



APRIL 2018

## Three Reasons To See Your Physiotherapist

### ESSENTIAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

Most people associate physiotherapy with pain and injury management. While helping you recover from pain is our specialty, physiotherapists are also able to help with many more issues. Here are three things that you may not have thought to visit a physiotherapist for.

#### Stiffness and Inflexibility

Almost all of us have experienced pain and stiffness after a day of increased or unaccustomed exercise. This kind of stiffness usually wears off quickly, and is referred to as DOMS (delayed onset muscles soreness). If however, you find yourself feeling stiff for longer periods, or even most the time – it might be time to see a physiotherapist. There are many different causes of stiffness and inflexibility; by far the most common is lack of movement. Our joints and muscles both lose flexibility if they are not regularly moved all the way through their range. Muscles can feel short and tight with a bouncy feeling of restriction and joints are more of a hard 'blocked' feeling when you try to move.

For this kind of stiffness, you may not even notice that you have lost range, as it can be very easy to adapt your movements to compensate. Your physiotherapist can help you to identify where you have areas of inflexibility and help you to exercise, stretch and mobilise your joints to get them back to a healthy range. Disease processes such as Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis can also cause prolonged stiffness and your physiotherapist is well equipped to help you deal with these conditions.

#### Reduced Strength or Weakness

There are many reasons for weakness in the body, from generalised disuse, weakness in one muscle group following

injury, neurological weakness or structural weakness of joint following an injury. Weakness of any kind can predispose you to future injury and can be surprisingly difficult to resolve without targeted exercises. Your physiotherapist is able to determine the cause of your weakness and determine the best treatment to restore your muscle strength.

#### Reduced Balance

Keeping your balance is a very complicated process and your body works hard to make sure you stay on your feet. Humans have a very small base of support for our height and we use all our senses together to determine which movements we should make to stay upright, including our visual, vestibular, muscular and sensory systems. As balance is so important, if one part of our senses begins to weaken, the others will quickly compensate, so you may not notice that your balance has worsened until you fall or trip over.

As a general rule, our balance deteriorates as we age but this does not mean that falls should be an inevitable part of aging. Actively working to maintain or improve your balance can have a significant effect on your quality of life and confidence in getting around. Your physiotherapist is able to test all the aspects of your balance and provide effective rehabilitation to help keep you on your feet.



## Brain Teasers

1. A large truck is crossing a bridge 1km long. The bridge can hold 1000kg exactly, the same weight as the truck. Halfway across the bridge, a bird lands on the truck. Does the truck collapse?

2. Which of the seven dwarves never speaks?

3. At what location on earth do winds always blow from the South?

### The Paper Pick-Up Challenge

*Can you do this? Fold a piece of paper in half like a tent and place on the ground.*

*Stand on one leg and pick up the paper with your mouth, then return to standing without touching the ground.*

## PhysioTip

Physiotherapy isn't just for getting rid of pain. We can help to improve your fitness, flexibility, overall health and wellbeing.

# Tennis Elbow

## What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow, also known as Lateral Epicondylitis, is a common condition characterised by pain at the outside of the elbow with movements of the wrist and hand. The pain is usually localized to the tendon of a small muscle of the forearm just below the elbow called Extensor Carpi Radialis Brevis (ECRB). This muscle is responsible for extending the wrist back into a "stop" position and is active when gripping and moving objects. While the term 'tennis elbow' is used because this is a common injury for tennis players, anyone who performs repetitive tasks with their hands and wrists can be susceptible, including office workers and manual labourers.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

The cardinal sign of tennis elbow is pain felt on the outside of the elbow, particularly when making wrist movements or when gripping an object. Symptoms may occur suddenly or appear gradually over time. In the early stages, pain may be present with activity and quickly go away with rest, however, as it progresses the pain may be more constant, lasting for longer and occurring with smaller movements. If pain has persisted for three months then it is considered to be a chronic condition. As with most injuries, the longer an issue has been present, the longer it usually takes to resolve. Other symptoms can include night pain, stiffness in the elbow and forearm,

weakness, numbness and pins and needles. As symptoms progress, simple tasks such as lifting a cup can be painful, which can have a significant impact on your lifestyle.

## What causes it?

While tennis elbow was originally thought to be due an inflammation process, it appears that this is not the case, rather there is an increased sensitivity to the area along with changes to the blood supply and disorganization of the collagen fibres that make up the tendon. These changes are an adaptation to excess loading of the tendons attaching to the elbow, particularly the ECRB. Most of the time, this happens because of small repetitive movements that are done with poor ergonomics or technique. If the health of the tendon tissue is compromised, this can also contribute to the development of tennis elbow. Poor nutrition, disuse, inflammatory diseases and aging can all mean that the tendon is less able to adapt to forces and are a risk factor for the development of tennis elbow.

## How can Physiotherapy help?

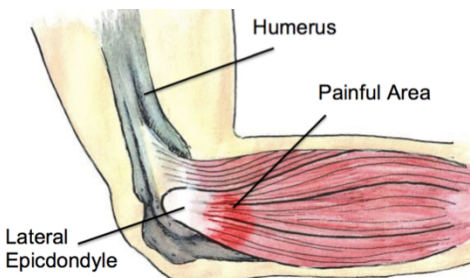
Your physiotherapist will first confirm that you are indeed suffering from tennis elbow, which is an important step as some neck conditions can present with similar symptoms. Once the diagnosis has been confirmed, they will determine the severity and causes of your particular condition, likely testing your grip and individual muscle strength.

Your physiotherapist can also identify any muscle tightness, postural or ergonomic flaws

and joints stiffness that may be contributing to your condition. Treatment may include, fitting of a brace, dry needling, strengthening with eccentric exercises and stretching. Depending on the cause of your tennis elbow, your physio may suggest a change in the setup of your desk, workplace, or grip technique of your racket or hand-held tool. Eccentric exercises load the muscles in a very specific way and research has shown that these exercises can help strengthen tendon tissues, reducing symptoms of tennis elbow.

It is normal for tennis elbow to take a few weeks or even months to heal. If conservative management is not having a good effect, your physio can help you speak to your doctor about other management techniques. As tennis elbow is a progressive condition that generally does not resolve on its own, it is recommended to seek treatment sooner rather than later, as recovery is much faster when started early.

**None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for an assessment of your individual condition.**



Brain Teasers Answers: 1. No, the truck will have lost weight because of the petrol used. 2. Dopey 3. The North Pole

## Quinoa & Mushroom Stuffed Capsicums

### Ingredients:

4 Red and Yellow Capsicums  
1 cup of cooked Quinoa  
1 small Onion, diced  
300gm Mushrooms, diced  
1 cup fresh Spinach, chopped  
2 cups of water  
2 cloves of Garlic, Crushed  
Chilli Powder, Cumin & Paprika  
¼ cup fresh Cilantro/Coriander  
2 Tbsp. Olive Oil  
Salt & Pepper



1. Preheat your oven to 200°C or 390°F, prepare a baking tray with baking paper or brush a thin layer of olive oil over the bottom.
2. Sauté oil over medium heat in a large frying pan. Add onions, garlic, chilli, cumin and paprika, salt and pepper and cook until onion and garlic begin to soften.
3. Add mushrooms to pan and cook for a few more minutes, stirring occasionally until mushrooms begin to brown slightly. Finally, add cooked quinoa and chopped spinach leaves and stir in other ingredients.
4. Slice capsicums lengthwise, into halves, removing seeds and stems. Fill with quinoa mixture. Set capsicums on the baking tray and cook for 25 minutes.

**Garnish with fresh coriander, lime and cracked black pepper.**



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