



Serving the local community since 2001



Back in Shape




Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Mat Classes

Term dates: 2024 Term 1

Start: Monday 22 January 2024

End: Thursday 28 March 2024

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

7.00-8.00pm

Wed: 5.30-6.30pm (Zoom only)

Fri: 9.15-10.15am

10.30-11.30am

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$252

Wed: 10-week term: \$280

Fri: 8-week term: \$224

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: 9-week term: \$162

Thu: 10-week term: \$180

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.20am

Cost: 9-week term: \$162

Revisiting vertigo and vestibular disorders

Do you suffer from dizziness? Do you ever wake up and find the world is 'swimmy'? Do you ever roll onto your side to get out of bed and feel a spinning sensation? Or do you ever find that when you look down to put on your shoes, or look up to hang out the washing you experience a sense of a loss of balance. Do you ever feel a general unsteadiness on your feet? If you answered 'Yes' to any of these questions, you are definitely not alone.

Dizziness and vertigo are the most common complaints to doctors by people over the age of 70, and in fact these issues affect 15-20 per cent all adults in Australia. While dizziness can occur from a number of conditions, it is most commonly caused by a disturbance to our vestibular system, located in the inner ear. The good news is that these symptoms can definitely be improved with treatment.

Dizziness is one of the main reasons for falls and this tends to have a knock-on effect with our confidence. It can encourage us to take extra caution, which can lead us to slow down, become less active and more sedentary, and generally enjoy life less than we should. This can result in sufferers becoming less fit, less strong, less flexible and less agile. In a very real sense, dizziness can make us become old before our time.

As I said, while the most common culprit, vestibular disorders are not the sole cause of dizziness. As such, if you experience any of the sensations described above on a regular basis, it is always good to consult with your doctor to rule out any more serious maladies.

However, if your doctor agrees that you are most likely suffering from a vestibular problem, then you should book in to see a physio who specialises in vestibular disorders, such as The Neurological Rehabilitation Group, which has clinics in Mount Waverley, St Kilda and Eltham. Call them on 9803 7755 or visit online at neurorehab.com.au.

Benign Paroxysmal Position Vertigo (BPPV) is one of the main causes of vestibular disturbance. I discussed this in Edition 20 of this newsletter in December 2019. To recap, the labyrinth in the inner ear is made up of three semicircular fluid-filled canals. These—the horizontal, posterior and superior—are arranged in three different (X, Y and Z) planes, that together cover our spacial perception of height, width and depth.

Hair-like sensors in the lining detect movement of the fluid in these canals, which is interpreted by the brain to help us balance. With BPPV,



PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no class on the following dates:
Australia Day - Friday 26 January
Labour Day - 11 March
Good Friday - 29 March

crystals can form in the fluid and these have the effect of overstimulating the system, confusing the brain and causing the sensation we know as vertigo.

BPPV usually presents with brief episodes of vertigo usually lasting less than a minute. It is brought on by specific movement of the head, related to which canal is affected. It commonly causes nausea and sometimes vomiting. Treatment often entails simple exercises that you can do when you get symptoms.

Other causes of dizziness can be due to damage, infection or degeneration of the vestibular/inner ear system, any of which can cause the system to underperform and result in the brain receiving insufficient information. This is especially confusing for the brain if only one side is affected, in which case symptoms will usually last longer and may require bedrest and medication for a few days, or even a trip to the hospital. Adaption exercises can provide effective treatment, driving the vestibular system to make long-term changes. The earlier these exercises are started, the better the outcome. So if you frequently feel dizzy, go and see your physio now!

If vestibular disturbances affect both left and right sides, you may experience no dizziness, but a feeling of unsteadiness instead, which can also lead to falls. So, if you are becoming less steady on your feet, or have any symptoms of dizziness, you shouldn't have to put up with it or accept that it is a natural part of ageing. Get it investigated and seek treatment.

Healthy habits



Today's fast-paced world often conspires to undermine our ability to feel our best. Healthy habits are small activities you can incorporate into your day to help offset the multitude of unhealthy effects of the modern environment. As with all activities—good or bad—the more often you do them, the more habit forming they become.

Cold blast

This is a very simple habit to add to your daily routine. I do it every day! Have a normal shower at your preferred temperature, but end it with a cold blast for 60 seconds. This triggers a stress response in your body, and if you do it regularly your body will get used to it and help condition your body to cope with other stress factors.

Multiple studies have demonstrated numerous benefits, including improved mental health and better ability to fight infection. A Dutch study found that those who take cold showers take an average of 30 per cent fewer sick days.

Cold showers have also been shown to promote the growth and retention of (good) brown fat in the body. Unlike (bad) white fat, brown fat is metabolically active, helping break down blood sugar and fat molecules, improving general health and weight control.

Moreover, cold showers have anti-inflammatory benefits. Considering that Alzheimers, diabetes, heart disease and depression are all linked to chronic inflammation, a brief sixty-second icy blast in the morning is a small price to pay!

For more details, read '*Just one thing*' by Michael Mosley.



Effective exercises

My personal top ten

Many people ask me which exercises I believe we should do every day. I am putting together a short video on the website with my top ten for you to check out. These are all exercises we cover in the Pilates classes, so they should be familiar.

1. Chin tucks: standing tall, keep looking straight ahead and tuck your chin in.
2. Shoulder retraction: squeeze your shoulder blades together, either sitting, standing, lying on your back or on your front.
3. Deep tummy (transverse abdominals): draw your belly button and the area below towards the small of your back, while keeping your back still.
4. Pelvic floor: as you breathe out, squeeze the muscles around the opening of your bladder and back passage. Relax them on the breath in.
5. Back extensions on your tummy: using your arms to do the work, keep your back relaxed as you 'peel' your spine up. This can also be done in a standing position.
6. Lower back rotation: lying on your back with your knees bent and pressed together, slowly roll your knees from side to side.
7. Openings for upper back rotation: Lying on your side, reach up and over with your top arm, moving your head to watch the moving arm.
8. Single leg quarter squats: an important knee stabiliser, this exercise works the VMO muscle that is just above the knee on the inside.
9. Stretching the floor for lateral hip stabilisers: stand with feet hip distance apart and imagine you are stretching the floor out sideways.
10. Lumbricals for the feet: press the pads of your toes into the ground as you try to shorten and narrow the foot.

If you do ten reps of each exercise every day, you will feel better. Try them over Christmas, and look out for the new video on the website if you are unsure how to do any of these.

