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YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

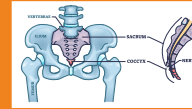
MAY/JUNE 2023



A COLOURFUL CHOICE



NETBALL, KNEES & ANKLES



TAILBONE TROUBLE



WHY YOU GET MUSCLE CRAMPS

Better breathing can benefit your spine

Do you pay attention to your breathing, or do you take this life-sustaining process for granted? Most people don't think about it, yet breathing involves more than transferring air in and out of your body. Breathing and your spine and posture are linked. Let's explore how with a quick exercise.

Sit up straight, take a deep breath in and allow your belly to relax outwards as you do. Notice how this feels. Now drop your chin towards your chest and round your back so that you're slouching forwards. Take a deep breath in. How do the two exercises compare? It's much harder to fill your lungs when you're slumped, isn't it? Poor posture limits your breathing ability.

Your diaphragm is the main muscle that helps you breathe. It's connected to two lumbar vertebrae in your lower back. This part of your spine is connected to the rest of your spine by ligaments and muscles. Because of this connection, breathing correctly likely affects your spine.

Each of your ribs connects to your spine at joints, and small movements occur at these

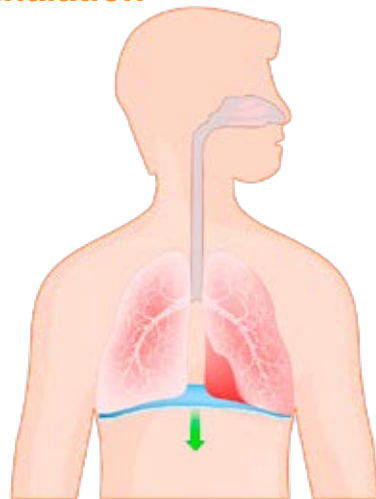
joints as you breathe. These movements are encouraged by breathing correctly. Without motion, joints may contract or break down, and inflammation and back pain may occur.

So, how can you breathe well? Diaphragmatic breathing, also called belly breathing, might help to relax the spine and the muscles around it by releasing tension. Here's one exercise you can easily repeat throughout the day, no matter what job you have or how busy you are.

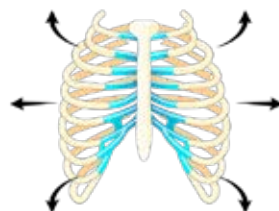
Make sure your bottom is at the back of your chair. Sit straight, look forward and keep your head level. Relax your shoulders, neck and core muscles. Take a slow, deep breath in, allow your belly to extend, your rib cage to rise, and your lungs to fill. After taking a full breath, exhale slowly. Let your ribcage fall while keeping your posture straight.

How you breathe affects your health. Practicing good technique and posture may relax muscle tension, ease pain, and improve spinal function. Ask us if you have any questions or would like advice.

Inhalation

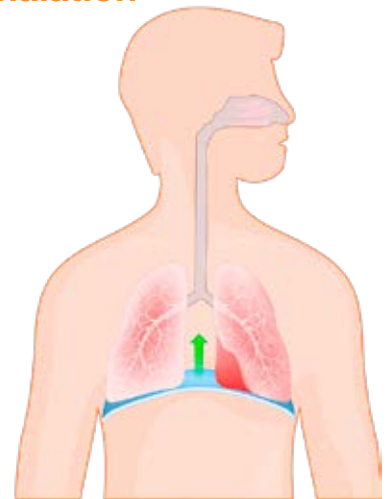


Diaphragm contracts and moves downwards

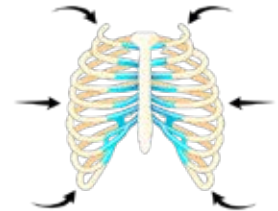


Muscles contract to move ribs outwards

Exhalation



Diaphragm relaxes and moves upwards



Muscles relax to move ribs inwards

Talking about tailbone trouble

Does your tailbone hurt? Most people don't think about their tailbone (coccyx) until it becomes sore. A painful coccyx, also called coccydynia, can affect everyday life.

