CHIROPRACTIC FIRST

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CHIROPRACTORS

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B.App.Sc(Chiro) M.Sc.Chiro(Paeds)
Paediatric Chiropractor (AICE 2022)

Dr Jayme-Lee Smith
B.Sc(Chiro), B.Chiro

OFFICE STAFF

Lynda Riley (Office Manager)

Maggie Sturges (Chiropractic Assistant

OFFICE HOURS

Monday	
9:00am–12:30pm	2:30pm–6:30pm
Tuesday	2:30pm–6:30pm
Wednesday	
9:00am–12:30pm	2:30pm–6:15pm
Thursday	
8:15am–12:00pm	2:00pm–6:00pm
Friday	9:00am–12:00pm

REMEMBER for best results:

- Stay well hydrated and choose foods that heal.
- Move frequently, including after your adjustment.
- Take 5 slow deep breaths if you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Repeat, "I have a marvellous capacity to heal."

YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

MARCH/APRIL 2024

TRIGGER POINTS

SMOKING AND BACK PAIN

FOOD CRAVINGS

SYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE

Discovering vitality: the power of good posture

"Pull your shoulders back!" "Stand up straight!" You've probably heard these words before, but is there any wisdom in them? Or are they from a bygone era fixated on a prim and proper appearance? It's an important question in today's world where we spend hours hunched over computers and sitting.

Your posture affects your entire body. Recognising the benefits of good posture and the drawbacks of poor posture can help you make better choices to improve your habits and health. Let's delve into these aspects.

1 Strength, movement and support

Good posture maintains your spinal curves. It's not about sitting rigidly upright, because your spine is naturally curved. These natural curves absorb and spread physical strain, and enable efficient movement. They protect and promote nerve function and provide a foundation that connects and supports muscles, ligaments, and other bones. And this is just the spine - every joint and skeletal muscle contributes to posture.

That's why good posture helps prevent muscle strain and overuse, which reduces shoulder, back, and neck pain and other discomfort. From a chiropractic perspective, good posture keeps the bones and joints, including the spine, in correct alignment. But posture impacts more than the musculoskeletal system.

2 Breathing and lung health

When you breathe in, your rib cage expands, helping to draw air into your lungs. But if you slouch or hunch over, it constricts your rib cage. This makes it harder to breathe because it reduces how much air your lungs can take in. So, sitting up straight and expanding your chest helps you breathe better.

Poor posture not only hampers your ability to breathe properly, but also leads to long-term complications. Increased kyphosis, the outward curve of the middle back, contributes to a decline in lung function over time. Good posture makes it easier to inhale and exhale for optimal breathing.

3 Stress, confidence and mood

The benefits of good posture reach beyond physical well-being. When you're feeling stressed, sitting up correctly can make a difference. Press your lower back against the back of the seat, align your head above your shoulders, and let your shoulders relax, naturally following gravity. Why? Correct posture can enhance self-esteem, reduce negativity and improve mood.

The effects of your posture are far-reaching and critical. That's why we may provide exercise and advice about how you sit or stand; or advise you to take time away from digital devices. If you have any concerns, ask us for a postural assessment.

