

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Mat Classes

Term dates: 2022 Term 1

Start: Monday 31 January 2022

End: Friday 8 April 2022

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: 12-1pm & 7-8pm

Wed: 5.30-6.30pm (**Zoom only**)

Fri: 9.15-10.15am &

10.30-11.30am

Cost: Mon: 8-week term: \$200

Wed: 10-week term: \$250

Fri: 10-week term: \$250

St. Andrews Uniting Church

85 Gillies Street, Fairfield

(Classes available Live and on Zoom)

Over 50s class

Mon: 9.30-10.20am

Cost: 8-week term: \$120

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.20am

Cost: 8-week term: \$120

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no classes on:

Monday 28 February

(as I will be away) or

Monday 14 March (Labour Day)

Something to sleep on

I have recently read a brilliant book '*Why we sleep*' by Matthew Walker and I'd like to share some of the key ideas from this book with you.

Walker is adamant that sleep is the single most important item for our health—more so than diet and exercise. In fact, he states that most of the efforts we make with regard to diet and exercise will be rendered pointless if we do not underpin these with the foundation of quality sleep. All adults need seven to nine hours sleep a night: no exceptions! For those who believe you thrive on less, you are deluding yourselves. The fact that you believe you can function on less is probably a result of clouded judgement arising from too little sleep!

Walker goes further. Many of the chronic health issues prevalent in the industrial world can be linked to insufficient sleep. Sleep deprivation mimics the effects of ADHD, undermining our immune system, doubling our risk of cancer, and is a key factor in Alzheimers. It disrupts blood sugar levels leading to pre-diabetes, and it increases the likelihood of both strokes and heart attacks.

Lack of sleep—including poor sleep quality—is a major contributory factor in ALL psychiatric conditions, including depression and anxiety. And it confuses our natural satiety mechanism that tells us when to stop eating, leading to obesity. If you try to lose weight through diet while under-slept, you will only lose precious muscle rather than fat.

No other animal purposefully deprives themselves of sleep: humans are alone in somehow considering it to be a badge of honour! The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared sleep loss to be an epidemic in industrialised nations.

The purpose of sleep is a complex symphony of essential functions. It allows our bodies and brains to refresh by removing waste products, and it is crucial to memory. The two main types of sleep are REM (rapid eye movement) and NREM (non-REM) sleep. NREM is deeper sleep during which we don't dream. The purpose of this is to transfer the recent memories from short-term storage (which needs to be freed up for the next day's memories) to long-term storage. By contrast, REM sleep is when we dream, and this is when the brain starts making cross connections, linking different memories together.

REM sleep allows us to be creative, combining previously unrelated memories together to produce innovative ideas.

There are two processes that synchronise (ideally) to ensure we get enough sleep. First, we each have an inbuilt 24-hour clock—our Circadian Rhythm—which creates a day/night cycle that automatically adjusts itself through

**MATTHEW
WALKER**

**Why We
Sleep**



The New
Science
of Sleep
and
Dreams

exposure to daylight. The second mechanism works through the build-up of a chemical called Adenosine during our waking hours. After 12-16 hours awake the concentration of Adenosine in our bodies creates 'sleep pressure' that we experience as an irresistible urge to sleep.

However, these two systems are not fool proof; there are many things we unwittingly do in our daily lives that sabotage these natural processes. Going to bed late, for instance, deprives us of non-REM sleep, thereby impairing our long-term memory. Conversely, waking too early robs us of REM sleep, which stifles our creativity, problem-solving abilities, and our ability to learn patterns of movement, such as playing the piano, riding a bike or learning a Pilates routine!

Likewise, caffeine blocks the Adenosine receptors, thereby delaying the urge to sleep. While a useful tool on occasion, caffeine has a half-life of seven hours; if you have a coffee at midday, 50 per cent of the caffeine is still in your system at 7pm and 25 per cent at 2am! Similarly, artificial light—especially 'blue' light, associated with LED lighting and screens—confuse our Circadian Rhythms into believing it is daylight in the evening when we should be naturally preparing for sleep. As an easy guide, we need as much natural light early in the day, and are well advised to minimise artificial light for at least an hour before we head to bed.

Jet lag, shift work, sleeping pills and alcohol impair sleep in similar ways. Alcohol, for instance, may help you fall asleep, but it prevents REM sleep. The best advice is to avoid alcohol completely, or consume it in moderation as far from bedtime as possible. However, I am not advocating a cheeky glass of red with breakfast!

I'd recommend you read *'Why we sleep'* by Matthew Walker for a more in-depth understanding of the subject. In the meantime, to maximise your health, happiness and sense of well-being, please go to bed!

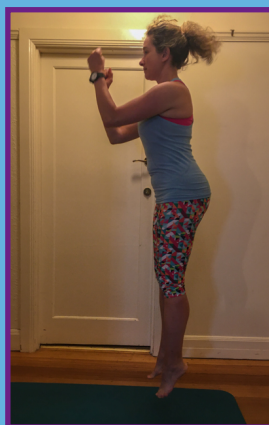
Active Standing Exercises

Most 'Active Standing Exercises' can be performed anywhere at any time but this one is a little different: perhaps one to do while you're cooking dinner rather than buying the ingredients for dinner!

Little jumps

This is one of the exercises we've been doing in class as part of our 'fast movement'. It's good to elevate your heart rate and good for bone strength:

- Stand with your feet hip-distance apart, swing your arms back, bend the knees, and then swing the arms forward as you do a little jump.
- As you land, allow your knees to bend and ensure you land equally on your toes and heels.
- Repeat this for as many reps as you can manage in 30 seconds.
- If this standard form is too challenging or painful, vary the exercise by keeping your toes on the ground and landing heavily on your heels instead.
- If you find the standard form too easy, try jumping a little higher, or add hand weights. With weights, keep your arm swing more compact and your elbows locked at 90 degrees.
- If at any point you feel pain or strain, stop and consider an easier version.



Back catalogue

Eight terms' of classes online

Covid-19 has given us a great resource. By forcing my classes onto Zoom, I now have eight terms' worth of Pilates classes, sitting on my website for you all to use.

With a six-week break until we restart in 2022, I'd recommend you use this back catalogue to maintain your fitness over the holidays.

As you know, I tend to build on the exercises throughout each term, so if you want an easier class, pick one from earlier in the term, or opt for a class later in the term for something more challenging.

You might like to pick a class and work through the natural term's progressions, or even pick a couple to do concurrently.

For those who'd like a break from classes, but would still like to keep your hand in, I've added a new channel on the website called *'Last Term's Classes'*. For a cost of \$50, you can have access to the All Abilities classes you have just completed this last term.

If this proves popular, I will make it available to the Over 50s and Limited Mobility classes too.

Happy holidays to you all. Here's wishing you good health for 2022.

