

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Pilates

Term dates: 2018 Term 2

Start: Monday 16 April
End: Friday 29 June

...

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, Wed & Fri: 10-week term: \$200
OR \$25/class casual

...

Fairfield Community Room Station St, Fairfield

Over 50s class

Mon: 9.30-10.15am

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.15am

Cost:

10-week term: \$100
OR \$12/class casual

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no classes on:
Friday 20 April (I'm away)
Wednesday 25 April (ANZAC Day)
Monday 11 June (Queen's Birthday)

Physio & Pilates Appointments

Helen Constantinou
47 Bennett St, Alphington
T: 0421 526433

E: helen@backinshapemelbourne.com
W: www.backinshapemelbourne.com

Weight of the world on your shoulders?

There are many causes of shoulder pain, but we can generally consider two main scenarios. Firstly, if shoulder pain arises as a result of a specific accident or incident—such as a fall, a direct impact, or through lifting/pulling/pushing—then there is a strong likelihood that you have torn a muscle, tendon or ligament, broken a bone or caused other direct damage to the joint. If this has been your experience, you need to go to see your physio or GP to get it checked out immediately.

However, many of us will experience pain that comes on gradually with no obvious trigger. This second category is more likely to be a muscular complaint or the start of a tendinopathy (a disease/dysfunction of a tendon), but can be a referred pain from your neck. This also needs to be checked out by a healthcare professional, but in this instance I would suggest that a physio is your most effective first choice.

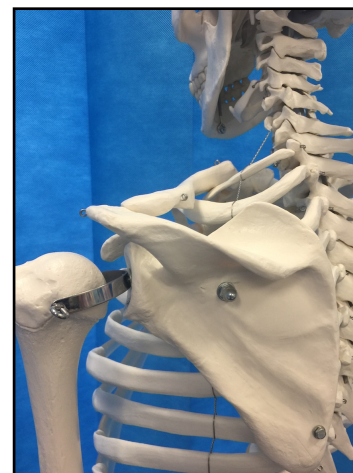
Slow-onset shoulder pain could arise from poor posture, or from over doing a particular activity, or performing it incorrectly—a common effect when you take up a new sport. This can cause some muscles to tighten and others to weaken, resulting in an overall muscle imbalance. Generally, the sooner the cause of the pain is identified, the less chance there will be of continued aggravation and the quicker the recovery will be.

The shoulder joint itself is a ball-and-socket joint, but the socket is only the size of a 20c piece and quite flat. This means that this joint does not have any bony stability, which it effectively sacrifices for mobility. In fact, the shoulder is the most flexible joint in our body—a hang-over from when our distant ancestors were still swinging in the trees! To compensate for the lack of bony stability, the shoulder relies on muscles for stability, specifically the Rotator Cuff muscles, and the muscle balance between these is extremely important.

As far as self help is concerned, my general advice is:

1. Good posture. Tuck your chin in and think tall through the crown of your head. Look in a mirror to see if the painful shoulder is higher than the other and if so try lowering it. Conversely, if it looks lower, try shrugging your shoulders to balance them out. If at any point, you get a sharp stab of pain at the tip of your shoulder when you reach for things, STOP, correct your posture and see if it feels any easier.

2. Naturally, you should avoid anything that aggravates the pain.





Pendular exercises are often relieving. To do these, lean forwards slightly, letting your arm hang heavy and let it swing back and forth, side to side or in circles. You can try holding a light weight in your hands to make this more effective.

3. Have a good feel around your shoulder region and see if you can find the pain. If it is tender around the joint, try icing it (an ice pack for 10 minutes, or ice massage for one minute) and rub a little Voltarin gel into the area. If any of the muscles in the upper arm, neck or shoulder blade are tight or tender, try applying heat for 10 minutes to the muscles and try some 'Self Trigger Point Release' with a tennis ball or your thumbs: find a sore spot, press until you feel a little pain and then hold until it releases.

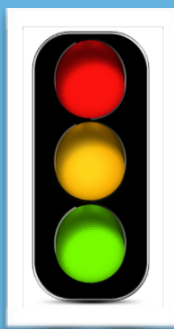
4. If it is painful to lie on your affected shoulder, don't! Use a pillow to stop yourself rolling

onto it, and if painful to sleep on your good side, try hugging a pillow.

5. If your pain persists, or if you are worried, then don't hesitate to book in and see your physio.

Traffic Light Exercises

We all know the excuses. "I didn't go to the gym because I had to work late" or "I missed my exercise class because the traffic was horrendous"! Well now is the time to use time spent waiting at traffic lights to your advantage! Now you can sit comfortably in your own car, listening to your own choice of music, trying out the latest traffic light exercise, in a state of self contentment and calm, while the motorists around you fume in frustration!



Self-trigger point releases: shoulder blade and upper arm

We have a lot of muscles that attach to our shoulder blades and upper arms. Any of these muscles can become tight or develop trigger points, which are painful tight knots in the muscles. This is especially common if you experience any shoulder pain.

- With your opposite hand, have a feel down the front of your arm (Bicep), the back of your arm (Tricep), the side of your shoulder (Deltoid), and around behind the armpit, along the outside edge of your shoulder blade.
- Try gently squeezing the edge of the shoulder blade between your thumb and fingers and see if you can reach up to press on the flat surface of the shoulder blade itself.
- You are hunting for tight spots in the muscles. When you find one...
 - PRESS gently until you start to feel pain
 - FOCUS on the pain and keep breathing
 - HOLD it until it eases
- Once you have eased one tight spot, you can go hunting for the next, but you might have to wait until the next set of lights!

Healthy mind; healthy body

Mental health benefits of Pilates

There is currently a great deal of interest in mental health issues, with recent segments on The ABC show 'Catalyst' and the SBS show 'Trust Me, I'm a Doctor' summarising effective self help techniques. Good advice to improve and maintain your mental health includes the following:

1. **Exercising:** promotes the body to produce its own feel-good hormones, such as Endorphins and Enkephalins. Exercise also decreases the production of stress hormones, while increasing the blood flow generally in the body and to the brain.
2. **Meditation.**
3. **Socialising:** any activity with other people or in a group.
4. **Keeping the mind busy:** doing activities that require focus and concentration help you 'live in the moment'.
5. **Getting outdoors into nature.** This provides fresh air, Vitamin D from sunlight, and often helps bring the focus back to simple pleasures.

Pilates ticks pretty much all these boxes: it is a form of exercise; it is meditational; group classes are a social experience (more so when we go for a coffee after class!); and it keeps the mind busy trying to coordinate physical movement with breathing.

The only box it doesn't tick is the outdoor one. But there's nothing to stop you practicing your Pilates outside, and who know—'Pilates in the Park' might be the next big craze!