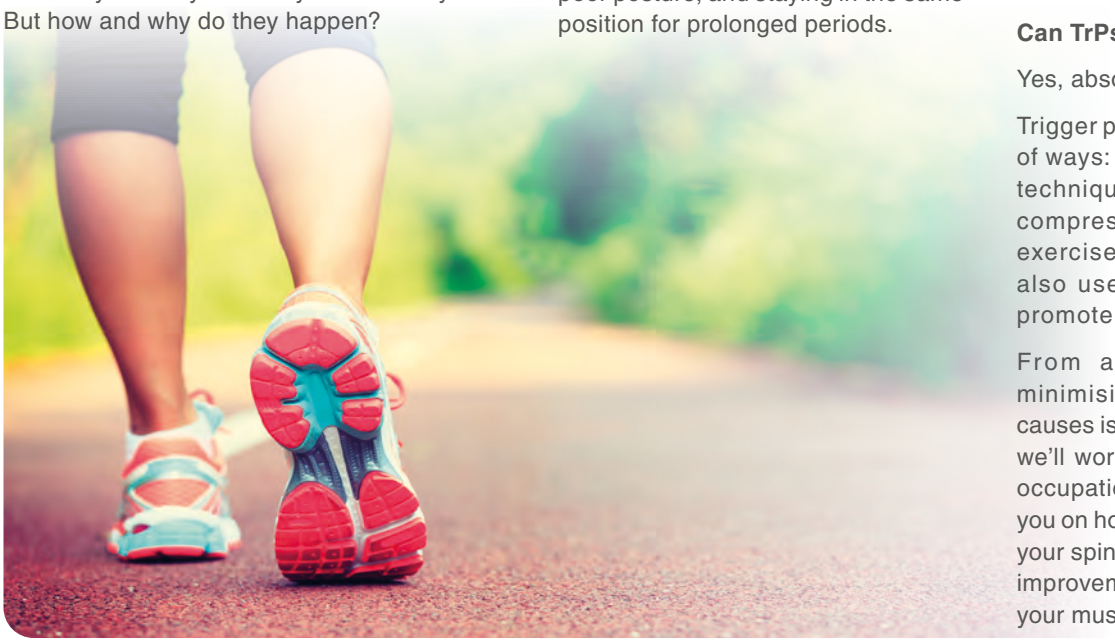
Your posture is more important than you might think. Good posture enhances your well-being and is essential for a healthy lifestyle.

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

Trigger points: causes and chiropractic care

Have you ever felt a tight 'knot' in your muscle - a spot that feels tender and solid to touch? When pressed, it may cause pain, tingling, or burning in another area. These are called trigger points, myofascial trigger points, or TrPs for short.

TrPs are generally defined by some common features: a taut band of muscle, a hypersensitive spot, and referred pain. In other words, that tender point that sits within a firm muscle and when pressed, sends pain or other sensations to other areas in your body. And they can be nasty! But how and why do they happen?



What causes TrPs?

Many activities can strain muscle fibres, causing contraction over time, and leading to the development of trigger points. These actions include:

- sudden injuries such as falls or sprains
- small repetitive movements like typing
- long-term high-impact activities like jogging and running
- everyday actions like consistently carrying heavy items
- poor posture, and staying in the same position for prolonged periods.

Where do TrPs commonly occur?

TrPs are common and often affect the muscles in your neck, shoulders, upper and lower back, as these areas often bear the impact of repetitive movements and tension.

These trigger points are associated with shoulder issues, neck and back pain, as well as headaches, including migraines and tension-type headaches. They can also develop in arthritic knees, and tend to increase after a stroke.

Can TrPs be prevented or treated?

Yes, absolutely!

Trigger points may be treated in a variety of ways: these typically include manual techniques like massage, trigger point compression, and targeted stretching exercises. Relaxation techniques are also used to alleviate symptoms and promote healing.

From a chiropractic perspective, minimising or removing the cause or causes is essential. If your posture is poor, we'll work with you to improve it. If your occupation carries risks, we can advise you on how to lessen them. We may adjust your spine and, if needed, other joints. An improvement in nerve function may help your muscles to relax.

TEST YOUR GENERAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Can you fill in the blanks in the following sentences?

1. Craving fatty food is not just about taste; it appears that the ___ can 'tell' the _____ what the body wants or needs.

2. Many activities can strain muscle fibres, which can make them contract over time, leading to the development of _____ _____.

3. The _____ _____ _____ (SNS) prepares you to respond to stress or danger - for "fight or flight."

4. The _____ _____ _____ (PNS) is also referred to as the "rest and digest" system.

5. ____ _____ helps prevent muscle strain and overuse, which reduces shoulder, back, and neck pain and other discomfort.

6. ____ _____ not only hampers your ability to breathe properly, but also leads to long-term complications.

