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MAY/JUNE 2018

Paracetamol **ineffective** in reducing **lower back pain**

For a number of years, a general practitioner's most common approach to treating spinal pain was with acetaminophen – better known as paracetamol. However, a recent review states there is 'high quality' evidence it is not all that effective.

In 2014 and 2015, 16 percent of the Australian population had back problems. A trip to the doctor may lend itself to further tests, x-rays and health advice, and in many cases, paracetamol is also prescribed as a form of pain relief.

In 2015, researchers from the George Institute for Global Health, Sydney completed a review of data collected only from trials which were representative of the highest standard of evidence, to investigate how effective paracetamol (acetaminophen) is, in the management of spinal pain and osteoarthritis of the hip or knee.

The results revealed there is 'high quality' evidence that paracetamol is not an effective short-term solution in reducing the pain intensity or related disability, due to lower back pain. The long-term effect of using paracetamol in the treatment of spinal pain remains unknown.

According to a review of all relevant literature dated from January 2000 through to March 2017, completed at the Southern California University of Health Sciences this year, the evidence suggests that manipulation and mobilisation is likely to help reduce lower back pain. Spinal manipulation has also been found to be as effective as other medical interventions for both reducing pain and improving overall function.

Alongside spinal manipulation, exercise, ice, and heat therapies are also methods of pain relief that may be worth your consideration

in light of news that paracetamol is not. Exercise could consist of supervised, individually-designed strengthening and stretching components, while ice and heat therapy may be carried out at home, or with the help of your chiropractor.

A 2017 Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians also recommended nonpharmacologic treatment methods such as superficial heat, massage, acupuncture, mindfulness-based stress reduction, yoga, electromyography, motor control exercises, tai chi, low-level laser therapy, spinal manipulation, or cognitive behavioural therapy for acute, subacute and chronic lower back pain. Outcomes from using such treatment methods included reduced or eliminated back pain, improvements in overall function, improvements in quality of life, a return to work, global improvement, patient satisfaction, and reduced episodes of back pain.

When it comes to preventing back pain in the first place, limited research has been released. However, based on the few studies available, you may be able to reduce the risk of suffering from back pain by being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, enjoying life and work, and by being sensible with how you use your back. Where possible, avoid heavy lifting without a lifting aid, and always lift with your legs, rather than your back.

Lower back pain affects a significant part of the population and can contribute to disability and lost productivity. Because acetaminophen is now proven ineffective in pain management for lower back pain, there's every reason to look into alternative treatments to find out what else may help to reduce your pain levels.

Take me home for some relaxing COLOURING IN – check inside!

Keep active with winter walking

When walking in summer you get to enjoy the sunshine, and the outdoors in general. Walking in winter however, can be a completely different experience. Here's how to make your winter walk as enjoyable and beneficial as your summer one.

Walking at any time of the year is good for your health. Not only are you getting that much-needed exercise, but you're also improving circulation, boosting your mood and energy levels, building core strength, and helping to improve mobility.

In summer, getting out and about is easy to do. You want to be out in the sunshine, so taking a quick walk down around the block or to the park is an enjoyable experience. In winter, when the air is cold, or it's a little bit drizzly, you may be more inclined to want to stay indoors.

While it's all too easy to cuddle up on the couch with a good book and a cup of hot chocolate, it's important to get the same level of exercise now as you did during those summer months. Once you've built up the motivation to get your walking shoes on and out the door, you'll remember just how refreshing a walk can be, whatever the weather.

Here are a few things you can do to enhance that experience just a little bit more.

1. Warm up and down

When you go from the warmth of your home to the colder temperatures outside, it can take time for your body to adjust.

Be sure to warm up slowly, which helps reduce the risk of injury. Once you finish your walk, it's helpful to bring your heart rate back down to normal by warming down and stretching.

2. Drink water

Staying hydrated is just as crucial in winter as it is in summer. You will lose fluid through perspiration, so drink plenty of water before your walk, and after as well.

3. Check the weather

Check the weather before you head outdoors and delay your walk until any forecast storms pass over. Doing so can make your walk more comfortable.

4. Be comfortable

Wear appropriate footwear. Your walking shoes should be breathable, lightweight, and cushioned for comfort.

