

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Pilates

Term dates: 2018 Term 1

Start: Monday 29 January
End: Thursday 29 March

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Alphington Bowls Club Parkview Rd, Alphington

All ages and abilities classes

Mon: 12-1pm & 7-8pm
Wed: 5.30-6.30pm
Fri: 9.15-10.15am & 10.30-11.30am

Cost:

Mon & Fri: 8-week term: \$160
Wed: 9-week term: \$180
OR \$25/class casual

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Fairfield Community Room Station St, Fairfield

Over 50s class

Mon: 9.30-10.15am

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.15am

Cost:

8-week term: \$80
OR \$12/class casual

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:
There will be no classes on Monday
12 March (Labour Day)

Physio & Pilates Appointments

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The low-down on lower back pain

If you have low back pain that is aggravated by sitting, bending or lifting, you are probably suffering from discogenic back pain, which occurs as a result of putting stress on our discs. This commonly results from heavy/repetitive lifting, or from sustained/repetitive actions involving bending forward such as vacuuming, gardening or even prolonged sitting.

Typically, discogenic damage builds up over a period of weeks, months or years, and may not even be apparent until pain is felt, often following a fairly minor event like bending down to pick up a dropped object.

Our discs are like little cushions that separate the vertebrae in our spine. Each disc has a jelly-like soft centre (the Nucleus Pulposus), which is surrounded by concentric rings of cartilage (the Annulus Fibrosus). This construction allows the disc a degree of flexibility, such that when we bend forward the Nucleus moves back a bit and the Annulus stretches at the back and compresses at the front, making the disc wedge shaped. When we arch back, the opposite happens.

Most people tend to bend forward far more than they arch back. Sitting is often the most aggravating activity as this places all the discs in a slightly wedged position. Over time, the Annulus can become over stretched resulting in the emergence of small cracks. The Nucleus can start to move into these cracks and eventually reach the outer rim of the disc. Up until this point, we will be unaware that anything is amiss. However, as the outer edge of the disc is loaded with sensitive nerve endings, when the Nucleus reaches this extreme we will begin to feel pain.

To mitigate discogenic pain, I would advise the following:

1. Minimise flexion (bending forward) activities, especially sitting or sit-ups.
2. Wear slip on shoes that can be put on or removed with minimal need for bending.
3. Sit properly in an upright chair that can be adjusted to support the arch of your lower back. Ideally hips and knees should be at 90 degrees.
4. Don't sit for prolonged periods. Get up and move around every 20 minutes or more frequently if pain comes on sooner.
5. Avoid all lifting.
6. Standing and gentle walking is beneficial.
7. Lie flat on your tummy on a firm surface as often as possible, using pillows under the hips if this is painful.
8. Apply heat in the form of a wheat pack or hot-water bottle for 10-20 minutes if your back muscles feel tight. Repeat hourly if symptoms persist.
9. Wear a back brace for added support and relief.

Certain gentle exercises can also help. Remembering to always stop short of pain, try the following:



1. Prone Extension while Lying: As Point 7 above, lie flat on your tummy on a firm surface, using pillows as required to ensure you start in a pain-free position. Put your hands under your shoulders (as if you are about to do a push up) and slowly straighten your elbows to passively extend your back, taking care to keep your back and buttocks relaxed. Breathe in as you return to the start position. Repeat five to 10 times. Rest for a few minutes before starting a second set. Aim for three sets every hour.

2. Rotation while Lying: This is a good exercise to follow the first one. Lie on your back with your knees bent to 90 degrees and with your feet flat on the floor. Keeping your feet/knees together, gently roll your knees from side to side. Repeat 10 times and aim for three sets.

3. Extension while Standing: Stand tall with your palms on your buttocks. Keep looking straight ahead as you breathe out and push your hips forward. Do not hold the position before returning to the start position. Repeat ten times, and try to remember to do this before any flexion activity, such as sitting, putting on shoes and socks, or even cleaning your teeth.

4. Pelvic Floor and Transverse Abdominal Muscle Contraction: This can be performed lying standing or sitting. Take a breath in, and as you breathe out, lift your pelvic floor muscles and draw your belly button in. Relax as you breathe in. Repeat four to five times every hour.

If you want to ensure you are doing these correctly, please contact me for a one-on-one physio session, or attend one of my Pilates classes. We only get one back, so we all need to give ours a little tender, loving care to keep it working well into the future.

Traffic Light Exercises

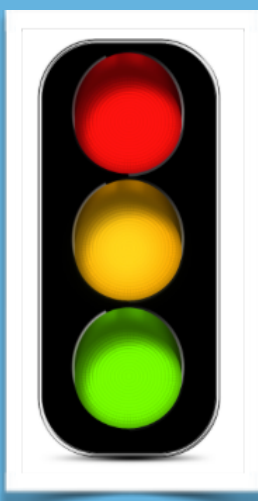
Frustrated waiting for yet another set of red lights to change? Feel like you're wasting valuable time stuck in traffic? Why not try the latest Traffic Light Exercise and finish your journey feeling better than when you started?

Back tennis ball release

For anybody who has attended one of my classes, you will be familiar with the tennis ball releases, as I know you all love doing them! Well the good news is that you can now perform these exercises while you are in the car, so why not keep a tennis ball handy in your car's door pocket ready for that next red light?

- Before you begin, take a moment to assess your back. Are you aware of any specific areas of tightness or tension in your back or between your shoulder blades? If so...
- Place the ball at your target area and hold it in place between your body and the car seat.
- Gently press your body back onto the ball.
- Avoid the very centre of the back, as this will place the ball directly over the bony spinous processes. Aim instead for the muscles located about 1cm either side.
- Simply press until you feel a bit of pain. Continue breathing while you hold this position, focussing on the area until the pain lessens to more of a sensation of just pressure.
- You can now either press a little harder, or go hunting for another tight spot.

Please note that I do not condone the jumping of red lights just so you can avoid doing this exercise!



Christmas present ideas

Stock up now on your Pilates equipment for the holidays

If you would like to purchase any of the Pilates equipment we use in the classes, or the Bee Cream, please come and see me after a class, or call/email (details on the front page).

You can also purchase Physio/Pilates Vouchers, either for a one-on-one session or for the general Pilates classes. This would make a great present for anybody who you think would benefit from a Physio treatment or Pilates session.

Costs are:

- Chi ball \$15
- Magic circle \$35
- Theraband \$10
- Full roller \$50
- Half roller \$35
- Bee Cream \$20
- Physio/Pilates 45 minute one-on-one session voucher \$80
- Pilates class voucher: can be purchased for any amount