7. Smoking cigarettes reduces _____ ____ to your spine, depriving it of essential nutrients.

8. _____ not only causes physical changes that worsen back pain but also affects mental well-being.

9. Sometimes your food cravings might actually be masking thirst, so staying _____can reduce overeating.

10. People with low back pain often have elevated levels of _____,

Hint: these sentences can be found in the articles in this newsletter.

Peach and 'cream' ice blocks

These homemade ice blocks are not only tasty and easy to make, but healthy too. They're perfect for dessert or a cool treat after school, and will satisfy any sweet cravings!

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh chopped peeled peaches
- 2 Tblsp runny honey or maple syrup
- ¾ cup of unsweetened Greek yoghurt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ cup milk (cow, almond, soy, coconut)

**If you're short on time you can skip the layering step. You can also substitute any fruit of choice.*

Instructions

1. Place peaches and 1 tablespoon of honey or maple syrup into a blender or food processor and blend until puréed. Place one third of mixture into a small jug and the remainder into a large bowl.
2. Place remaining ingredients into the blender and process until combined. Add to the peach mixture in the large bowl and swirl together gently.
3. To make the first layer, pour the peach mixture from the small jug evenly into 8 ice block moulds and freeze until semi-solid (about 30 minutes).
4. Top up the moulds with the yoghurt and peach mixture and freeze until semi-solid, add ice block sticks and freeze for 8-10¬ hours.

Why do we have food cravings?

Our brains are complicated… but our needs are simple. We respond to fatty, sugary, salty foods with immediate, short-term feelings of pleasure, and this can present itself as cravings for unhealthy foods. Unfortunately this can have a serious impact on our health.

A food craving usually means a desire for food which is unrelated to any nutritional need or hunger. Food cravings are more tied in with habits, pleasure and emotions, than with nourishment. We don't crave vitamin tablets… we crave donuts!

Several studies in 2022 on mice have produced interesting results. A study from Columbia University discovered that craving fatty food is not just about taste; it appears that the gut can 'tell' the brain what the body wants or needs. Another study from the University of Pittsburgh found that microbes in the gut of animals may affect their food choices by making substances that create cravings.

These findings suggest that although we can influence our thoughts about food, we have less control over how our gut guides cravings. It's uncertain how this will help fight obesity, but gaining insights into the reasons behind cravings may lead to advances in weight management and disease prevention. The gut-brain connection is complex and further research is needed.

Until we have those answers, there are some practical ways food cravings can be controlled:

- Distraction – if you occupy your mind with another task or purpose, your desire to snack can reduce.
- Find alternatives – there may be more healthy options that satisfy your cravings – a piece of fruit or yoghurt. Preparing and planning for healthy snacks in advance can help.
- Stay hydrated – sometimes your food cravings might actually be masking thirst, so simply having a glass of water can reduce overeating.

Mindfulness – taking the time to consider whether you're actually hungry, whether it's a habit (like a cake with coffee), emotional, or other reasons for choosing unhealthy food.

Sympathetic dominance: balancing strategies

Your nervous system manages everything in your body — actions, thoughts, sensations, and how you interact with the world. It has sympathetic and parasympathetic branches that enable you to respond to threats, or relax and heal.

Let's explore this further.

You can think of these branches as the accelerator and brake, working together to keep your body balanced and functioning correctly.

The sympathetic nervous system (SNS) is like the accelerator, preparing you to respond to stress or danger — for "fight or flight." It increases your heart rate and blood pressure, slows digestion, redirects blood flow to the muscles, and triggers the release of glucose for extra energy.

The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) is like the brake, also referred to as the "rest and digest" system. The PNS conserves energy and promotes relaxation and recovery. It reduces heart rate and blood pressure, supports digestion, fertility, and repair.

Sometimes, the accelerator 'sticks'— this happens when the sympathetic system becomes overly active. The nervous system is thrown out of balance and leads to a state known as sympathetic dominance.