It can be painful to sit, bend, or find a comfortable position. Tenderness over your coccyx can be intense, and aching can occur in your sacral area. So, what role does your coccyx perform, and how does this condition happen?

What is the coccyx?

The coccyx is made of three to five small fused bones. This triangular-shaped bone sits at the bottom of your spine and connects to your lower sacrum. The coccyx is an anchor for muscles and ligaments in the pelvic region; the 'glut max' and the pelvic floor, for example. It's also a balance point when you sit.

How does coccydynia happen?

The most common causes are: trauma or injury – such as a fall or blow to the area, pregnancy and childbirth, poor posture, obesity, and abnormal tailbone mobility.

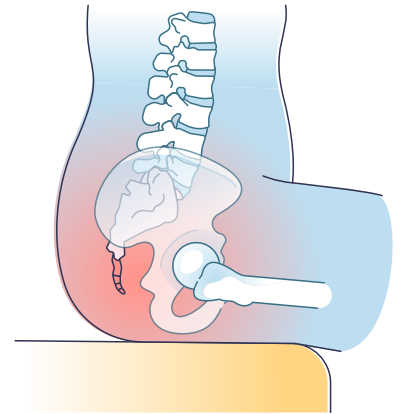
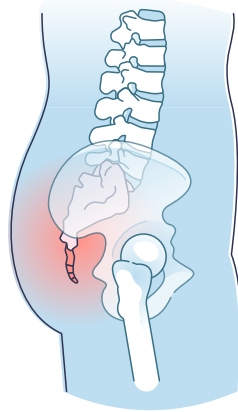
Repetitive or prolonged strain on your tailbone – such as sitting for a long time – can also cause coccydynia. Sometimes the cause is unknown.

What to do if you develop coccyx pain?

There are several practical approaches. Avoid sitting when possible – especially on hard surfaces, or place a 'doughnut' cushion or small pillow under your bottom – sitting on

an exercise ball can also help. If you work in an office, a sit-stand desk is sensible. Lie on your side to reduce the pressure. Cool or heat therapy may also help.

If you suffer from coccydynia, speak to us at your next appointment or make a booking. Coccydynia can feel overwhelming, but relief may be possible with the right assessment, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment.



What are muscle cramps and what can you do about them?

Do you suffer from exercise-induced cramps? If you're physically active, there's a chance you may have suffered a muscle cramp and wondered what caused it.

A muscle cramp is a sudden, involuntary contraction of one or more skeletal muscles. It can cause pain and discomfort and make it difficult to move the affected muscle. Muscle cramps can strike during or after exercise and may be relatively minor or cause pain which can linger for days.

Why do cramps happen?

Why would a healthy muscle 'lock up'? The honest answer is that scientists don't know for sure. Even after years of research the cause of these unpredictable spasms is difficult to identify, however there are two main theories:

- an upset to your body's water and electrolyte balance
- your nervous system is sending messages to a muscle, telling it to contract abnormally because of nerve and muscle (neuromuscular) fatigue.

These may each play a role, but it seems likely that cramping is due to various factors, not a single cause.

What you can do about cramps

While we can't be certain about the 'why', we can share what might help. The first you probably know; that stretching or lengthening the affected muscle may help. For example, your calf – the most

common site of cramping – can be stretched by keeping your leg straight and pulling your foot and toes towards your knee.

There's a higher risk of your muscles cramping when you sweat a lot, so keeping hydrated is essential. You may find that taking electrolytes helps. There isn't much journal evidence to support this practice, but if it works for you, it's worth doing. You can read about electrolytes in this month's companion article. Training to improve fitness and strengthen the susceptible muscles may also help.

Luckily, exercise-induced cramps aren't usually related to anything nasty and tend to settle quickly. If you have any questions we're here to help.



HEALTHY TIP

Don't overdo the salt - even though sodium is an electrolyte, eating too much can affect your fluid and mineral balance.

Electrolyte function and imbalances

Electrolytes are the mineral salts in your blood that regulate various body functions. They help keep the fluid levels in your body healthy and are essential for energy, aiding muscle movement, and maintaining brain and heart functioning.

