-up" sessions) should be considered.

"Tune-up" sessions will help keep your joints mobile, will release tight muscles and will update your self treatment exercises, so that they are giving you maximum benefit.

Many patients find that a tuneup session every few weeks can help keep them feeling good and stop them having repeated acute episodes of pain. It is also more cost

effective than having extensive treatment to overcome an acute episode of pain.

If you feel you would benefit from regular maintenance treatment, please ring to book a time to discuss this with your physiotherapist.

# Good first aid will get you back on track quicker



If you suffer an injury, a knowledge of appropriate first aid will minimise bleeding and further damage. This in turn will help you overcome your injury as quickly as possible.

The basics of first aid can be summed up by remembering RICER for the first 48 hours. This stands for:-

REST the injured part so that no further damage can occur. This may mean stopping work or sport immediately and it may also mean applying some sort of splint to prevent movement of the injured part.

ICE should be applied to the injured part for 15-20 minutes, every 30-60 minutes, to slow down bleeding and swelling. Make sure you avoid an ice burn by wrapping the ice in a damp cloth, so that it does not directly contact the skin.

COMPRESSION will also help reduce swelling and bleeding. This can be done by wrapping a bandage around the injured part or by compressing the injured site with your hand.

**ELEVATE** the injured part so that bleeding and swelling flow away from the injured part.

REFER the injured person to a health professional for further assessment and management. This would usually mean to your family doctor or your physiotherapist.

Physiotherapists are experts in managing sports and soft tissue injuries such as bruises, sprained ligaments and strained muscles.

Carry on this protocol for the first 48 hours after an injury. Also, during this time, avoid HARM. This means avoid Heat, Alcohol, Return to activity and Massage until you are sure bleeding and swelling have stopped.

### Did you know?

Women's hearts beat faster than men's

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# Dear Physio

25 Wantirna Road RINGWOOD VIC 3134

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#### **HOURS**

The practice hours are

**MON-FRI:** 7.00am - 8.00pm

**SAT:** 8.00am - 1pm (*Please ring for an appointment*)

### **CONDITIONS TREATED**

You can have the following conditions treated at our clinic:-

Manipulative Therapy for the Treatment of:

Spinal Problems

Sports Injuries

Treatment of Neck Related Headaches

Postural Assessment

Treatment of Work Injuries

Treatment of TMJ (Jaw) Problems

### SERVICES AVAILABLE

Some of the services available to you are:-

Orthotic Assessment & Prescription

Home Visits

Nursing Home/Hostel Visits

Post-operative Rehabilitation

Hydrotherapy

Assessment and Treatment of Balance Disorders

Exercise Prescription and Monitoring of Gym Programmes

Clinical Pilates

Massage and Myotherapy

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Preferred Provider for HBA, MBF and Medibank Private - HICAPS available for most health funds - we bill the health fund for the rebate - you pay gap amount only

Most Cards Accepted

**EFTPOS** Facility Available

#### Q. . What is the best treatment for tennis elbow?

A recent study published in the British Medical Journal involving 198 patients, has confirmed that tennis elbow is probably a self limiting condition and that in time it will probably settle on its own. However, the study indicated that if you want to ensure good long term relief, physiotherapy will help. In



this study, patients received 8 physio sessions over 6 weeks and performed home exercises. The patients receiving physiotherapy had the best long term outcome. The patients receiving a cortisone injection gained good short term relief, but had the worst long term outcome. One might infer from this that an optimal approach might be a combination of physiotherapy and a cortisone injection.

#### Q. Do ankle injuries cause arthritis?

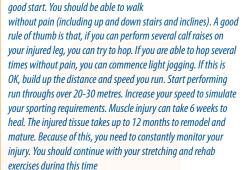
Ankle injuries account for approximately 25% of the injuries that occur in running and jumping sports. Of these, 20-40% of patients with these injuries experience chronic ankle instability. 70-80% of these patients develop post-traumatic ankle arthritis. Arthritis can develop a



long time after injury. In one study it occurred on average 21 years after injury. Intensive rehabilitation after an ankle injury is very important to lessen the likelihood of this happening.

# Q. I hurt my calf recently. It responded really well to physiotherapy treatment (the physio sure had strong thumbs!). How do I know when to return to running?

If you are able to stretch the calf fully without pain or restriction, this is a



### Q. What sort of private health insurance should I have? My current insurer doesn't seem to pay back much on items such as Physiotherapy.

This is an excellent question. Unfortunately the government and the private health insurance industry tend to concentrate on doctors and hospitals when they formulates health care strategy. They don't seem to realise fully that allied health care, such as physiotherapy, play an important role in preventing you reaching the point where you need more serious, costly medical intervention and time in hospital.

Some health funds have very low fees but pay back very little on items such as physiotherapy. People on a budget may gravitate towards these cheaper insurance plans (if they have private

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insurance at all). This is a false economy because if you do hurt yourself you will either have to pay large gaps or go without treatment.

We would recommend you look closely at your health insurance cover. Find out how much they pay back on items such as physiotherapy and shop around. If funds don't live up to expectations, swap to another fund. Generally, if you change to a similar level at a different fund there is no waiting period and you won't be penalised. The reception staff at our clinic may be able to direct you to which funds, in our experience, have the best deals.

### Q. I suffer from Crohn's disease. I also have a lot of trouble with my lower back. Someone said they can be related. Is this true?



Yes. Problems with your internal organs, in this case your intestines, can refer pain into your back and mimic a back problem. However, inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, is associated with a type of arthritis called enteropathic arthritis. This can affect your peripheral joints but commonly can cause inflammation of your lumbar spine and sacroiliac joints.

#### **POOR POSTURE**

Q. My teenage daughter has terrible posture and experiences headaches and mid back pain. Can physio help?

Stretching and strengthening exercises can help improve posture. Sometimes a postural support brace can be used for short periods to re-educate your

daughter to keep a corrected position. The brace can often alleviate pain if she has to sit or stand for long periods and finds this brings on her pain.

# Are you due to have orthopaedic surgery?

After most knee, shoulder, hip, back and other joint surgery you should be having physiotherapy to enhance your recovery. Ask your surgeon when you should commence this (usually as soon as possible). You can a



(usually as soon as possible). You can also request that you have your physiotherapy carried out at this clinic.

### Referring others to our clinic

If you know someone with any of the problems outlined in this newsletter, please let him or her know about our clinic. We are very grateful for any referrals we receive and we will endeavour to provide patients referred to us with the highest quality of care. Physiotherapy offers a safe, gentle and effective treatment approach for a variety of conditions.

The information in this newsletter is for general patient interest. If you have a problem you should get it properly assessed by your physiotherapist or family doctor.



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