

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Mat Classes

Term dates: 2025 Term 2

Start: Wednesday 23 April 2025
End: Monday 30 June 2025

Alphington Bowls Club

Parkview Rd, Alphington

All ages and abilities classes

Mon: 12.15-1.15pm
6.00-7.00pm This class will only proceed if there are 5 participants or more

Wed: 5.30-6.30pm (Zoom only)

Fri: 9.15-10.15am
10.30-11.30am

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$270
Wed: 10-week term: \$300
Fri: 9-week term: \$270

St. Andrews Uniting Church

87 Gillies Street, Fairfield

Over 50s class

Mon: 9.20-10.20am (Live & Zoom)

Thu: 9.20-10.20am

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$180
Thu: 10-week term: \$200

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.30am (Live & Zoom)

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$180

Finding the balance: meditation versus motion

As a physio, my mantra has always been to move, to keep moving, and to move more. Our bodies are designed to move and, on the whole, movement makes us feel good. Ideally, we need to move every joint in our body through its total extent of articulation on a regular basis to maintain the full range of movement. Equally, we also need to operate our muscles through their entire range to maintain their complete length and strength.

Those of us who have broken a bone and had a body part confined to a plaster cast for six weeks will know that inactivity for that period of time is enough to stiffen up the immobilised joint. This occurs because we have lost the full range of movement, and trying to rectify this can be extremely painful. The muscles around the joint will have begun to atrophy; they will look small and feel weak. instinctively, we know we must move the joint, and that once we do we will gradually be able to return to better strength, control and range of motion. Often, tailored exercises—such as those suggested by a physio—will be required to get the function of the joint back to where it was before the injury occurred.

It doesn't even require an injury and plaster cast to stiffen our joints. As we age, we often inadvertently achieve the same effect simply by moving less.

Moreover, we also need to move our whole body to work our hearts and lungs to maintain our cardiovascular health. I'm sure you are all familiar with how quickly you can lose your cardio fitness if you stop exercising for a period, whether this is due to injury, overtime at work, or even going on holiday.

So, as a physio, I cannot stress enough how important movement is. But I would also suggest that it is beneficial to make time in our daily schedules to be still and not move. For most of us, the only time we are still is when we are asleep.

The concept of the benefits of stillness has been of interest to me since my recent 10-day *Vipassana* meditation retreat, during which we moved as little as possible for 10 hours every day. We were able to move and walk at the end of every hour, which naturally felt good, but the stillness itself was quite amazing, enabling

you to connect with your body and the sensations that are present. It is also a very powerful way to connect with your mind, and observe just how busy—and often chaotic—our 'monkey mind' can be. In the modern technology-fuelled world, we are so constantly bombarded with stimulation that it is little wonder so many of us suffer from anxiety and other mental health problems.

Being physically still enables us to still the mind, which is the first step towards improving our mental focus, something that is



PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no classes
on Anzac Day on Friday 25
April or on the Kings's
birthday on Monday 9 June

incredibly difficult when we are rushing around. Just as we need to keep our bodies fit and strong, the same is true for our minds: and meditation is our mental gym.

There are innumerable meditation and mindfulness apps available—such as *Mindfulness*, *Meditation Oasis*, *Headspace*, *Calm*—so I would encourage you to explore a few and find what works for you. In Pilates, we started with a two-minute session of silence, and this is a good duration to begin with. As you experience the benefits, I guarantee you'll want to extend these periods.

There are also meditation groups out there, such as *Brahma Kumaris Meditation Centre* in Fairfield, *Melbourne Buddhist Centre* in Brunswick, *Mahamundra Tibetan Buddhist Society* in Melbourne, and *Vipassana* in Woori Yallock.

To be both physically and mentally fit, it is necessary to find the balance between activity and inactivity. Setting aside a period of time to be still—as a counterpoint to the rest of our rushing-around lives—will help calm our minds, improve our mental clarity and focus, and enhance our sense of wellbeing, our happiness and our overall health.

Healthy habits

Silent relaxation

My class attendees will recall that we did a two-minute silent relaxation at the end of each Pilates class last term. While we did this lying down, the exercise can be performed in any comfortable position: seated; cross-legged sitting on the floor; sitting against a wall or tree; seated in your car; in the doctor's waiting room. Sitting has the advantage over lying that you are less likely to fall asleep!

- Choose your position.
- Put your phone aside, ideally on silent, unless you are using an app for this exercise.
- Close your eyes.
- You are aiming to stay awake, but don't be too hard on yourself if you do drift off.
- Bring your focus to the sensations that are present in your body, by scanning from your head to your toes and passing your attention to each part of your body in turn.
- Alternatively, you can simply open your mind to whatever bodily sensations arise.
- Sensations could be an awareness of your breath, the temperature of part of your body, itching, tingling, tightness, burning, aches and pains.
- Observe how each sensation changes or moves or passes.
- Allow yourself a minimum of two minutes, but extend as you progress. Research shows that 15-20 minutes dramatically improves the ability to focus.



Cyber security

Staying safe

On Monday 3 March 2025, Senior Constable Andrew Morton of the Preston police presented a session on cyber security the Alphington Country Women's Association (CWA). Key strategies to keep safe include:

- Keep savings in an account with no immediate transaction access and keep withdrawal limits to a minimum.
- Open up a separate debit-card account to use for online purchases. Keep a minimum in this account and only transfer funds in when you intend to buy something. That way, if scammers get hold of your card number and clear your account, there is never much to take.
- Treat every unexpected email as suspicious. Never click on any link contained within an email, as scammers can send out emails that look like they are from your bank or service provider.
- Do not answer the phone from numbers you do not recognise. If you are expecting a call from an unknown number and answer your phone, do not give any personal information out. Anyone who calls you and then asks for information for you to identify yourself is probably a scammer.
- With social media, if you have not met somebody in person, then they are not your friend. They might not even be human.
- Any email, text or phone call claiming that your urgent attention is required is particularly suspect. Never respond immediately, if at all. Always give yourself time to think.
- For emails or phone calls allegedly from a service provider, contact that organisation on a phone number you already know and trust.
- On your phone, laptop or tablet, only turn your bluetooth on when you need to use it.
- As a general rule, if something feels 'off', it probably is. Trust your gut instinct.

If you are interested in learning more about how to protect yourself, check out the details on the Alphington CWA website at alphington.org.au/cwa.