The causes vary, but it's often triggered by the stressors of modern life, such as being constantly busy, overwork, financial struggles, mental health challenges, and physical illness. As a result, we become trapped in a survival loop, neglecting relaxation and healing.

From a chiropractic perspective, sympathetic dominance may cause issues such as: anxiety, digestive problems, fatigue, headaches, high blood pressure, increased heart rate or palpitations, low mood, physical tension and discomfort, shortness of breath, trouble sleeping.

These symptoms can occur with various other health issues, so seeking professional advice is essential. If you do have sympathetic dominance, there are steps you can take to recover. Start by addressing the leading cause: ongoing stress. Find the sources of stress in your life and limit its impact.

Here are some practical lifestyle tips to bring back balance in your life:

- Practice mind-body techniques: meditation and deep-breathing can promote relaxation.
- Find relaxation through hobbies and activities you enjoy.
- Prioritise sleep – to be healthy, you must sleep well.
- Follow a wholefood, balanced diet.
- Limit your caffeine and alcohol intake.
- Quit smoking.
- Exercise regularly with gentle activities like: walking, yoga, Tai Chi, swimming, light resistance training, and flexibility exercises.

Feel free to inquire about sympathetic dominance and discovering the underlying reasons behind your symptoms.

APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Your next appointment is on _____ at _____
Date Time

Smoke signals: the link between smoking and back pain

By now, most people know the dangers of cigarette smoking. It's a habit that increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease, but did you know that it's also linked to back pain? The connection may seem odd at first, so let's examine how and why cigarette smoking could be causing or worsening your discomfort.

Chronic inflammation

Tobacco smoke contains over 7,000 chemicals. Many of which are known to harm your body in various ways; including some which can affect your back. For example, smoking can worsen chronic inflammation, a prolonged bodily response which is linked to back problems.

Chronic inflammation can lead to the breakdown of proteins, essential for muscle strength and endurance, weakening muscles and contributing to pain and discomfort. People with low back pain often have elevated levels of inflammation, making smoking a risk factor for aggravating back issues.

Bone weakness

Recent evidence demonstrates that tobacco smoking causes lower bone mass, increasing the risk of osteoporosis and fracture.

This means even a cough or a minor fall can result in bone fractures, including those in your spine. However, the impact of weakened bones extends beyond fractures; osteoporosis can cause skeletal deformities, joint issues, and increased muscle tension. Severe back pain is a common symptom for people who have this condition.

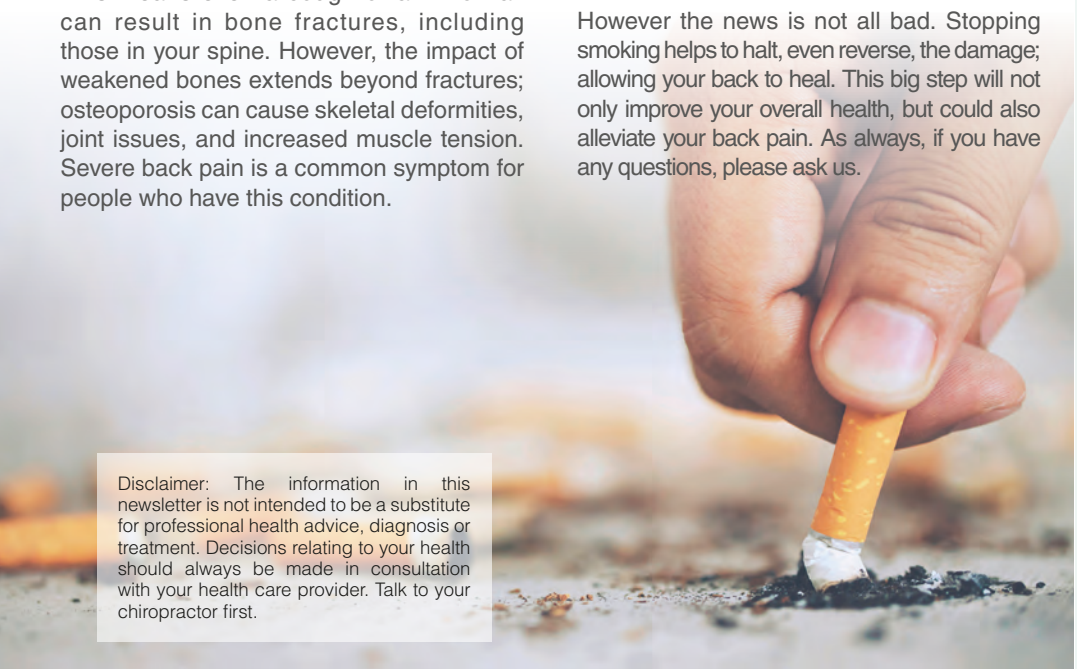
Smoking cigarettes also slows down the healing of fractures. The more you smoke, and the longer you smoke, the worse these effects become, although more studies are needed to find out exactly why. Smoking also leads to more complications during medical treatments, making recovery and hospital stays longer.

