



better posture

a strong, stable body

less pain

July Newsletter

Live Longer

Move more sit less is the big health message of this decade



BY MELINDA LUCK

Melinda Luck has been with Physiocise for over 11 years. As well as running the Physiocise for the Office Program she consults to the NSW Waratahs Rugby Union and to the Sydney Swifts Netball team.

HOW MUCH EXERCISE IS ENOUGH?

Do you know what the current international guidelines for the recommended amount of exercise is?

- A) 3x30mins per week
- B) 5x30mins per week
- C) 5x60mins per week
- D) 7x 60mins a week

Answer on the back page

Recent research has shown even that might not be enough to lower our overall risk of chronic lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. Some of the Physiocise Team attended the National Physiotherapy Conference in Cairns where internationally acclaimed researcher, Dr Karim Kahn, presented numerous studies showing that people who did one hour of daily physical activity daily lowered their overall cancer risk by 50%. People who did the current recommended levels only lowered their risk by 20%. If you feel weak at the knees about doing an hour a day, the great news is that that physical activity is everything from the stuff that gets you all hot and sweaty requiring a change of clothes and shower, to the incidental stuff you do as a matter of course in your day; carrying the shopping to and from the car, using the stairs, hanging out the washing, and getting out at lunch from the office. In fact it is all the extras we don't think count that are actually doing wonders for our systems.

Are you an active couch potato?

Brand new research carried out at the International Diabetes Institute Melbourne and University of Queensland's Cancer Prevention Research Centre is showing that the problem is not just how little we move, but how much we sit.

The researchers have coined the word active couch potatoes, to describe people, who are achieving the current minimal physical

guidelines of 30 mins of exercise 5 x week, but are sedentary for the most part of their day. Their research is finding extraordinary health risks associated with the amount of sitting a person does. In fact they found that watching TV (which is the most common form of sedentary behaviour) actually leads to premature death.



- People who spent 4+ hours a day watching TV have a 46% higher risk of premature death and an 80% increased risk of death from heart disease
- Risks associated with prolonged sitting were not necessarily counteracted by exercise. One study showed that people watching 3-4 hours of television per day were at great risk even if they spent 30 minutes at the gym (Diabetes Care 2007)

While this study dealt with TV watching it may obviously be extrapolated to all types of sitting, especially in front of computers.

The great news is that even regular small breaks in sedentary time, like walking to a colleague instead of emailing and getting up in the ads when watching TV can make huge differences to your health risks. (Diabetes Care 2008) So the big messages for keeping yourself well and living longer are really quite simple...move more and sit less!

Get your kids moving



BY REQUEL TREVILLION

Requel Trevillion has also been with Physiocise for 11 years and started the Physiocise for Kids in 2005. The program has now surveyed almost 4000 secondary school children in Sydney. Here are some of her findings and recommendations.....

- The average Year 7 students sits for 9 hours a day on schooldays.
- On weekends they spend about 14 hours on their bottoms!
- 80% of children complain of various levels of neck pain, shoulder tightness and headaches.
- Over 60% also complain of back pain.

The big problem is not only how much they are sitting but how badly.

Sitting slumped at the computer or playing play station is a major contributing factor to the symptoms they are getting.

How can we help our children avoid these aches and pains:

- **Get the Gear**

Use a laptop stand and separate keyboard and mouse to improve laptop ergonomics. www.laptopsolutions.com.au

- **Get them on their feet**

Encourage time outside away from the computer: walking the dog, shooting baskets, skateboarding, bike riding etc.

- **Get them on the floor!**

To give their spine a stretch, encourage them to lie on their stomach or on their back arching over a cushion while they read or watch TV.

- **Get in their ear!**

Explain that when they slump, their stomach muscles will weaken and possibly give them a pot belly. And when all else fail don't be scared to nag!



Beautiful Breathing

BY KATE ROBERTS



Kate Roberts has been with us over 10 years and now co ordinates much of the Physiocise research and curriculum development. She has a Masters degree in sports physiotherapy and was the physio for the NSW Rhythmic Gymnastics National Team from 2002 – 2006 and is chairperson of the Dance

Network of Sports Physiotherapy Australia.

Many of us don't breathe well. We take short shallow breaths and use our neck and shoulder muscles to help. Have you noticed that when you are slumped in front of your computer or the television that your shoulders rise and fall with your breath? Or have you noticed that when you are stressed or rushing around that your breath becomes short and sharp? Perhaps you have noticed that you hold your breath when you bend down to lift something up or when you walk up a flight of stairs or that your belly bulges when you run for the bus?

If you have been in one of our Physiocise classes you will know that we often talk about our breath. We talk about how important our posture is to allowing us to breathe well and we use our breath to reboot our stabilising corset. Breathing is a fundamental part of our lives and of our spinal stability and it is an automatic process. And yet breathing is something that most of us take for granted – we breathe all day and all night so surely we are breathing well.

Our breath has so many important functions and poor breathing has been linked with numerous health issues such as heart disease, muscle tension, stress, chronic pain and weight gain. Breathing well makes sure we have enough oxygen in our blood for our brain, organs and muscles to function.

In our fast paced world, there is an increasing emphasis on the relationship of the mind, body and spirit. Learning to relax is becoming more and more important and chronic pain is becoming a large community problem. In our Foundations program we talk about this mind/body connection by noticing the link between when we have

a 'wobbly mind' we often have a 'wobbly body'. We often look for a physical reason for our pain and some days it might just be because we are stressed and rushing around and forgetting to breathe well.

Our breath is an important component of our spinal stability. Our stabilising corset is like a cylinder with a lid and a base. The walls of the corset are our deep abdominal muscles, the base is our pelvic floor and the lid is our diaphragm. When we breathe well, filling the air all the way to the bases of our lungs and rib cage, we allow our diaphragm to work with our pelvic floor for effective 'core control'. Several studies have documented the relationship between the lid, base and walls of our corset and how they function when we have pain or are pain free. A recent Canadian study found that up to 60% of people with chronic low back pain have altered breathing patterns when performing different physical activities (such as leg in/leg out and virtual reality/leg floats). Most interestingly, they found that the altered breathing was not related to pain severity. So whether you have mild, grumbly pain or intense 'let me go to bed' pain, chances are you are not breathing well.

So...The next time you catch yourself slumping, rushing around and stressing or just wondering what you did to aggravate your pain – Stop, sit or stand up straight and take three beautiful slow breaths.

What is the opposite of a stress response?.....

A hearty laugh in a safe place with friends (Explain Pain 2003)

Melissa's famous white chocolate brownie recipe

ADAPTED FROM DINING BY DONNA HAY **Makes 24 squares.**

Melissa has been making these brownies for our staff meetings and physio courses for years. They are an absolute winner!

240 g	butter
240 g	dark chocolate
3	eggs
1 1/2 cups	castor sugar
1 1/2 cups	plain flour
1/2 cup	self-raising flour
1 1/2 cups	coarsely chopped white chocolate

Place the butter and dark chocolate in a saucepan over low heat and stir until smooth.

Sift the flours together into a large bowl. Then stir in dark chocolate mixture. In a smaller bowl, beat together the eggs and the sugar until light and thick. Fold the egg mixture through the flour/chocolate mixture. Finally, stir through the white chocolate.

Pour into a greased and lined 23 cm square cake tin and bake in a preheated oven at 180C for 30 minutes or until just set. Allow to cool, then cut into slices and serve, dusted with icing sugar if you choose.

HOW MUCH EXERCISE IS ENOUGH?

Answer B)