

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Mat Classes

Term dates: 2023 Term 3

Start: Monday 10 July 2023

End: Friday 15 September 2023

I have restricted casual attendance in recent terms in order to regulate class sizes. However, from this term on I am happy to accept casual attendees for all classes that are not full.

Alphington Bowls Club

Parkview Rd, Alphington

All ages and abilities classes

Mon: 12.15-1.15pm

5.30-6.30pm (Golf Pilates)

7.00-8.00pm

Wed: 5.30-6.30pm (Zoom only)

Fri: 9.15-10.15am

10.30-11.30am

Cost: Mon: 10-week term: \$280

Wed: 10-week term: \$280

Fri: 10-week term: \$280

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: 10-week term: \$180

Thu: 10-week term: \$180

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.20am

Cost: 10-week term: \$180

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There are no public holidays
this term

*getback*TM case study

In my last newsletter I told you a little about the theory behind *getback* — a program designed to safely reactivate and strengthen the deep stabilising muscles of the spine. In this article I want to provide a real-life example of how *getback* helped a patient of mine to overcome chronic pain that had dogged her for years.

Pauline suffered from ongoing neck pain and associated arm numbness. She was taking Mobic—an anti-inflammatory—on a daily basis to cope with the symptoms. An MRI showed she had multiple changes at many levels of her spine, and a neurosurgeon advised her she needed surgery to address the condition.

However, as Pauline's physio, I explained that surgery was not guaranteed to fully relieve all her symptoms. I recommended that she consider *getback* and she agreed that she had nothing to lose by seeing if this program could help her situation.

There are currently not many places offering this treatment. However, I have heard that Melbourne Physiotherapy Pilates and Fitness Group—at 201 Fitzroy Street in St Kilda—is achieving great results and I was comfortable to pass their details on to Pauline.

As I briefly explained in the last newsletter, *getback* involves an initial assessment to measure the range of movement and the strength of the muscles, followed by the treatment program. The treatment program typically involves 12-to-24 sessions during which medical rehabilitation devices are used to safely increase the strength and flexibility of the deep spinal muscles.

At the halfway mark of the treatment, a further assessment is undertaken to determine how well the program is working for each patient. In Pauline's case, she reported, "I am happy to say that my symptoms have subtly but progressively improved."

At the end of the program a final assessment takes place to measure the efficacy of the treatment, comparing improvements

in strength and flexibility achieved through the course. Pauline could not be happier with the results.



Vipassana mediation

In April this year, I attended a 10-day silent mediation retreat. It was both physically and mentally challenging: probably one of the hardest but most rewarding things I have ever done.

Vipassana means to see things as they really are, and it is an art of living which provides mental training that is of profound practical value in everyday life. During the 10 days you learn to develop heightened awareness and concentration, which you then use to examine your own mental and physical nature. This helps you gain insight and detachment to free yourself from mental tensions such as anger, greed and fear.

Personally, I cannot recommend this highly enough. I think everybody would benefit in some way, especially those with chronic pain. As a physio, when a patient comes to me with pain, I find the source of the pain and endeavour to release the stiffness or tightness from the outside. In my mind, one of the powerful things Vipassana teaches its students is to use their minds to find these 'knots' and release them from the inside.

The mediation technique was taught by Buddha 2500 years ago, but is not based on any religious practice. It can be done by anyone and amazingly costs nothing. Donations can be made at the end of the course. For more information, contact: Vipassana Meditation Centre: Email: info@aloka.dhamma.org or check out their website at www.dhamma.org

"After three months of bi-weekly *getback* sessions I am happy to report that the mobility and strength of all sections of my spine have improved significantly," she said.

"Importantly for my cervical spine, my strength and mobility is now above average for my age, whereas when I started the program I was below average. Also, I'm glad to say that I no longer require anti inflammatories."

If you think *getback* might help you with a chronic pain issue, talk to your physio and check out Melbourne Physiotherapy Pilates and Fitness Group at www.melbournephysiogroup.com.au or call the practice on 03-95340611.



Healthy habits

Healthy habits are small activities that you can squeeze into your day between other tasks. They do not take long to do, and can prove quite a useful break when you need to clear your head for a moment. And the more you do them, the more habit forming they become.

Anapana

During the first three days of my mediation course (see separate article in this newsletter), we were taught a technique to improve our focus. I have used this technique in our five-minute relaxations at the end of each class during this last term. We have been performing this lying down, but it can be done in any position. Sitting in a chair or cross legged is ideal. You don't want to be so comfortable you fall asleep!

- Close your eyes and bring your focus to your breath. Do not change your breathing; just observe it.
- Focus on your nostrils and the area of skin below the nose and above your top lip, paying attention to every breath in and breath out.
- Notice all the sensations you feel here. If your mind drifts, bring it back to your breath.
- You can then narrow your focus further to just the area of skin below your nose.
- You can do this very simple exercise in a spare five minutes, or you can try sustaining it for longer periods, building it up to an hour.

Osteoporosis support

What help do you need?

I was a member of the Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group until it was sadly discontinued when the then-president, Beryl Logie, stood down from the position and nobody was able to step up to replace her.

As this support group provided invaluable information and support to members, I am interested to determine if there are people out there who are interested in resurrecting a similar group.

At this point in time, I'm just putting the feelers out to hear your thoughts. Are you looking for regular meetings with information and presentations? Or perhaps you are interested in a more socially orientated group?

So if you are suffering from osteoporosis or osteopenia, please get in touch with me. Equally, if you feel you are able to volunteer a bit of spare time to help others with this 'silent' disease, I would love to hear from you.