Blood circulation

Smoking cigarettes reduces blood flow to your spine, depriving it of essential nutrients. As a consequence, the discs, the cushioning between your vertebrae, can harden and tear. Joint cartilage deteriorates, reducing shock absorption, and lubrication decreases. The overall result is accelerated wear on bones, discs, and joints, and inadequate healing. This combination can lead to degeneration, damage, dysfunction, and pain.

Smoking not only causes physical changes that worsen back pain but also affects mental well-being. Stress, especially, increases the chances of long-term low back pain, and the more stressed you are, the higher the risk. Some people turn to smoking to find relaxation through the nicotine hit. However, once the calming effect fades, stress-like symptoms such as anger, anxiety, frustration, and irritability can emerge. This sets up a harmful cycle of stress, smoking, and pain.

However the news is not all bad. Stopping smoking helps to halt, even reverse, the damage; allowing your back to heal. This big step will not only improve your overall health, but could also alleviate your back pain. As always, if you have any questions, please ask us.



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. gut, brain nervous system
2. trigger points
3. sympathetic nervous system
4. parasympathetic
5. good posture
6. poor posture
7. blood flow
8. smoking
9. hydrated
10. inflammation

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PRACTICE UPDATE

Now that 2024 is well underway we hope that you are making progress in the life areas that matter most to you. Health, or as we like to refer to it, vitality, is much more than lack of pain and disease. The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

For us, reading and sewing are enjoyable methods to improving our mental well-being.

I've always loved to read. A visit to the public library on Friday afternoons was one of my childhood delights. Our library cards entitled us to 10 books each, but if my sisters didn't take their quota I'd put more on my pile. All this reading contributed to a love for learning. It's a lifetime habit I cherish.

In the past month I've reread James Clear "Atomic Habits", I've devoured "The House that Joy Built", about the transformative power of finding joy through creativity, by Australian author Holly Ringland, romped through "The Bookbinder of Jericho", the companion story to the bestseller "The Dictionary of Lost Words" by Pip Williams, another fabulous Australian author. And almost finished Seth Godin's latest missive "The Song of Significance".

Dr Jayme-Lee likes to juggle at least 2 books at a time. Usually, a fiction book and a non-fiction title. Recently she read the latest in the 'Crescent City' series, a contemporary fantasy tale that is hard to put down, and in complete contrast "The Reality Check" by Dr Heidi Haavik, an award-winning neuroscientist and Chiropractor explaining how adjusting your spine impacts your brain, leading to optimal health and wellbeing.

Maggie is continuing to master Japanese language. Her reading pile is heavy with Japanese workbooks for vocabulary and kanji. Kanji refers to Chinese characters used to write Japanese – how fascinating.

Lynda's love of sewing and creative craft means that she'd rather be at her sewing machine than have her head in a book. She could make an amazing picture book of all the beautiful quilts she has produced.

Are you a reader? If so we'd love you to share what you have been reading. And if not, is there something you're listening to or watching that lights you up?