

essential



physio

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Understanding Referred Pain

Pain is one of the most complicated processes in the human body. You may have experienced this if you ever saw a physiotherapist for pain in one part of your body, and they started to treat an entirely different area. Some people are born with no sensation of pain at all, and amputees sometimes continue to feel pain where their limbs used to be. The complexity of pain is one of the reasons why physiotherapists conduct such a thorough physical examination before being able to determine the exact source of your pain.

Why is pain so complicated?

Unfortunately, we are still don't understand everything about the way pain is processed. Usually, when an injury or damage occurs to body tissues, a signal is sent to the brain, which begins to interpret this signal and creates the sensation of pain. Pain is thought to be a warning signal to let you know to avoid danger and pay attention to the injured body part. Occasionally this system goes a little haywire, and pain signals are sent when there is no damage or the location of the pain is misdirected.

Referred pain is the term used when pain is felt at a different location to the source that is sending the pain signal. There are many kinds of referred pain, and some are easier to explain than others.

What are the different types of referred pain?

In some cases, if it is a nerve that is sending the pain signal, then pain can be felt all along the length of the nerve. Patients often describe this as a sharp burning pain along the skin. One of the most common examples of this is sciatica, where the large nerve that runs down the back of the leg is irritated around the lower back. The source of the pain signal is near the spine. However, that pain follows a distinctive pattern down the leg.

In other cases, it is the muscles and not the nerves that are referring pain elsewhere. Muscular trigger points are taut bands that develop within muscle tissue that is undergoing abnormal stress. Poor posture, lack of movement, and overuse can cause muscles to develop areas of dysfunction. These trigger points can cause pain that radiates out in distinctive patterns. Trigger points are diagnosed as the source of pain if symptoms are reproduced when a therapist presses on a specific point.

If that wasn't confusing enough, we know that our internal organs also refer pain. Pain referred by internal organs is frequently described as a deep, ache, and usually not influenced by movements of the limbs or back.

Organs often distribute pain in patterns that are very obscure and sometimes don't even create any pain at their location. For example, kidney pain often feels like lower back pain. Tragically there have been patients who have failed to seek treatment in time as they mistook a serious condition for a simple backache.

There are many other fascinating aspects to pain, and understanding how it works is an important part of managing your symptoms. To understand how referred pain may be affecting you, chat to your physiotherapist who can help with any questions.



PHYSIOTIP

**MAINTAINING
FLEXIBILITY OF
YOUR JOINTS
AND MUSCLES
KEEPS THEM
HEALTHY.**

Physio Funnies

What exercise did the physiotherapist give to the Pirate?

Planks!

What exercise did the physiotherapist give to the Engineer?

Bridges!

What exercise did the physiotherapist give to the Farmer?

Calf Stretches!

Hamstring Tears

One of the biggest predictive factors for a hamstring tear is having had a previous hamstring tear. Full rehabilitation following a tear is essential for the best long term outcomes.



Common Running Injuries

Running is a great way to stay in shape, manage stress, and increase your overall wellbeing. However, it's not without its drawbacks. While being a low-risk activity, there are a few injuries that commonly affect runners. As running is a repetitive impact activity, most running injuries develop slowly and can be challenging to treat. Here are three of the most common conditions faced by runners.

1. Runner's Knee:

Runners' knee is a persistent pain on the inside of the knee caused by the dysfunctional movement of the kneecap during movement. The kneecap sits in a small groove at the centre of the knee and glides smoothly up and down as the knee bends and straightens. If something causes the kneecap to move abnormally, the surface

underneath can become damaged, irritated, and painful. The pain might be mild to start with; however, left untreated, runner's knee can make running too painful to continue.

2. Shin Splints:

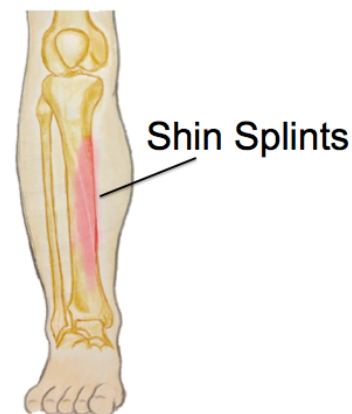
Shin splints is a common condition characterised by a recurring pain at the inside of the shin. While the cause of this condition is not always clear, it is usually due to repeated stress where the calf muscles attach to the tibia (shin bone). Why this becomes painful is likely due to a combination of factors that can be identified by your physiotherapist to help you get back on track as soon as possible.

3. Achilles Tendonitis:

The Achilles tendon is the thick tendon at the back of the ankle that attaches to the calf muscles. It is vital in providing the

propulsive force needed for running. If the stresses placed on the tendon exceed its strength, the tissues begin to breakdown and become painful. Treatment is focussed on helping the healthy tendon tissues to strengthen and adapt to new forces while allowing the damaged tissue to heal and regenerate.

None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your injury.



Basil Pesto Gnocchi

1. Prepare the pesto ahead of time by crushing garlic with salt and pepper in a pestle and mortar. Add the basil leaves and pine nuts and grind until a paste forms. Add the olive oil and Parmesan cheese, continue to blend ingredients and set pesto aside. Pesto can be stored in the fridge until ready to use.
2. Heat a medium-sized pot of salted water to high temperature and bring to the boil. Add gnocchi and cook until soft and gnocchi are floating. Strain gnocchi and set aside.
3. Add butter to a large frying pan heat to medium. Add gnocchi and cook until slightly brown and crispy. Stir gnocchi regularly to prevent burning.
4. In a separate frying pan, heat olive oil and fry sliced mushrooms and zucchini until soft and slightly browned. Remove from heat and stir through to cooked gnocchi.

Stir through basil pesto and garnish with rocket and Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

Ingredients

500g Fresh Gnocchi
4 large mushrooms, sliced
¼ Fresh Zucchini, sliced
50g Butter
1 Tbsp. Olive Oil
1 tsp. crushed Garlic
100g Shaved Parmesan Cheese
1 cup Rocket Leaves
Salt and Pepper

Pesto

1 clove of Garlic, peeled
Sea Salt
Ground Black Pepper
1 large bunch of Fresh Basil, diced
50g Pine Nuts
3 Tbsp. Olive Oil
50g Parmesan, finely ground



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