



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK- USA

Caboolture Physical Therapy Centre

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Don't Sit Down... This is Important

CABOOLTURE PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTRE

We know that repetitive behavior can cause injuries, but scientists have found that the worst type of repetitive behavior could be sitting itself.

Any physiotherapist will tell you that the human body is made to move, but in our modern lives it's hard to avoid sitting. More of our lives are online, our work and entertainment are often done through a screen. Add in the drive to work and you realize we are sitting more now than any other time in history. But why would it be bad for us?

To start with, extended periods without moving regularly causes joints to stiffen a little. Maybe not a lot in just one day, but over a long period of time joints begin to lose some of their movement.

Joints need to be able to move freely to stay healthy. This is particularly true in the spine, as the back is made up of many small bones, known as vertebrae. Vertebrae are connected to each other and move through lots of little joints. When one segment is not moving well, the joints around it have to move further to allow normal movement. If this happens with too many segments, the softer structures that restrict movement, called ligaments, are at risk of being damaged.

In fact, quite a lot of lower back pain is caused by stiffness of the upper back.

When we have a hunched posture our thorax is unable to rotate properly and the lower back moves more to compensate, sometimes leading to injury.

The dangers of sitting, however, go further than just bad posture and back pain. Scientists are finding that sitting for extended periods can actually increase your risk of heart disease, obesity, cancer and diabetes.

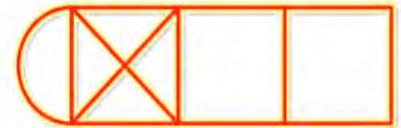
It doesn't seem likely, but when we sit our bodies become very relaxed. Most body systems slow right down, particularly those that break down sugars and almost all muscles become inactive.

It is starting to be understood that sitting for long periods disrupts the normal functions of the body and as such is a major cause of disease. Even worse news is that just going to the gym or for an extended walk once a day doesn't counteract this, it is much more effective to breakup long sessions of sitting by standing or walking for a few minutes. This is not to say that going to the gym isn't important, it's just that if you sit still for six consecutive hours you don't undo the damage with half an hour of exercise later.

There are many simple ways to combat this problem. Standing has been shown to be much better than sitting, so if you have an office job, perhaps go out of your way to stand up wherever possible. Take your phone calls standing up or get up and walk over to colleagues instead of sending an email if you can. One minute of movement every twenty minutes could be enough to keep you in good health.

Work This Out

Can you draw the hopscotch figure shown in the illustration without taking your pencil off the paper or going along the same line twice?



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Focus on...

Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis)

Tennis Elbow

Tendon Degeneration



What Is It?

Tennis elbow is a condition that affects many people, particularly in middle age, characterized by pain at the outer elbow. Symptoms include pain, occasional swelling and reduced grip strength.

Usually the pain begins gradually, noticeable only during activities, then progressively becomes worse. In severe cases, pain might even be experienced at rest. As the muscles involved have the job of stabilizing the wrist and raising the wrist and fingers, this condition can have a huge impact on day-to-day activities. The condition is common with tennis players, but can affect anyone and usually begins after a period of increased activity where strain is put on the tendon and it cannot cope.

What causes it?

Tendon tissue has a poor blood supply compared to muscle and during a period of increased activity the tendon sometimes can't adapt quickly enough. The tendon that attaches the muscles of the forearm to the elbow develops micro-tears and the collagen fibers become disorganized. This degenerating tendon is even worse at absorbing forces and so a painful cycle begins.

Many people notice symptoms after a sudden increase in activity, such as a holiday tennis match, a weekend of gardening, or painting the house however not everyone can pinpoint an activity or event.

It seems that increased age, poor technique, posture and starting a repetitive activity suddenly without training make developing this condition more likely.

How do I treat it?

For some people, symptoms will resolve with a little rest. For others, more targeted therapy is needed. Latest research has found that a very specific exercise program of eccentric strengthening exercises can be highly effective in treating tennis elbow. Along with analysis of technique and postural factors, which may be aggravating the disorder, eccentric exercises have been shown to help tendon tissue reorganize itself and become stronger.

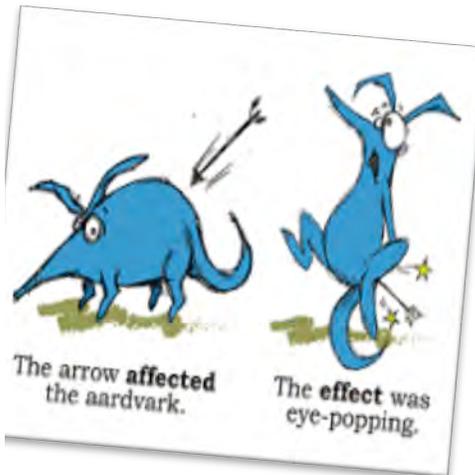
As this is a degenerative condition, treatments such as anti-inflammatory pills and corticosteroid injection are not always helpful. There are a few medical options for treatment such as shockwave therapy or more recently Platelet Rich Plasma Therapy, which enhances the body's own ability to heal. For very severe cases, surgery to remove the degenerating tissue has also been shown to be successful.

What are eccentric exercises?

Eccentric exercises are muscular contractions with act alongside another force but control it, or slow it down. For example, when you lower something heavy to the ground instead of letting it fall. It is thought that this type of exercise stimulates the cells of the tendon to align and strengthen, stimulating the healing process.

Once the tendon begins to regenerate, other stretching and strengthening exercises can be incorporated. In severe cases where rehabilitation fails, surgery to remove the affected tissue might be recommended usually is successful.

As always, every case is different and individual analysis is essential for optimal recovery. Your physiotherapist can perform specific tests in the clinic to confirm the diagnosis and advise you on the best course of action.



BLOG OF THE MONTH

Grammar Girl

Txting 2 much makn u 4get ur gramma? Grammar Girl teaches in an easy, engaging way. Doesn't seem possible? Have a look anyway, it's (its?) surprisingly fun!

Find her blog and podcasts at...

www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl

Read About It

Scientists have developed a robotic exoskeleton, which allows paralysed people to walk using only their mind. This amazing development has been tested recently in Rome and may be used in the next 5 to 10 years commercially.

Read about it at... <http://www.newscientist.com>

search: paralyzed, exoskeleton

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