

Serving the local community since 2001

# Back in Shape



## Physiotherapy & Pilates



### Helen's Mat Classes

#### Term dates: 2023 Term 1

Start: Monday 30 January 2023

End: Monday 3 April 2023

There will be no casual attendance in order to regulate class sizes. However, all participants will have access to the Zoom recordings on my website, plus all previous term's recordings.

#### Alphington Bowls Club

Parkview Rd, Alphington

#### All ages and abilities classes

Mon: 12.15-1.15pm

7.00-8.00pm

Wed: 5.30-6.30pm (Zoom only)

Fri: 9.15-10.15am

10.30-11.30am

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$225

Wed: 9-week term: \$225

Fri: 9-week term: \$225

#### St. Andrews Uniting Church

87 Gillies Street, Fairfield

(Classes available Live and on Zoom)

#### Over 50s class

Mon: 9.20-10.10am

Thu: 9.20-10.10am

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$135

Thu: 9-week term: \$135

#### Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.20am

Cost: 9-week term: \$135

#### PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no classes  
on Labour Day on  
Monday 13 March 2023

### Standing up straight for holistic health

After reading my last newsletter, a patient commented—tongue in cheek, I'm sure—that I should become a book reviewer. I like to read books that have an interesting, challenging or innovative approach to health, especially if I perceive there to be a link with Pilates or physiotherapy. Moreover, I am particularly intrigued by health advice where there is a correlation between physical and mental well-being.

The current book I am reading (and the subject of this term's book review!) is "*12 Rules For Life: An Antidote To Chaos*" by Jordan B Peterson, which I can highly recommend. The title of the first chapter is '*Stand up straight with your shoulders back*', which I'm sure my regular attendees will agree is close to my own mantra of '*think tall through the crown of your head*'!

Peterson describes how good posture affects our mental health and social status through a positive feedback mechanism. He uses lobsters to illustrate his message. Lobsters, in common with many other species including humans, live in a society governed by a social hierarchy in which the higher ranking members enjoy the most secure homes in the best territory with the best food supply, and enjoy easiest access to the best mates.

He explains how there are several escalating stages of conflict that a challenging lobster may go through to disrupt the social order and achieve high status for himself. One of these stages involves exchanging a chemical spray that provides information on the health, size and confidence of each protagonist. Often this information exchange is enough for one of the lobsters to back down before actual combat is necessary.

One of the effects of winning such a challenge is to produce more serotonin and this makes the victor naturally stand taller. Conversely, the loser of these conflicts produces less serotonin and this causes the vanquished lobster to adopt a more hunched up, altogether more apologetic stature.

From this point onwards, the confident stance of the top lobster is often enough to reinforce his social standing and dissuade others from even trying to challenge him.

Now lobsters have been around some 350 million years, but the primitive part

of their brains that keeps track of their social standing is not something that has been lost through evolution. In fact, all species that have evolved since that time—ourselves included—have a similar throwback section of the brain that knows our relative ranking and this subconsciously influences the way we react to

JORDAN B.  
PETERSON

12 RULES  
FOR LIFE

AN ANTIDOTE TO CHAOS

THE MULTI-MILLION COPY  
BESTSELLER





others.

Simply put, if we feel like a low-ranking member of our own society—especially if we feel bullied or intimidated—we likewise tend to adopt a rounded, hunched, non-threatening stance. Unfortunately, this tends to mark us out as weak and this can attract more bullying to be directed at us. However, unlike the lobster, we can voluntarily change our posture to stand more upright with our shoulders back. Peterson's message, for mental health, is to adopt the pose of one of life's winners. Stand tall, he advocates, as this automatically makes us look more confident and capable. Over time this is likely to make others treat us more respectfully.

From a purely physical standpoint, I also advocate that we stand tall. A good posture enables our muscles and joints to move and function better; it increases our lung capacity and allows our internal organs to work optimally. If we allow ourselves to be bowed by the weight of the world, the poor posture that results will stiffen the joints, tighten and weaken our muscles and decrease our aerobic capacity. We will feel worse and function less well.

An upright posture delivers more self assurance, resulting in the production of more serotonin, which makes us feel even better. It also means other people see us as more confident and attractive, improving the way we are treated and further improving our quality of life. It really is a win-win scenario.

Pilates is the best way I know to improve posture. So if you want to try one change in your life to enhance both your sense of physical and mental wellbeing, book a Pilates class today to learn how to stand tall for a healthy body and a healthy mind. The world will look and feel better the taller you stand: a few millimetres of extra elevation really may make all the difference to your outlook.

## Active Standing Exercises

Most of the active standing exercises are designed for you to perform when you have an idle moment on your feet, such as standing in a queue, washing the dishes or even brushing your teeth. However, you might need to be a little more selective where you try this one. Happy standing!

### Eyes-closed leg floats

- Place your feet hip distance apart, with your arches lifted, your knees soft and your kneecaps pointing straight ahead. Now close your eyes.
- Think tall through the crown of your head, tuck your chin in and imagine the back of your head and shoulder blades are just lightly touching an imaginary wall behind you.
- Close your eyes and take note of where all your body parts are in space.
- Start by floating one arm to 90 degrees (i.e. horizontal) and back down, and then repeat with the other.
- Continue this until you feel as though no other part of your body is moving, and then start to lift the opposite heel off the ground in conjunction with each arm.
- Notice the movement that occurs in the body while you do this, and once stable see if you can progress to lifting the whole foot, keeping just the tip of the big toe on the ground. Then, see if you can lift the whole foot initially just a millimetre and see how high you can comfortably progress.
- As you do this, keep your focus on where your body parts and joints are in space, as this will improve your proprioception and your overall sense of balance.

## Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

### Would you know what to do?

Have you ever thought about doing a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) course?

I think it is a good idea for everybody to do a CPR course on a regular basis, as approximately 80 per cent of cardiac arrests occur in the home. The sooner CPR can be administered the higher the chance of patient survival.

St John's Ambulance is offering 1,800 free CPR courses in Reservoir before March 2023 and are further planning on installing defibrillators within 400m of every home in the suburb.

Reservoir has been chosen as it is the Victorian suburb with the fifth highest incidence of sudden cardiac arrests. From March 2023 the initiative will be moved to another suburb. To book yourself a training slot, visit [defribinyourstreet.org.au](https://defribinyourstreet.org.au).

Personally, I did my CPR refresher course this year at Emergency Medical Response at 251 St George's Road, Northcote. It was only \$35. For more details, call 0438 718369 or email [tomaczal@gmail.com](mailto:tomaczal@gmail.com).