5. Check your posture

Walking is beneficial for the body, but it's even more so when you maintain the correct posture. Keep your body straight and be mindful of how you hold yourself throughout the entirety of your walk. Speak to your chiropractor about posture and balance when walking.

Don't let the winter blues set in. There are several great walking apps available from the App Store or Google Play which can help motivate you. Find walking routes to suit your experience level. You may be inspired to walk further and faster, and your body will thank you for it.

Fall-related injuries – minimise the risk

Softer carpet may reduce the impact of a fall and associated injuries as a result.

Falls are a significant issue in Australia, with medical costs on the rise as the population ages. While care homes do everything they can to prevent them, both residents and the elderly who live alone are still at risk of injuring themselves as a result of a fall.

According to the Australian and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society, 30 percent of adults over the age of 65 experience at least one fall per year, and up to 60 percent result in injury.

As part of a study on the effects of floor stiffness and impact during backward falls, ethylene vinyl acetate foam rubber was added to a bare floor. Without the rubber, peak impact forces were between 6.4 to 9 times your body weight, but with the rubber, a 15 percent reduction in the force created from falling was noted.

The study concluded that the softer the flooring, the less vertical force there is. Researchers deduced that by adding just a thin 4.5cm layer of foam to the floor, the vertical force could be lessened by 15 percent – thus having the potential to reduce instances of vertebral fractures as a result.

Many people may benefit from exercises such as closing your eyes and standing on one leg at a time for one minute, then increasing that time without holding onto anything. Balance may also be improved by standing on your toes for 10 seconds then rocking back and forward on your heels.

Anyone of any age can fall, but as you get older you may be able to reduce the risk by using a cane or walker, wearing rubber-soled shoes, removing clutter, using skid-proof mats, putting rails in stairways and bathrooms, improving lighting, and by developing better balance with exercise.

Your chiropractor can assist you with balancing exercise tips, or general advice on how to improve your balance to aide in the prevention of falls.

Colour Therapy for Mindfulness





Is your **body ready** for winter sports?

Australasia is home to several well-developed resorts and ample ski and snowboard opportunities, making it an ideal part of the world to live in, if you're partial to winter sports. These many beautiful slopes are ready, but is your body?

Whether you're an avid back-country, cross-country, hobby, or competitive skier or snowboarder, you will know just how much of a toll these exhilarating sports can take on your body. Based on Victorian Ski Patrol reports alone, injury rates sit at between 1.5 to 3.9 injuries per 1,000 visitors.

These statistics don't take into account muscular and lower back pain that some people may experience after a weekend, or week, on the slopes. Skiing and snowboarding, while fun for the whole family, can leave your body feeling a little

worse for wear come the end of the winter sports season.

Muscular pain, including in your lower back and abdomen, can occur when your body's core muscles are working overtime to maintain your correct form – essentially, trying to keep you upright and off the snow. Doing this for extended periods in itself can cause muscular pain, but may then be made worse by heavy equipment such as boots, cumbersome jackets, and of course, the board or skis themselves.

If you fall while skiing or boarding, you may also run the risk of stressing, twisting, or jarring your spine, including the soft tissue that supports it. However, even the bumpy terrain may have the same effect, as could correcting your stance at short notice, to stop yourself from falling. In essence, skiing and snowboarding can put immense

pressure on your spine – whether you're upright or lying on the snow, post-fall.

The risk of injury and ongoing pain can put many people off hitting the slopes, but there are things you can be doing to prepare your body before the season begins. Start by exercising regularly for at least six weeks before you begin the season. Doing so is likely to put you in better physical condition.

You can also work your way up from beginner slopes through to the more challenging slopes, as a way to warm your body up to more physical challenges, as well as only attempting slopes you and your body can handle.

If you do experience back pain or muscular aches during or after a winter sports session, consider icing the tender areas, relaxing in a spa and consulting your chiropractor.



Strawberry Cheesecake (a healthy version)

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 2 C almonds
- 6-8 dates (depends on size)
- 5 Tbl coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp salt

Filling

- 3 C raw cashews, soaked in water for 2 hours
- ¾ C coconut cream
- ½ C fresh lemon juice
- ½ C maple syrup, or any other syrup for sweetening
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Strawberries, sliced (or try raspberries if you prefer)

Suggestions

- Try a different type of berry.
- Swirl through some berry compote or jam before freezing.

