

Pilates – what’s all the fuss about?



Pilates has gradually been increasing in popularity over the last ten years, with more and more people taking part for a variety of reasons. Pilates, along with other forms of exercise, has been recommended in recent research in helping to manage acute and persistent low back pain and it’s easy to see why. As we’ve mentioned on the previous page, exercise and global movement can help relieve back pain. So why all the fuss specifically about Pilates?

Many people may associate Pilates with simply ‘working on your core’, however this is not the case. Your core is a group of small muscles located around your abdomen and your spine, underneath your ‘six pack’ muscles, which help provide stability and strength to your back. Being able to use and switch on these muscles is important and one part of Pilates is learning how to do this effectively. However, Pilates looks at the movement and strength of the body as a whole. If we’ve had an episode of back pain, we may start to move in ways which are initially helpful in protecting our back, however soon become detrimental as they alter our normal movement patterns and cause pain. Pilates helps us to relearn what ‘normal’ movement patterns are, and teach us how we can move and use different parts of the body and spine individually from one another, without the rest of the body kicking in to try and help!



By using matwork based exercises, we can begin with low level control focussed movements which help centre our attention to how different areas of the body are working and how we can recruit specific muscles. These can then be progressed to more challenging exercises as your confidence and technique improves.

Here at The Physiotherapy Centre, we offer several different ways for you to get involved with Pilates. We offer one-to-one sessions, small classes of up to 3 people or our regular Pilates class of up to 8 people. So if you are completely new to Pilates or would like to further progress your technique, we have a class to suit your needs. Please speak to one of our physiotherapy team if you would like further information.

The Physiotherapy Centre Updates

Celebrating Patient Success!

We want to celebrate the fantastic achievements our patients make by shouting about them on our ‘Patient Success Board’. We are encouraging all patients to write down their successes or goals they have achieved, no matter how big or small, so that we can display these achievements on the board. The board will be located opposite the reception desk and will be a great way for us to celebrate your progress here at The Physiotherapy Centre!



Marathon Inspired?

Although not every jogger will dream of being an Olympic champion, he or she can dream of finishing a marathon.

Whether inspired to run your first marathon, or you just want to start running, there are many elements to prepare for and a number of approaches to take.

Consistent mileage on a weekly basis, helps to get the body accustomed to running for long periods of time. Start slow, with low mileage. Rest and recovery play an important part, as do incorporating strength training and cross training. Book in to see one of our Physiotherapy team to see how we can help you work towards your training goal.

The Physiotherapy Centre

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In this issue...

We talk about how to manage acute low back pain and how Pilates can be beneficial to aid in your recovery.



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The


physiotherapy centre

At Holy Cross Hospital

Back Pain Myth Busters!

Half of all people experience back pain at some point in their lives, and it can often occur during what seems like normal day-to-day tasks such as gardening, or even bending down to put on your shoes! How we manage our symptoms initially can help us on the road to a speedy recovery.

When you get symptoms for the first time, try not to panic! In most people low back pain represents a simple back sprain. This can be due to an increase in loading of the soft tissues around the back and/or a 'pain flare' associated with lifestyle stresses. This could be elements such as a busier work or family life or emotional stress. Back pain does not mean your back is damaged, just that it is sensitised. Your back is one of the strongest structures in your body and it's very rare to do permanent damage. It can be easy to worry when we have back pain, however our brain acts as an amplifier – the more you worry and think about your pain, the worse it will get.

Myth Moving will make my back pain worse

Fact: Don't fear twisting and bending – it's essential to keep moving. Gradually increase how much you are doing, and stay on the go.

Myth I should avoid exercise, especially weight training

Fact: Back pain shouldn't stop you enjoying exercise or regular activities. In fact, studies found that continuing with these can help you get better sooner – including using weights where appropriate.

Myth Pain equals damage

Fact: This was the established view but more recent research has changed our thinking. Modern physio takes a holistic approach that helps people understand why they are in pain.

Myth A scan will show me exactly what is wrong

Fact: Sometimes it will, but most often it won't. Also, even people without back pain have changes in their spine so scans can cause fear that influences behaviour, making the problem worse.

The best thing to do initially is to continue moving. Relaxed movements will help your back pain settle, so try not to 'guard' against movements, as this will cause muscles to tense which in itself can cause pain. Movements may be painful at first – like an ankle sprain would be – but they will get better as you get active. Try to gradually increase your level of activity back to your normal level. It may still be uncomfortable in your back as you do this, however remember that pain does not equal damage.

Physiotherapists are the experts in treating, and preventing back pain, but they hear many myths about what is causing it and what can make it better. It's easy to understand why they are held, as many of them were established before the evidence base moved on. The problem is these myths create fear, which cause many people to stop doing the activities which could help address the problem.

Let's fight the fear and move more!