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NICKY SNAZELL'S

Wellness & Physiotherapy Newsletter

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Exercise. Even the mention of the word usually causes a groan. We all have our reasons, or excuses, for not exercising, but mainly it's because we can easily imagine the short term pain, but not easily visualise the long term benefits.

We won't even try to make it sound like dedicated and consistent exercise is easy, because for it to be of any benefit, you have to put some effort in. For most, that's enough to go no further. This is at great personal cost to you later in life though. It will cost you. So what are the benefits of exercise?

- Done at the correct level, it's anti-ageing
- It reduces fat and improves appearance
- It makes you happier
- It's good for mental health, a natural anti-depressant
- It strengthens muscles, which helps you have a happier and more active life
- Stronger muscles also mean joints move more easily with less pain.
- Correct exercise levels help protect joints from arthritis and strengthen bones to help prevent bone thinning.
- It improves circulation
- It helps prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, strokes and obesity
- It stretches the fascia and helps maintain elasticity, easing movement and reducing pain
- It improves the immune system.

Many of the bad things exercise can help with are on the increase, blighting many lives prematurely. We can't force you to exercise, but we would strongly advise you to make regular exercise a part of your life now, so that you can help yourself have a much better later life and help prevent chronic diseases.

If you want advice on what to do, then we have great Sports Therapists who would be happy to help.

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Charities

The clinic is now supporting two charities:

[Blue Cross](#)

In line with our love of animals, we want to help provide aid to horses, dogs and cats.

[Staffordshire Wildlife Trust](#)

We chose this as we want to positively help the environment. Planting trees and providing healthy environments for endangered species is a positive contribution to the planet.

Exercise

I am always being asked about exercise as we age.

As we age, it becomes ever more necessary to avoid injuries and keep exercising – and, ideally, still really enjoy fitness. One of the key secrets lies in the core muscles of the torso, and the importance of keeping a good posture and strong core is well known by Yoga, Chi Kung, Tai Chi, and Pilates instructors. It's the impact on more brittle joints as we age that gets running such bad press. It is not just the running, but the *way* we run and what we run *on* that damages us.



Gentle arts such as Chi Kung, Tai Chi, and Yoga involve the discipline of listening to the body's wisdom, as well as stretching, balancing, and strengthening every day in order to bring back youthfulness to our aging bodies. Tai Chi is just one of the softer antiaging classes I attended. The beauty and grace of these exercises are truly breath-taking to see, and very inspiring.

I learnt that my arms could float effortlessly – like water through pipes – and yet appear to be working really hard at the same time. I still practice a handful of movements, to help with balance and I try to remind myself that being so busy 'doing' and not 'being' can be bad for both health and mind.

Good Posture Is Important

I find that when patients get problems with their back, it is nearly always linked to poor posture at work, or poor biomechanics whilst running. The arch

is in our foot for a reason; its ligaments and tendons need to be elastic in order to shock absorb our steps on tarmac. When we gracefully walk and run with focus, the arch becomes a great big softening lever, and our body thanks us for it.

However, sadly with aging and lacking the shock absorbency of youth, even if you run or jump with excellent posture, the pounding can still irritate degenerate joints and discs. Hence common sense needs to prevail, if you get sore after sports involving running then redirect your energy to more strengthening work.

I apply body posture awareness to all my fitness routines. Most importantly, it helps to minimise injury, as I am now at an age where I find if I run my back grumbles. I need to cherish my joints so that I may be like my friends and parents who gym/swim into their eighties and early nineties.

If you find running irritates your back, try Nordic pole walking, swimming or cycling.

Stretch First

Stretching is important for your connective tissues, ligaments, and tendons to feel elastic. Ongoing research is showing how useful it really is to stretch muscles in preventing injury, as that is essential for our connective tissue (bubble wrap).



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Several new ideas use dynamic movements in order to stretch and only after warming up with activity first. With a sprinting run, it really is



necessary to walk, then jog first, with a stretching session afterwards. Experts say that the constant coiling and uncoiling in a rhythmical action (for example, when running) can only work properly with your healthy, elastic, energy efficient rubber bands (your tendons and ligaments) doing this for you.

Moreover, new research states that the immune system and your emotions respond favourably to more flexible connective tissue.

We know that activities such as jogging, cycling and weight training can strengthen bone integrity, our muscles, and the resilience of blood vessels. It also very importantly builds a relationship with our breath, the most elemental aspect of being alive. This, in turn, stills our mind.

