

Serving the local community since 2001

# Back in Shape



## Physiotherapy & Pilates



### Helen's Pilates

**Term dates: 2015 Term 4**

**Start: Wednesday 7 October**

**End: Monday 14 December**

**All ages and abilities**

**Alphington Bowls Club  
Parkview Rd, Alphington**

**Mon: 12-1pm**

**Wed: 5.30-6.30pm & 6.30-7.30pm**

**Fri: 9.15-10.15am & 10.30-11.30am**

**Cost:**

**Mon: (9-week term): \$180**

**Wed & Fri: (10-week term): \$200**

**OR \$25/class casual**

### Over 50s

**Fairfield Community Room  
Station St, Fairfield**

**Mon: 9.30-10.15am**

**Cost:**

**Mon: (9-wk term): \$72**

**OR \$10/class casual**

### Limited mobility

**Fairfield Community Room  
Station St, Fairfield**

**Mon: 10.30-11.15am**

**Cost:**

**Mon: (9-wk term): \$72**

**OR \$10/class casual**

**NOTE: No classes on Monday 5 Oct,  
Monday 2 Nov (Cup Weekend),  
Wednesday 16 Dec or Friday 18 Dec**

### Physio & Pilates Appointments

**Helen Constantinou  
47 Bennett St, Alphington  
T: 0421 526433**

## Tendinopathy tendencies

Tendons attach muscles to bones and their function is to transmit the force of a muscle contraction to the bone in order to move our joints. Made from collagen, tendons have approximately five per cent elasticity, with water making up 50 per cent of a tendon's weight and giving them their shock-absorbing qualities.

The collagen itself is in a constant state of degeneration and repair. Tendons hate change, and for optimal health require good nutrition, sunlight for Vitamin D, and regular consistent exercise. Poor diet has been shown to block the natural repair process, as does smoking. Excessive exercise will overload the tendons, while too little will lead to 'under-loaded' tendons, resulting in insufficient stimuli for development/maintenance of a healthy tendon.

'Tendinopathy' is a term used for any tendon injury, which includes a number of common conditions: Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy; Tennis Elbow; or pain in the front of your knee, Achilles tendon or outer hip regions. These conditions all demonstrate a history of tendon 'overload' resulting from several potential factors: performing a new activity, such as taking up rock climbing; significantly increasing the intensity of a routine activity, such as stepping up your runs from 5k to 10k; or returning to an activity after a period of rest, such as resuming your exercise regime after a holiday.

Studies indicate that this 'overload' stimulates the tendon fibres to attract more water in an attempt to protect themselves, and this results in the tendons becoming thickened and swollen. This extra fluid causes pressure on the many pain sensitive nerve endings within the tendons and this causes pain.

All Tendinopathies demonstrate both pain and weakness when the area is loaded. You will know what this feels like if you have ever tried gripping something while suffering from Tennis Elbow, climbed stairs with Patella Tendinopathy, or gone running with Achilles Tendinopathy. The pain triggers protective tightening/shortening of the muscle, which both increases the sense of weakness and creates additional tension on the tendon, creating yet further pain; the process becomes a vicious cycle that can be hard to break.

Treatment for Tendinopathy can be both proactive and reactive. A healthy lifestyle will help prevent the onset of Tendinopathy and boost the body's ability to repair damage once it has





occurred. General preventive measures include stopping smoking, eating a healthy diet, spending time in the sun, and getting enough sleep.

In addition, once an injury has occurred, you will need to give your body relative rest from the aggravating injury; this can entail decreasing the load or reducing the intensity while continuing with the activity, as advised by your physio.

Icing the affected area can reduce inflammation, as will the use of anti-inflammatory medication such as Nurofen.

A graduated exercise program—two to three times a week—is advised to reload the tendon in a controlled manner. Exercise is crucial to instigate production of new collagen fibres, but rest days are also vital to allow the new collagen fibres to establish. If in doubt, you need to consult your physio for more tailored advice. Your physio will also be able to massage the affected muscles to release tightness. Finally, if you are taking Glucosamine for your joints, this could be aggravating your Tendinopathy and you might need to seek advice from your GP.

Hopefully, this advice will help you avoid Tendinopathy in the first place, and recover more quickly if it does occur. Here's wishing you a happy, healthy, pain-free future.

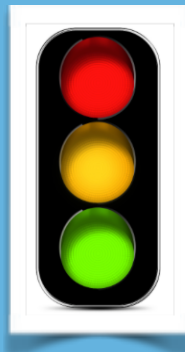
## Traffic Light Exercises

Bored waiting for the lights to change? Try these!

### Quick Fire Pelvic Floor

If you experience any bladder leakage when you sneeze, cough or jump, then this exercise will be beneficial as it trains the pelvic floor muscles to contract quickly.

- Start by doing a couple of normal pelvic floor lifts to wake up the muscles. Take a little breath in to prepare and on the breath out, squeeze around the openings of your bladder and bowel. Feel like you are lifting these towards the small of your back. On the breath in, relax these muscles.
- Then, on the next breath out, try and do four very quick lifts of the pelvic floor. Again, relax on the breath in.
- Repeat this three times.



**Note:** If you find that you get worse with each repetition, it means that the muscles are weak and lack endurance. Try giving yourself a rest of three to four breaths between each repetition. You can then gradually decrease this rest as your endurance improves. Conversely, if you get better with each repetition then this indicates that your muscle strength and endurance are good, but the connection with your brain might be sluggish! The solution to both scenarios is the same: practice every hour and your performance will quickly improve.

## Pilates on DVD

### Holding it together in the holidays

I run my Pilates classes in accordance with the four school terms, each usually around ten weeks in length and with school holidays varying between two weeks and six weeks. Many of my Pilates class attendees are happy to attend during term time and take a break during the holidays, but as with all forms of exercise, you actually get the best results by training consistently.

Each term, I change the exercises I cover in order to keep the classes interesting and also to continue to challenge your muscle groups. However, through experience I notice that many of you regress during the holidays. In order to combat this, and provide a more consistent service to my hard-core Pilates aficionados, I am working on a Pilates DVD that summarises the main exercises covered during the preceding term. The idea is that you can use this during the holidays to keep yourselves 'ticking over' until the next term.

These DVD classes are primarily intended for use by those people who currently attend my classes, as I know the specific injuries or limitation of all my class participants. When following the DVD class, always execute the version of the exercises that you can manage pain free; if in doubt, regress to an easier version of an exercise or rest during any exercise that exacerbates discomfort.

I aim to produce a DVD of one exercise class each term, so over time you will have the opportunity to collect a series of different Pilates classes. This project is very much in its formative stage at present, and I would welcome feedback from you all on how well the first DVD meets your needs.

