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Your Chiropractic Newsletter

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This newsletter is produced by Benjamin Brown, the Chiropractor from 'In Golden Health' in Eastwood.

Chiropractic News

Is it time for a wheel alignment?

If you look at a set of car tyres you can usually tell if the wheels of the car are properly aligned. If the wheel alignment is right then there is an even wear pattern on the tyres. If however, the tyres are not aligned, the tread on the outside or the inside of the tyre begins to wear at an increased rate. If this uneven wear continues, the tyres may fail to perform properly and will need to be replaced long before their time. The joints of our body can be likened to the tyres of our car. If the alignment and movement of your joints is not right then your joints will wear unevenly. Over time you will notice a decrease in the function of the misaligned joints, and decrease in your physical performance...



Osteoarthritis

A common name for the accumulated wear and tear that develops in joints as we age is 'Osteoarthritis' (OA). The word arthr-itis simply means 'arthro' pertaining to joints and 'itis' meaning inflammation. Together they combine to describe joint inflammation. Osteoarthritis can affect any moveable joint, however it is more common in the knees, hips, spine and hands. Osteoarthritis is characterised by the symptoms mentioned below:

- Pain
- Stiffness
- Tenderness
- Limitation of movement
- Crepitus (a crunching or grating sound or feeling)
- Swelling

Symptoms tend to begin gradually and worsen with time. As the joint space between the bones narrows due to loss of cartilage there may be deformity of the joint, as one side is often more affected than the other. For example, if the inner compartment is more affected than the outer, the knee may bow outwards. A variety of factors can affect the way OA progresses and the amount of disability it

causes. These include mechanical abnormalities (where the joint doesn't function normally), joint misalignment, obesity and poor muscle strength.

Some of the structural changes that occur in an osteoarthritic joint—the narrowing of the joint space and thickening of the bones—can be observed on an X-ray. These are known as radiological changes. However, radiological changes are not always observed in people with joint symptoms, and people with radiological changes do not always have symptoms. Cartilage does not show up on X-rays. Other tests, including ultrasound and MRI, are being used in research studies to see if OA can be diagnosed more accurately.

Are you at risk?

Osteoarthritis is the most common chronic joint disease, affecting 1.3 million Australians. It is a major cause of pain and disability. The disease commonly strikes after the age of 45 years and mostly affects people aged 65 years or over. The common risk factors are mentioned below:

- Being female
- Joint misalignment
- Joint injury or trauma
- Excess weight
- Repetitive joint-loading tasks

Do you have worn tyres?

Just like the wheels on your car, your joints won't necessarily last forever. As we age, the ability of our body to replace and repair cartilage in our joints decreases. As a result we lose some of our flexibility, elasticity, and our joints become less robust. However, you can do things to maximise the life of your joints. The great thing about the human body is that it provides cues and warning signs of joint damage. If we have injured a joint in any way the body will alert us to this issue via pain, joint clicking, associated muscle weakness, or swelling. How we respond to these warning signs is very important.

Get the advice of a tyre expert

Any sign of joint damage should be taken seriously. The earlier the situation is addressed, the better the outcome will be. You can continue to drive around on bald tyres if you wish, but if you need to stop suddenly your choice to ignore the damage may come back to haunt you. The pain associated with a slight injury today will go away eventually but the legacy of joint misalignment that may have resulted will gradually wear out a joint over time. If the injury was taken care of immediately, the body would be allowed to heal appropriately and joint integrity could be maintained for years to come. If your joints are saying 'lose some weight' or 'take care of that old netball injury' it's a good idea to listen. You may be able to squeeze out another 20,000 kms before you need to replace them...

General Health News

The constant flux of life

Clients often ask “What is it that causes my body to hurt or break down?”. The answer to this extremely complex question can be answered very simply – Stress. Stress is the factor that disrupts the balance and tips the scales toward disease and ill health. The body has mechanisms in place to maintain a set point. This set point is the point at which the body runs most efficiently. Body temperature for example is set at a specific point. Temperature changes above or below this set point result in changes in the way that the body functions. There are changes that occur in the body when we get too hot or too cold, these changes help to move us back toward this set point.



The many faces of stress

The reason that the word ‘stress’ can be used to explain almost all of life’s difficulties is that stress comes in many different forms:

Physical Stress

Physical stress includes some form of physical force or factor that has upset the body’s natural balance. This can be excess body weight that places strain on our bones or joints. External physical forces such as being hit by, or running into objects, the Earth, or other humans, can disrupt our health. Poor posture or awkward positions can place unnecessary strain on our skeletal structure. Wear and tear accumulates as we perform our daily activities, for this reason, working too hard and/or too long can also physically stress the body. Physical stress can be in the form of thermal stress, for example getting over-heated. Ultraviolet radiation and man made radiation also contribute to physical strain on the body.

Chemical Stress

Every day our body must perform thousands of chemical reactions. These reactions help us eliminate waste, digest our food, provide us with energy, repair tissues and so on and so fourth. The body has a pretty full work schedule each day. Unfortunately, man has created a whole bunch of other chemicals and substances that the body must contend with. These come in the form of pollution, pesticides/insecticides, food additives, toiletries etc. In addition to the manmade chemicals, nature throws various chemical stressors at us as well. Viruses, bacteria, mold and other creatures, while falling under the category of physical stressors, can also contribute to the chemical load that the body must adapt and deal with.

Emotional Stress

Emotional stress is any type of stress that disrupts our thought patterns and causes our emotions to become overwhelming. As our body and mind cannot be separated, any thing that causes mental or emotional stress will also have an impact on the function of the body. Our emotional stress can be present, past or future oriented. We may be stressed out about how our children are going to perform in the upcoming HSC exams, or we may be worried about our current financial situation. Unresolved hurts from the past may continually pop into our conscious mind and disrupt our daily functioning.

If you push it too far something will break...

Whilst humans are quite robust we are not indestructible. Just like a bone that has borne a load that is too great, the body will break if a stressor exceeds its buffering capacity. You can stress your body to a point and the body's inbuilt safety mechanisms will shunt you back toward your balance point. If however, you expose yourself to extremely large stressors or stress your body for prolonged periods, the ability of your body to guide you back to your balance point diminishes. This point where we have exceeded our body's natural mechanisms is where the real damage starts to occur...

Heed the warning signs and take action!

If you take the time to listen, you will find that your body is providing a constant stream of feedback regarding your health. You may find that right this minute your body is feeling thirsty. This is your cue from the body to drink some water. Right this minute your left ankle may be throbbing. This may tell you that you need to move or stretch the muscles surrounding your ankle joint. It may highlight that your strained your ankle while playing soccer on the weekend. It may be a problem that you had when you were a teenager that never quite went away. The messages are always there should you choose to start listening. By listening you are given clues on how to restore balance. The majority of the time this can be done with out the help of others. However, sometimes the clues don't make sense or the action required to restore balance requires the input of a health care practitioner. In this instance, seek the correct advice, get some help and get back to a point where you feel confident that you can manage your own health.

Ben's hours:	Tuesdays	7-5pm
	Thursdays	9-8pm
	Saturdays	9-5pm

To be taken off this mailing list, simply contact Ben at: moving_towards_balance@hotmail.com or contact 'In Golden Health' on 9804 1414