Kundalini Yoga is all about training your mind whilst getting a more flexible spine, and it became fashionable to westerners when an Indian chap called Yogi BhaJan brought it to the hippy Californians in 1969.

The typical Yoga pose of sitting with the legs crossed is not easy for everyone, so I suggest starting gently, with a little cushion under the bum, and your legs gently crossed, as able.

Just to add insult to injury for those who are less flexible, this is known as the EASY POSE. The hand position you're meant to do in this pose – with the first finger to the thumb – is a big thing, and it's called the Gyan Mudra. It is important to remember this part of the pose, as it stops you from reaching for snacks whilst doing Yoga.

Awaken Your Kundalini

Now, we have the same old same old pulling in of the tummy button, which is universal throughout Pilates, Tai Chi, and Yoga, and is so important. Ensure that you also tighten up your buttocks and the pelvic floor; this area in particular is very important to work as we age. As an aside, this is said to be where the Kundalini energy is curled up, and contracting these muscles wakes it up. It is called performing a 'root lock'.



Maintain Movement As Long As You Can

There are all kinds of research studies from all around the world exploring how we should maintain our skilled, dynamic movement in sport as long as we can. Although, you may not be able to do any sport anymore, here is the good news. Professor Jim Levine at the Mayo Clinic, USA, is an obesity specialist in movement, and he says that movement is the secret of

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longevity – though he calls it ‘non-exercise activity thermogenesis’ (NEAT). This is the calories we burn up with the activities of daily living. In general, we need to move every half an hour in order to keep our fuels moving through our body efficiently. That’s right, just moving around a little regularly will help your health.

Sedentariness is a killer: the lipoprotein lipase enzyme drops on being still, so fewer blood fats are available for fuel and you end up getting unhealthy sugar spikes in the blood after eating.

Researchers used fidget pants to find out how much you move: NEAT pants have multiple sensors and accelerometers in to measure this. Dunstan et al. (2012) looked in-depth into the physiology of sitting, and they concluded that short bursts of activity are enough to help blood sugar levels keep you in a healthier state.

**Being Sedentary Is A
Killer**

What Time of the Day is Best to Exercise?

When should you exercise? They usually say first thing is a nice mood elevator. However, in terms of physiology, they say mid-day till 7 p.m. is best. In 2005, some research carried out at Liverpool John Moore’s University looked at doing exercise at 5 a.m., 11 a.m., 5 p.m., and 11 p.m., and they confirmed that mid-day to 7 p.m. is the best time.

What Do Our Genes Dictate About Exercise?

Homo sapiens have a long evolutionary history; we are the products of thousands of generations of a species that for most of its existence has lived briefly and in danger. Life for a caveman or woman was

generally nasty, horrifically scary, and short. To keep in shape they didn’t ‘exercise’ in their Pilates classes, wearing the latest caveman fur thong; they simply had to do a wide range of different activities to help ensure that they survived and passed on their genes.

Our bodies and our genes were forged by the demands of the environment in which they – the hunter-gatherers – lived. As you’ll discover if you read *Fast Exercise* by Michael Mosley, there is compelling evidence that a hunter-gatherer approach is also good for our more cosseted bodies.



Get Moving and Research Agrees

We need to be active, but not *too* active; we benefit most from short bursts of intense activity, and we need rest days to recover or we’ll undo all the good work. Especially as when we get older, recovery takes longer. As the authors of ‘Achieving Hunter-gatherer fitness in the 21st Century’, a paper in the *American Journal of Medicine*, point out:

“Hunter-gatherers would have likely alternated difficult days with less demanding days when possible. The same pattern of alternating a strenuous workout one day with an easy one the next day produces higher levels of fitness with lower rates of injury... The natural cross training that was a mandatory aspect of life as a hunter-gatherer improves performance across many athletic disciplines” (O’Keefe et al., 2010).

So what are the characteristics of a prehistoric hunter-gatherer fitness program? Well, they include short bursts of moderate to high intensity exercise (20 seconds to a minute) interspersed with rest and

Climate Change—A Wellbeing Concern For Us All

Even with advancing medical science, humans cannot be well in a sick society or on a sick planet. David Attenborough, a hugely respected man, aired a show recently about climate change, which really should have every person alive sitting up and taking note. He stated that we only have 10 years to fix the problem and save life as we know it. He also addressed the world leaders at the climate change conference and left them with the warning **'the continuation of civilisation is in your hands'**.