When electrolyte levels become too high or too low, vital body functions can be seriously affected. Imbalances occur for a wide range of reasons, but are often linked to dehydration or excessive sweating

Important electrolytes include sodium, potassium, magnesium and calcium – signs of harmful levels of these can include: nausea, weakness, lack of energy and confusion, muscle spasms, and heart problems.

Electrolytes come from what you eat and drink, and your body helps keep the levels balanced. People who exercise strenuously often add electrolytes to their water, but usually you can keep levels balanced just by following a healthy diet and staying hydrated.

Carrots - a colourful choice for good health

It won't come as a surprise to anyone that carrots are a nutritious and tasty addition to a healthy diet. What you may not know is that they come in a variety of colours which are beneficial to your health.

They're high in essential nutrients, including fibre, healthy carbohydrates, antioxidants, and a great range of vitamins and minerals.

Fibre

Carrots contain soluble fibre, which helps lower cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease. Carrots also have insoluble fibre, which improves gut health.

Carbohydrates

Carrots are a healthy source of a combination of types of carbohydrate. They have a low glycaemic index (GI); meaning that they help your body use energy from food in a slow, steady way, preventing blood sugar spikes. This means that they're a good choice for diabetics. Low GI foods can also help you feel fuller for longer, which is helpful for people trying to manage their weight.

Carrot and orange soup

Enjoy this easy, delicious winter soup packed with goodness.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 brown onions, chopped
- 1kg carrots, chopped
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 orange
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- Peel 3 strips of orange rind and set aside. Juice orange and set aside.
- Heat a small amount of olive oil in a large saucepan on medium.
- Cook onion until soft, add chopped carrot and cook until soft.
- Add stock and bring to a boil.
- Add the strips of orange rind and simmer on low heat for 20 minutes.
- Remove the rind and blend until smooth.
- Add orange juice, mix well, and return to heat. Add salt and pepper to taste.



Antioxidants

Carrots aren't just orange, they come in red, purple and yellow; and the compounds which give them their bright colours are a type of antioxidant. Antioxidants are nutrients found in vegetables and fruit that help your body remove harmful free radicals — unstable molecules. If too many free radicals accumulate in your body they can cause cell damage, which can lead to problems like cancer and heart disease.

Vitamins and minerals

Carrots are high in:

Potassium – good for nerve, muscle and heart function, and helps reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

Vitamin K – essential for clotting, and also helps build and maintain healthy bones.

Vitamin B6 – helps convert carbohydrates into energy, keeping you alert and energetic!

Vitamin A – essential for eye health, immune function and the growth of healthy tissues in your body.

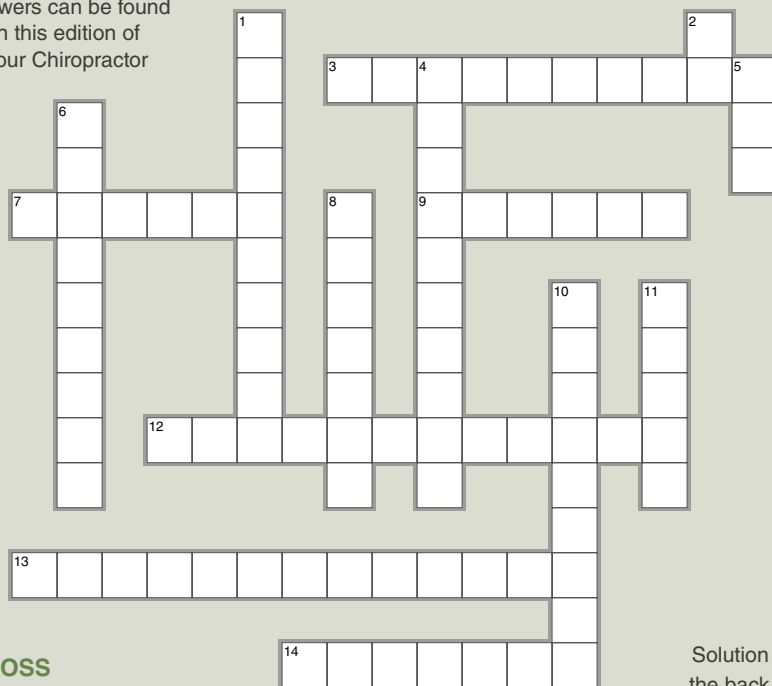


Carrots are an easy addition to your diet as they're versatile and can be eaten raw or cooked. For those with a 'sweet tooth,' a carrot cake is a delicious occasional treat, but it's not the healthiest way to get carrots into your diet!

