

Back CHAT

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTENANCE CARE **WITH MARTIN PRESS**



Most of us are hopeless, we abuse our bodies yet expect them to survive without care and then get annoyed when we do not function properly and expect someone to fix us. Bit like a car really, not working properly you simply take it in to someone to fix, don't have to do anything, just pay the bill.

But when it comes to fixing back and joint problems things are not quite so straight forward.

Most of the back and joint pain we experience as older adults is as a direct result of "wear and tear" in our childhood and teenage years. We have falls, our parents pick us up and we carry on. Later we play sports like rugby, netball, tennis and squash all of which impact heavily on our bones,

joints and spine. As time passes we often develop arthritic changes as a result of these activities. While osteoarthritis for example is most commonly associated with post injury, it is not necessarily caused by injury. Insults into joints and bones like jarring, pounding, twisting and jumping can also result in the condition.

Usually the pain starts as we hit our late 30s and 40s and stop playing our sport and our core stability muscles stop working. Maybe you are a former rugby player or runner who has suffered back discomfort in the past. Nowadays you feel a bit stiff in the morning or after sitting for any length of time but once you get moving this stiffness eases off – well all this is an early sign of things not working properly. If you are in sedentary job, sitting at a computer desk all day long again

this lack of movement can lead to a decrease in bodily function. Remember when we first came into this world we were hunters and gatherers not bottom sitters!

It is important to get your children and yourself into a regular programme of self maintenance. You should do stretches to get moving, and keep doing them regularly and exercise. What most people do is exercise, and stretch only when directed or in pain. Most people stop stretching once any pain is gone because mentally they believe if they are in pain they are sick, no pain they are healthy.


You should teach your children how to bend, sit and lift properly. If you do not know seek advice. If your child has a fall they should be monitored and checked out by a health professional. I would recommend a full check of the spine and joints by either a chiropractor or physiotherapist.

You should also assess your children's sports. If they play rugby for example make sure the child is in the right position for their body type or size. Children's growth periods into their teens and early 20s are most important and damage to the growth plates on the ends of their bones including spine and long bones can have long lasting effects.

Remember when it comes to gymnastics and dancing strength is as important as flexibility and a special exercise and strength programme may be necessary to prevent problems in later life.

Rather than running around the hard streets, choose grass, or sand or the treadmill and make sure you have good techniques and good shoes. You really are better off power walking than running. You can knock yourself around immensely and not realise it.

Chiropractors specialize in spinal problems and can give some of the best and safest form of maintenance care as we specialise in spinal health and therefore have a better understanding of what exercise and muscle stretching programme is required for ongoing maintenance.



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