And yet politicians were subsequently on TV arguing about climate change, one stating that MP's would be far too busy for the next 5 years sorting out Brexit, to do much on climate change. This kind of intransigence

sadly reflects exactly what has happened over the last few decades, despite numerous warnings from scientists. Only 5 EU countries



have achieved even 50% of their Paris commitments made as recently as 2015. The UK should be proud to be the best of any big country, but even so only achieved a 3.5% reduction. It's not enough and it's not fast enough.

This topic is, however, highly debated with strong views on both sides and as with all things we have to recognize there are political and ultimately financial motives involved.

The BBC program stated that we have no more than 10 years to halt and reverse the damage done by humans. Even so it will be like trying to stop a train doing 100 mph by putting your hands up and saying stop.

If we reach a tipping point, such as melting the permafrost and releasing untold quantities of methane into the atmosphere, which is 86 times worse than carbon dioxide, then the future may be bleak.

As an adult, I felt ashamed that children of the world have felt the need to protest about their future, which is under threat because of the actions of older generations and the lack of response and intransigence of our rulers.

If you are a parent, how are you going to explain to your child that they may live a short life because our generation destroyed the planet?

Whatever you view, what we can't ignore is that the ice caps are melting and sea levels are rising. The USA now has a new type of refugee caused by this. In Louisiana, they are losing an area equivalent to a football pitch every hour. It is estimated over 1 billion people world wide will be displaced by this problem.

Ultimately, this problem is something that we all have to take a responsibility for and we all have to take positive action. If not for us, then for the next generations.

What Can We Do?

For many, the problem may seem so vast, that we alone can do nothing. But with help and information all of us can do a lot. For example, the average UK person is responsible for over 9 tons of carbon dioxide per year. Cars, planes, food, energy. Everything we do needs energy and the main contributor to greenhouse gases is burning fossil fuels.

We need to burn less. We need to plant more trees as trees absorb carbon dioxide. We need to walk or cycle short journeys instead of drive. Even a small vegetable plot or buying local produce in season saves food being shipped across the world. One report estimates the UK could halve its carbon footprint just by reducing waste on food, clothing and electronics. In Sweden there is a 'don't fly in 2019' campaign.

None of us are perfect and not all ideas will appeal, but there is always something that each of us can do. The more we think about it, the more we will realise it is possible.

There is no Plan B. We All Need To Think About That.

Exercise

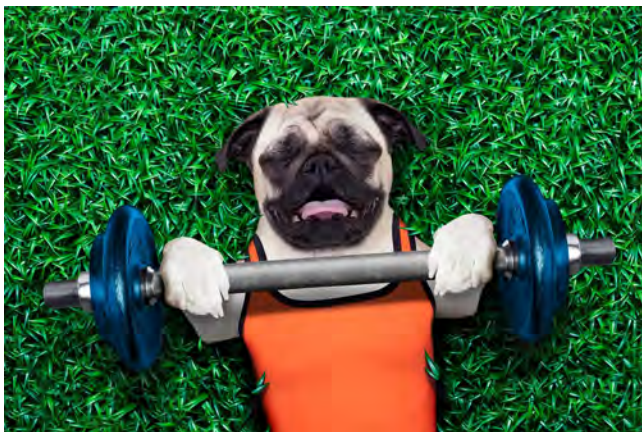
recovery, 2-3 times a week. Just as long as they're regular sessions of strength and flexibility-building. Hunter-gatherers had to chop wood, gather veg and nuts, climb trees, and carry children, or chase food.

Their 'exercise' was done outdoors, as their caves were likely to be dark and cramped, so they were regularly exposed to sunlight, which gives the skin a chance to generate vitamin D, a vital hormone. Many of us – particularly those who live in the northern hemisphere – are chronically short of vitamin D.

Some people find exercise much easier to do in a social setting, as self-motivation can be poor. We are intensely social creatures, and doing exercise together is a good way of ensuring that we do it at all. Hence bowling and golf is increasingly popular after retirement.

3 Minute Bursts

Jamie Timmins, a professor of Aging Biology, also works at Centre for Olympic Studies and Research, one of the leading sports research centres in the UK. He worked with Dr Mosley on the TV documentary about 3 min bursts of high impact activity at any age, telling him that if he was prepared to give it a go, he was confident that in just four weeks he would see significant changes in his health and his biochemistry.



“Since 2011, HIT has really taken off but the principles remain simple [and time-efficient]: do 3-10 minutes of exercise a week, take lots of rests but pushing yourself

hard enough to get your heart pumping” (FastExercise.com). It is said to help with getting slimmer, strength, fitness, and insulin sensitivity. The concept is simple, and in the *Fast Exercise* book, there are many workouts to play with (Mosley, 2013).