METHOD

Crust

Place all ingredients into a food processor and process until combined.

Line a 8-inch or 9-inch spring-form pan with baking paper.

Press mix firmly into the base and refrigerate while preparing the filling.

Filling

Drain and rinse the cashews. Place into a blender or processor with the remaining ingredients.

Blend until smooth - this could take a few minutes.

Pour half of the filling into the base. Layer with the berries. Top with the remaining filling.

Freeze at least 3 hours until set.

When ready to serve, remove from freezer and allow to thaw slightly for about 10-15 mins.

Slice into small portions – remember, although a healthy version, it is still rich.

Serve with more fresh berries.

Mould and your health

You can find mould almost anywhere, but the last place you want it is in your home. Here's what you need to know about mould and your health.

If your home lacks adequate ventilation or insulation, you may notice that mould is growing where it's not wanted. It might appear as a stain or discolouration on walls, windows, ceilings, tiles, carpet, and furniture, and it may look fuzzy, black, green, white, or even orange. Mould is easy to spot, but it's not as easy to remove. It takes being proactive and aware of its cause to stop growth in its tracks. In fact, the only way to rid your home of mould is by getting to the source of the moisture.

The most common areas of your home for mould to lay down roots are in your kitchen and bathroom. These tend to be the dampest parts of your home, and without airing these spaces out regularly, you're giving mould spores a chance to flourish.

It's crucial that you don't leave these fungal spores to sit and mature, as doing so can play havoc with your health. Those exposed to these spores may be more at risk for nasal



congestion, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, respiratory infections, allergic conditions, or suffer from worsening symptoms of asthma, allergies, or lung disease.

If you believe mould is prevalent in your home, it's time to take action. Left to its own devices, it's not only dangerous for your health but can damage the surfaces it's growing on. Use insulation, heat, and ventilation to stop and discourage growth.

Ventilate rooms by opening doors and windows, use an extraction fan in the bathroom, purchase dehumidifiers for particularly damp areas of your home and wipe down surfaces regularly. It may also be helpful to use a vacuum cleaner with a high-efficiency air filter, to fix leaky plumbing, dry clothing outdoors rather than inside, and use an extraction system in the kitchen while cooking.

If you're renting and you can't get to the source of the mould, contact your landlord. They are required by law to provide homes in reasonable states of cleanliness and fit for habitation. If mould is prevalent due to a fault rather than a general lack of ventilation, they must fix it and repair any damage.

While mould is usually visible, if it's within ceiling cavities or walls it can be hard to spot. If you're suffering from ill health and believe mould spores could be to blame, you may wish to look at hiring an environmental health and safety expert. Tests can be done to confirm the presence of mould, which enables you to take further action.

A damp and mouldy home is not comfortable for anyone, and when the problem is not fixed, can be detrimental to your health. Don't take a chance on your health and wellbeing.

What's causing my shoulder pain?

About one in ten people will experience shoulder pain at some point in their lives.

Your shoulder is actually made up of several joints, tendons and muscles. It is only through the combination of these that the shoulder can allow the arm such a wide range of motion. However the price of mobility is instability and often paid with ensuing problems in this area, which may result in pain and discomfort.

Sometimes the pain is only noticeable when you move your shoulder, or the feeling of pain and discomfort is constantly there. Either way, the pain can be inconvenient and sometimes debilitating. It may prevent you from carrying out simple everyday tasks, and if the pain continues for a long time, the cause of the pain may well have the potential to cause permanent damage. If your shoulder pain is bothering you, or lasts for more than a few days, it's best to seek professional advice.

As a trained healthcare professional, your chiropractor will make an initial assessment

by discussing your pain and any associated injury with you and will perform a physical examination. It is important for your chiropractor to obtain as much information as possible in order to correctly diagnose the cause of your pain. Once your chiropractor has ruled out any, albeit rare, serious conditions they can establish whether the pain is associated with damage to muscle, tendon or bone, or a combination.

Just as there are different causes of your shoulder pain, there are different treatment options. Depending on the cause, your chiropractor can recommend a treatment plan specifically designed to help return the mobility and use of your shoulder to normal. Shoulder pain settles down fairly quickly for most people. This usually takes several weeks, but does vary from person to person.

If you experience shoulder pain along with shortness of breath, seek immediate medical care.



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