

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Mat Classes

Term dates: 2020 Term 4

Start: Monday 5 October 2020

End: Monday 21 December 2020

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: 10-week term: \$200

Wed: 10-week term: \$200

Fri: 10-week term: \$200

Fairfield Community Room

Station St, Fairfield

Over 50s class

Mon: 9.15-10.00am

Cost: 10-week term: \$100

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.15am

Cost: 10-week term: \$100

Please Note: All classes—for both Alphington Bowls Club and Fairfield Community Room—will continue virtually on Zoom at the special Covid-19 low rate! Casual attendance will only be possible once we have resumed physical classes again.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no class on Melbourne Cup Eve on Monday 2 November. However, classes **will** go ahead on Grand Final Eve on Friday 23 October.

Tim's Pilates

Call Tim for information on 0410 010818

These classes are currently on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Tim will contact class participants to advise when classes are able to resume.

Hormone boost to get in the mood

Our mood is regulated by four hormones: dopamine, endorphins, oxytocin and serotonin.

Dopamine gives us a sensation of increased energy or excitement and is associated with the anticipation or actuality of getting our needs met. This hormone can be boosted by stimulating our minds with new activities, and by setting achievable goals.

Pilates can play an important role here, as it provides an ongoing challenge to make incremental improvements. For instance, if you pick a particular exercise that you are able to do, but perhaps not well, and set yourself small achievable goals for advancement, then this will increase your dopamine levels.

Push-ups probably provide an example most of us can relate to, as it is an exercise that we all feel that we could do better. If you can already perform this exercise reasonably well, you can aim to increase the number of repetitions you are able to do, or the number of times a week you perform the exercise. Equally, if you are only currently able to do push ups on all fours, you could set yourself the goal of progressing to doing the exercise on your knees.

In this way you can naturally increase your dopamine levels as you improve your fitness and your sense of well being.

Endorphins give us a sense of euphoria, which can help mask pain. These have been shown to increase when we exercise, when we meditate or engage in mindfulness activities, and when we laugh.

Obviously, it almost goes without saying, endorphins will be increased in the body by doing Pilates, as with any other form of exercise. By implementing a daily/weekly routine of exercise, you'll find you get that natural high that will encourage you to do more. For example, you could aim to incorporate a morning set of stretches into your daily routine, while aiming to do Pilates on a Monday and Friday, yoga on Wednesdays and Saturdays, walking on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a bike ride on Sunday.

Oxytocin, by contrast, makes us feel safe and secure, trusting others and feeling connected to them. Levels of this hormone can be stimulated by connecting and sharing with other people, as well as spending time with pets and other animals.

The Pilates exercises themselves may not help increase oxytocin levels in the body, but the shared class experience



—and going for coffee afterwards—definitely will. Obviously, in these difficult times of pandemic lockdown, we struggle to physically share in a Pilates class, but interrelating with each other before and after a Zoom class will also help. Added to this, we are still allowed to exercise with one other person, and the shared experience of a walk with a friend will also boost oxytocin. Or how about encouraging a friend to share the challenge to have set yourself to get a hit of endorphins and oxytocin at the same time!

The last of the four hormones, serotonin, plays an important role in essential bodily functions such as arousal, appetite, memory and sleep. To increase serotonin levels, it helps to take note of the positive aspects of our lives, such as enjoyable activities, special achievements, and meaningful connections we make with others. Serotonin is also boosted through the mindful reflection of our strengths and the progress we make in work, projects and relationships, in addition to taking time to relax and making positive affirmations to nurture confidence.

Here, serotonin can be increased by keeping a simple record of how you are progressing with your challenge exercise and the self affirmation that you are getting better, fitter and stronger every day.

So it's no use not exercising because 'you're not in the mood'. To get in the right mood you need to start exercising to get those important hormones flowing!

Active Standing Exercises

'Active Standing Exercises' allow you to exercise in otherwise unproductive times when you are on your feet, such as standing in a supermarket queue. So don't just stand there. Stand actively!

VMO (Vastus Medialis Oblique)

This is the muscle just above your kneecap, slightly towards the inside of the thigh. Together with the VL (Vastus Lateralis), the VMO controls the tracking of the kneecap when you bend and straighten your knee, but we need both muscles to work equally to ensure your kneecap tracks properly. It is common for the VMO to weaken as a result of post-surgery knee pain, poor footwear or flattened arches, and this can lead to poor kneecap tracking and localised pain.

- To do this exercise, step forward with your left foot and lock your left knee in a 30-degree bend, making sure the arch of your foot is lifted and your kneecap is pointing straight ahead.
- Put your fingers on your left VMO and slowly transfer your weight from your (rear) right leg to your (front) left leg, keeping your knee facing forward and locked at 30 degrees.
- Feel your left VMO tighten, and then soften as you transfer your weight back to your right leg.
- Perform ten repetitions for each leg.



Osteoporosis

Time to turn back the clock

You may recall I had a DEXA bone scan in 2017, which showed I had osteoporosis in my lower back (T-score of -2.5) and osteopaenia in my hip (with a T-score of -1.5).

These improved to scores of -1.9 and -1.1 respectively when I was retested in 2018, and again to -1.6 and -0.8 in my most recent DEXA scan this year, with both areas now comfortably in the osteopaenic zone.

I'm sharing these results with you as we are often told that osteoporosis is irreversible, which may lead some people to believe there is nothing they can do to help themselves.

My experience is that it is possible to reverse osteoporosis, just as it is possible to reduce the severity of osteopaenia. My secret? Simply increasing the amount of impact activity I do each week.

I have achieved this by taking up running, but I could just as easily have chosen brisk walking, skipping or weight training to achieve the same results.

Naturally, exercise is not the only part of the solution. Bone density reduces when we deprive ourselves of calcium in our diet, or vitamin D that enables us to absorb the calcium. Certain foods, such as dairy, eggs, fish and leafy green vegetables provide the nutrients we need, while caffeine and alcohol regrettably restrict our ability to absorb calcium.

Supplements can provide a secondary option to diet, but it is always best to have blood test to confirm you need to be taking these. And, of course, sunlight provides us with vitamin D for free, so get a double benefit by doing your impact exercise outside!

If you are over 50 or post-menopausal and have not had a DEXA scan, I'd strongly urge you to ask your GP for a referral for one and check out the Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group at www.melbosg.org.au.