“I got myself properly tested and then I went for it. The results were a revelation” (Mosley, FastExercises.com).

Of course, there's a bit more to staying thin than that, as it also matters what you do when you're *not* exercising. Exercise, even with the HIT style, will just turn into a SHIT outcome if you're sitting down for hours, day in, day out. As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, the concept of youthful activity and moving more is called 'NEAT' – non-exercise activity thermogenesis – and this is, as it says, the amount of energy you burn in everyday activities that are not considered exercise.

How Much Should We Exercise?

We also know – from summarising lots of research studies that often feature opposing views – that very simplistically, up to an hour's exercise a day improves mortality rate.

In a big international study, “1,000 people were asked to exercise four hours a week for 20 weeks. Their aerobic fitness was measured before and after starting this regime and the results were striking. Although 15% of people made huge strides, 20% showed no real improvement at all and 30% showed no improvement in insulin sensitivity. “There is no suggestion that the non-responders weren't exercising properly, it was simply that the exercise they were doing was not making them any aerobically fitter. [Scientists] investigated the reasons for these variations and discovered that much of the difference could be traced to just 11 genes” (BBC website).

Prof Jamie Timmins' team have a DNA test to predict an individual's response to exercise, though this kind of genetic test is still in its infancy.

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Culture, upbringing, and partners will also impact the compliance to any exercise, and if you only ever hobble 10 yards, being asked to walk half an hour a day will be disastrous. Always think about how much work you can achieve before the pain comes on, and tell your therapist. A good exercise prescription takes into account your tolerance, personality, and current capacity. Some people can hardly walk without pain, so they need to take several tiny walks a day, whereas someone else could go on three long walks a week. For those with little capacity, progression takes longer until you get to your specific goals of pain free activities.

There is increasing exercise research pointing to the importance of keeping the duration of holding a position under ten seconds, and building endurance with repetitions, rather than increasing the duration of the holds – this avoids fatigue. Near infrared spectroscopy of the muscles show that this is the best way to build up the endurance without the muscles cramping from oxygen starvation and acid build-up, not to mention tearing.

What have We Learnt?

The facts are stacked heavily in favour of regular exercise.

Revisit page 1 and see the list of benefits. All great positive reasons to get active. Simply put, regular exercise will give you a healthier and happier life.

If you haven't got past first base, then you probably need some guidance and encouragement, so that you set realistic goals and don't injure yourself at the starting gate.

We have great Sports Therapists who can help you devise a sensible program and show you how to exercise in the best way and to help avoid needless injuries.

Sports Therapist or Physiotherapist?

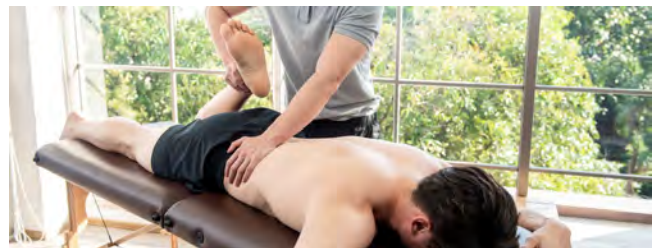
At our clinic we have both Sports Therapists and Physiotherapists and it will probably confuse you as to why we suggest one type of therapist before the other.

Physiotherapists are trained to cover acute and chronic injuries to the structure of the body (MSK) and how to recognise the multitude of medical conditions with which they could be faced with in a hospital.

Sports Therapists are trained to deal with acute trauma, typically as would be found pitch side. In this situation at a major club, a Sports Therapist would work alongside a medical Doctor and Physiotherapist.

Recently I discussed roles with an Olympics Physiotherapist, and he felt Sports Therapists were excellent at pitch side care, having good relationships with the players. They would routinely deal with acute trauma and CPR. They are used to assess essentially healthy individuals with an acute injury.

They can diagnose sports injuries and prescribe complex rehabilitation programs to aid recovery. They know when and how much sport to return to as the injury heals and have knowledge of massage, nutrition, preventative care and how to stay well.



Physiotherapists are not able to prescribe sports specific rehabilitation programs, unless trained post graduate in sports medicine. They can however triage sports injuries, head injuries, spinal problems, neurological problems, respiratory and rheumatological problems.

A Physiotherapist will often triage then refer a patient on to a Sports Therapist for massage and rehab.