** Carrots are generally considered safe to eat, but some people can have an allergic reaction to them.*

CROSSWORD

Answers can be found in this edition of Your Chiropractor



ACROSS

- 3. Tailbone pain
- 7. Relating to or near the sacrum at the base of the spine.
- 9. Tailbone.
- 12. Mineral salts in your blood that regulate various body functions.
- 13. Relating to or affecting both nerve and muscle tissue.
- 14. Tiredness.

DOWN

- 1. Reduce speed.
- 2. Stands for low glycaemic index.
- 4. An injury to your brain, like a blow to your head, that can cause unconsciousness.
- 5. Stands for anterior cruciate ligament.
- 6. The main muscle that helps you breathe.
- 8. Provide or drink water in order to maintain a correct fluid balance.
- 10. Bones of the spinal column.
- 11. Sudden involuntary contraction of muscle.

Solution is on the back page

APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Your next appointment is on _____ at _____
Date Time

Netball, knees & ankles: what you should know

Is netball, in truth, bad for knees and ankles? You may have heard comments about the risks, or experienced an injury yourself. You might wonder if your child should play. It's important to make decisions that are based on sound evidence, so let's take a look at the facts.

Around one million Australians play netball; it's one of our most popular team sports. There's something lovely about grandparents who played, watching their grandchildren play. Netball has a long history in our community and is an enjoyable way to stay fit, and connect socially.

What common injuries can occur?

Like all exercise – walking included – injuries can occur. Typical injuries for players aged 15 years and older involve the hips, knees, and ankles. Soft tissue injuries, for example anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears and ankle sprains, are the most common, followed by fracture, dislocation, and issues

like concussion. Younger netball players are more likely to injure their upper limbs.

One-quarter of major injuries are ACL tears. The ACL is a ligament which sits inside your knee and connects your thigh bone to your shin bone. Its job is to stop your shin from moving too far in front of your thigh and provide rotational stability to your knee. Netball involves a lot of sudden stops and twists which can damage the ACL. Sometimes a 'pop' is heard, and your knee can swell, hurt, and become unstable.

Sprained ankles are also common. A player might rapidly change position, land and twist awkwardly and roll their ankle. Or sometimes come down heavily on the foot of another player. Sudden pain, swelling, and an inability to stand comfortably often result.

Preventing injuries

Because knee and ankle injuries are not uncommon in this sport, Netball Australia has developed The KNEE Program. This program aims to prevent injuries by providing expert advice about taking off, landing, decelerating, and changing direction. It explains how to correctly warm up, strengthen legs and core, balance, land, and move. Recommended exercises include stretching your psoas, quads, glutes, calves, hamstrings, and different parts of your back.

But before you decide this sport isn't 'safe,' think about the good points; playing netball is wonderful for improving physical and mental wellbeing. Being a part of a team provides a way to connect with others and engage socially. Regular exercise also boosts self-esteem, improves immune function, and can protect against illness. Simply put, the benefits outweigh the risks.

If you have any questions about netball, ask us. We're here to help you and your loved ones get the most from your body and your health.

Free instruction manuals for The KNEE Program are available at knee.netball.com.au



CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 3. COCCYDYNIA 7. SACRAL 9. COCCYX
12. ELECTROLYTES 13. NEUROMUSCULAR 14. FATIGUE
DOWN: 1. DECELERATE 2. GI 4. CONCUSSION 5. ACL
6. DIAPHRAGM 8. HYDRATE 10. VERTEBRAE 11. SPASM

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional health advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your health should always be made in consultation with your health care provider. Talk to your chiropractor first.



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