

Serving the local community since 2001

Back in Shape



Physiotherapy & Pilates



Helen's Mat Classes

Term dates: 2024 Term 2

Start: Monday 8 April 2024

End: Monday 3 June 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: 8-week term: \$224

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: 7-week term: \$126

Limited mobility class

Mon: 10.30-11.20am

Cost: Mon: 9-week term: \$162

Just a nigggle

Most the time it is pretty obvious when we injure ourselves. There is usually an incident—a knock, a twist, a fall, a stumble—followed by an onset of pain. This might be immediate, or might arise when we cool down or stop doing what we are doing.

When an injury occurs, many of us will be familiar with the RICE approach—Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation—and will follow this protocol, before seeking advice and help from our doctor or physio. We naturally understand that when something is not right we need to take some kind of action to prevent it from getting worse and to help it heal.

But what if it is 'just a nigggle'? It seems a natural part of getting older to suddenly discover a 'bit of a gripe' that wasn't there the day before and does not necessarily relate to any significant incident or activity. I'm guessing in this instance most of us will tend to ignore the irritation, hoping it will simply go away of its own accord. Of course, quite often this is indeed the case. But equally often the nigggle will linger or reoccur.

It might be a feeling of tightness, in our calf for example, when we walk or run. Or it might be a pinch in our shoulder as we reach or lift overhead. Or it might be a stab in the groin or a grab in the back as we bend or twist or do any of the thousands of movements we do every day.

Often, these niggles are warning signs that a muscle is tightening, that we are overloading a tendon, that a joint is stiffening, or that we are irritating a disc in our spine. As we do not know what might turn out to be significant over time, I suggest that we listen to these niggles and try to pay attention when they materialise.

We should ask ourselves: what was I doing at the time; what was I doing previously that was different to my normal routine; are the niggles getting more frequent; or are they lasting longer?

My next suggestion is that we prod and poke around the area of concern. We should go hunting to see if you can find any tenderness around the joint, or tightness in the muscles above and below the pain. If we find tightness, we should see if we can loosen it up with a roller, rolling pin, our thumbs or a trigger ball. If it is tender around the joint, then we should ice it and massage some Voltaren gel into the area. With Voltaren gel, I'm a fan of Voltaren Osteo (in spite of the name!) as this contains twice the active ingredient compared with regular Voltaren gel.

Alternatively, we could book in to see our physio so they can do the hunting for us. Physios are

very good at that! Commonly, if we catch a nigggle early no tissue damage will have occurred, and once we loosen the tightness and understand what action we can take ourselves



PUBLIC HOLIDAY ALERT:

There will be no class on ANZAC
Day on Thursday 25 April

the issue will resolve quickly. However, if we ignore the niggles, the chances are that it will progressively tighten and stiffen and we might end up with a torn muscle, a tendinopathy, a bursitis or a disc problem. This will probably mean we are looking at a minimum of a six-week recovery period and the need to significantly modify daily activities and recreation.

In addition to the above recommendations, I think it is an excellent idea for us to get to know our bodies better. A weekly Pilates or yoga class is an ideal way to do this, as it helps us identify asymmetries, explore where we are tight or weak, and acquaint ourselves with our natural levels of balance and coordination. Another way to achieve the same degree of familiarisation is by doing a simple regular daily exercise routine at home, as explained in Healthy Habits below.

So we should ignore niggles at our peril. We should think of our bodies like our cars. They might still get us from A to B right now, but that weird knocking noise probably means something is going wrong and it's probably not going to resolve itself if we do nothing. Better to address the minor fault today than wait for the catastrophic failure tomorrow!

Healthy habits

Instead of a specific exercise, this issue's Healthy Habit is more of a philosophy for life. It concerns trying to add 10-20 minutes of exercises into your daily schedule. It is important to keep the program short so you have fewer excuses not to do it!

Personally, I like to do this first thing in the morning, partly because our bodies are a bit tight after a night's sleep, and partly because it makes me feel like I have achieved something right at the beginning of the day.

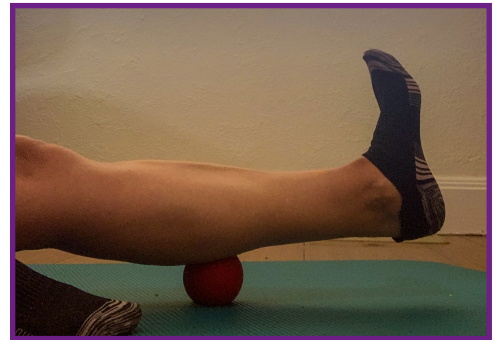
However, if the morning doesn't work for you, simply pick another time—your lunch break, when you get home, or before bed—that will work with your daily routine. You need to choose a repertoire of exercises that move as many parts of your body as possible through their full range of movement.

The exercises also need to stretch those muscles that get tight, and 'wake up' those muscles that you know are weak or which you actively want to focus on strengthening. If you have been given exercises by your physio, these are good to add, as are any releases using balls or rollers.

You should aim to do the same exercise program every day to enable you to assess how it feels today in comparison to yesterday and the day before. In this way, you will become more sensitive to any changes as a muscle gets tighter.

I have a couple of good morning 'warm up' routines posted on my website in the 'Short Workouts & Tips' section, one for 'Over 50s' and another for 'All Abilities'. These are a great place to start, but you should feel free to tweak the exercises to meet your own specific requirements.

For those who have not been to my website before, go to: www.backinshapemelbourne.com 'Login' above the 'Class Recordings' on the tool bar. Then click 'Sign Up'. Fill in your details (with your own password) and click 'Submit'. Once I receive your request I will approve it, allowing you to log in and see the class you want to do whenever you want to do them.



Terms and breaks

A few changes from normal

Please note that we will only have a one-week break between the Terms 1 and 2, except for the Friday classes which will have a two-week break due to Good Friday.

I will be starting Term 2 a week earlier than normal as I am going overseas and will be away for five weeks from Wednesday 5 June to Wednesday 10 July.

We will still manage to shoehorn a reasonable number of weeks into Term 2, but it does mean that you will have a five-six week break between Terms 2 and 3. I hope you will make the most of my class recordings online during this time.

If you have not used my recordings before, then I suggest that you familiarise yourself with them before I go. Term 3 will start on Monday 15 July.

I will flag that there is a chance that my son, Tim, may be able to bridge the five-six week gap by providing cover for some of my classes during the period of 5 June-10 July. I will confirm the details later in Term 2.