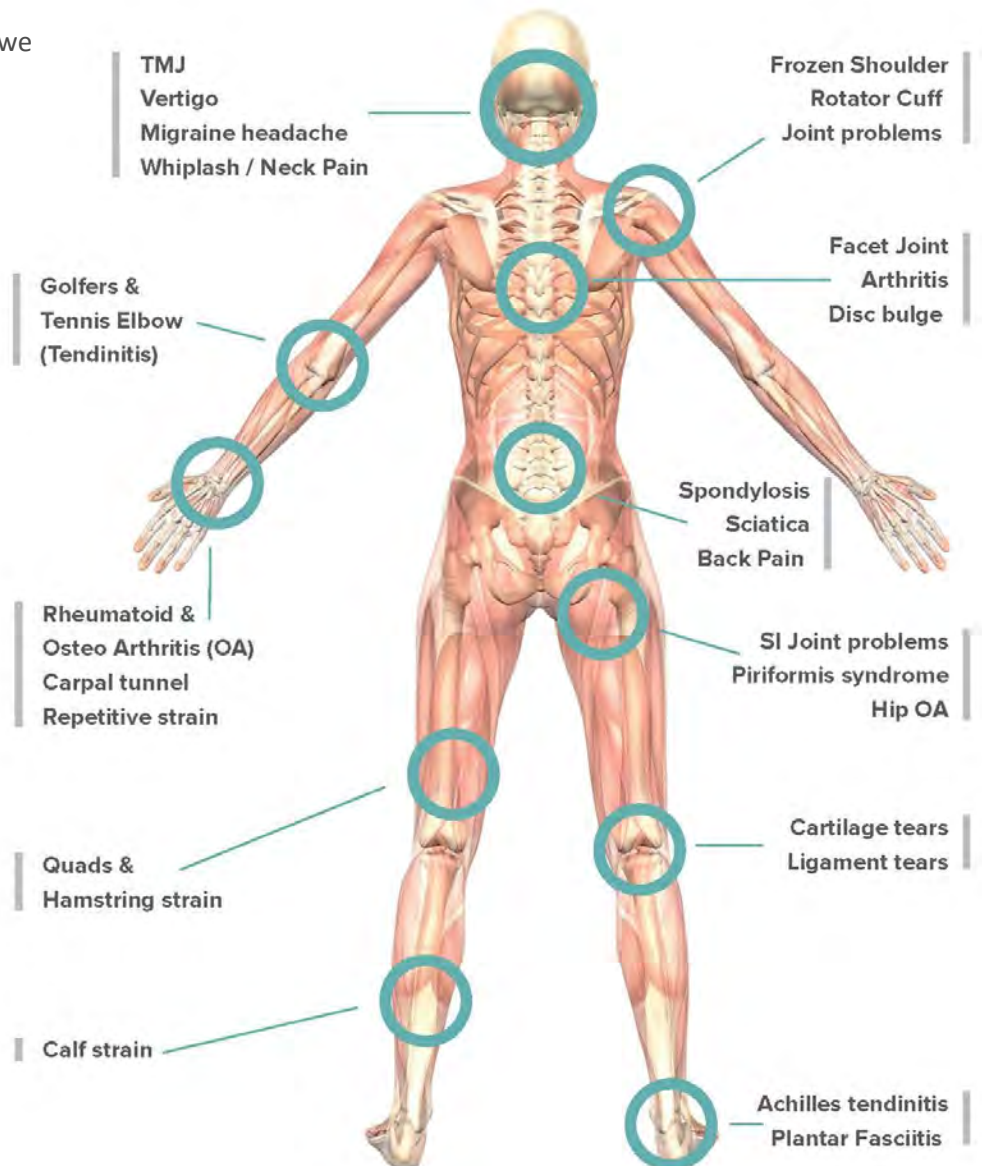
What We Do At Our Clinic

Not a month goes by without a number of our patients commenting that they were not aware of all the things we do here and if only they had known they would have booked in sooner.

It's impossible to list everything we do in this small space and the graphic below only gives a sample. In simple terms, if you have a problem with a muscle, tendon, ligament, spinal disc or joint anywhere in your body, we can help. If you want to improve your wellness, we can help with that as well.

Here is a list of the treatments we offer:

- Wellness advice & books
- GunnIMS—world specialist dry needling for chronic & sports pain
- Acupuncture
- Physiotherapy
- Sports therapy
- Post op rehab
- Biomechanics & Bespoke orthotics
- Relaxing, sports and deep tissue massage
- Personal training
- Reiki
- Reflexology
- Pregnancy pain
- Indian head massage



Contact Us

If you want to know more about the services we offer why not give us a call

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