



better posture

a strong, stable body

less pain

December Newsletter

Edited by Anna-Louise Bouvier

Tips for Keeping on track over Christmas



It's that time of year when waistlines expand slightly from all the good food and drink, and cocktail parties and high heels challenge even the most committed non-leaners! Here MELISSA PARTINGTON gives you some ideas to keep you on track during the holidays.



Research tells us that fit athletes lose half of their strength and conditioning within three months of stopping exercising. Novice athletes lose all of their strength and conditioning within two. The good news is just one exercise session a week is enough to maintain a significant level of fitness.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

Bad habits are easy to get into. If you want to keep your good habits over Christmas here are some simple tips to keep you on track.

What's good about how you feel now	Write down 3 things you like about how you feel now, eg "I feel stronger", "I look taller and slimmer", "I have lots of energy". Then write down 3 things about the way you felt before you started with us. "I had lots of pain" "I looked frumpy" "My bottom was droopy".
Find a friend	Choose a friend you can either walk or exercise with once a week and make a plan to meet at certain times in the week.
Remind yourself	Take your Physiocise holiday exercise sheet and stick it on the fridge or somewhere prominent.
No excuses!	Write down some things you think are likely to come between you and your exercise...late nights, Christmas parties, lying in the sun. Think of some solutions that might motivate you at those times, like getting your friend to meet you at the park, putting your exercise clothes out the night before or getting you partner to kick you out of bed!
Reward yourself	Think of a good reward you can give yourself if you succeed in keeping on track. Best if the reward isn't food!
Top tips	If you do get achy from all the sitting and slopping that are a normal part of holidays, the solution can often be as simple as a quick correction of your alignment and 5 slow breaths of quality rebooting. If that doesn't work, go to your <i>Backs, Brains and Breathing</i> to the releases that are best for you and perhaps slip in some good leg in/leg outs!

Variety is the spice of life



MELINDA LUCK explores the latest research, which shows that mixing up your exercise is not only great for your body but for your brain as well.

Have you ever felt that your exercise program is getting boring in its predictability, or that despite hours of training nothing ever seems to improve. Well new research is showing that to keep our brains interested and our bodies strong they need constant and varied stimulation. Without that variety you are at risk of detraining even if you are still exercising regularly.

This phenomenon has been examined in a recent study which looked at brain activity in subjects who were asked to learn to play a 5 finger exercise on the piano. For the first 4 sessions their brain activity sky rocketed, but by the 5th session, where they had learnt the physical skill, the brain activity dropped markedly, indicating that the brain was ready to turn its attention elsewhere now that the body knew what to do. Research shows that in weight training and strength training, it takes between 4-6 weeks for this same detraining effect to occur. So lifting the same load over and over, or doing the same exercise, no longer challenges the body or the brain once it has learnt to do it. In fact the body can become so efficient over time that if it perceives it doesn't require the amount of muscle it initially built up to lift a load it may even get rid of excess muscle, which is the opposite result most people want from training! This is why any good gym program should be progressive week to week and changed every 4-6 weeks. It is also why we change the squats and lunges subtly each week, so your bodies are constantly being challenged.

Physiocise classes are specifically designed to integrate your brain and your body by teaching you better ways to move and movement patterns that your brain can apply to complex tasks during the day. You may think that you are doing some squats and strengthening your legs but in actual fact your brain will relate this squatting pattern to many daily tasks such as putting the washing in the washing machine, unpacking the dishwasher or packing the car boot. The more ways you think about moving, the more challenging it will be for your brain and your body and the more benefit both will get.

SIMPLE EXERCISE ZONE DEFINITIONS

Sedentary Zone	Sitting, lying or moving for less than 2 minutes.
Light intensity Zone	Moving for longer than 2 minutes at a time.
Moderate intensity Zone	Moving to the point where you can talk but you couldn't sing without being a bit breathless.
High intensity Zone	Exercising so hard you can't talk.

HOW MUCH AND WHAT SORT

First of all, think hard about ways to avoid sitting for long periods in your day. Add to that regular moderate exercise, a bit of vigorous and a little near maximal and you are well on the way to an ideal combination. Finally add a few strength exercises such as squats, lunges and the arm work we do in class. The main message is keep varying what you are doing each week, and keep pushing yourself a little out of your comfort zone.

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MIX IT UP

A good idea would be to buy a pedometer and get your 10000 steps each day, then instead of doing one long walk each day, try a couple of shorter ones with a few stairs or hills. To get the heart and muscles really pumping every now and then you could try and climb the same hill or set of stairs a few times to add in some high intensity.

Associate Professor Norman Morris from Griffith University who has done a lot of research into the metabolic effects of exercise across all ages and into various disease states summaries beautifully the benefit of doing higher intensities of exercise: "the harder you exercise the more bang for your buck you get with the overall work load the same." Twenty minutes of intense interval training such as walking fast or running between one lamp post and another and then walking slowly to the next, can be just as beneficial as a one hour walk.

Sleeping secrets



A good night's sleep is often one of the most elusive things in our lives. Here KATE ROBERTS explores some of the latest research into this holy grail.

When we sleep well our brains regulate and balance our hormones, our tissues repair, we are able to process the things we have learned to make sense of them and to commit them to our memories. Poor sleep affects our mood and our ability to learn and move. It also affects our exercise tolerance and our ability to recall important information.

Sleep deficiencies diminish our ability to learn in two ways – firstly by limiting our attention and our ability to focus as well as by decreasing our brain's ability to take in new information. When we are sleep deprived we lose our ability to make sound decisions. Our ability to assess the situation and plan accordingly and choose the correct behaviour is also lessened.

Have you also noticed that some days you come to your Physiocise class and float through the exercises and other days, it feels like a terrible slog? Sleep deprivation has been proven to increase our rating of perceived exertion (that is our perception of how hard we are working) as well as how our muscles burn energy – especially our scaffolding/postural muscles. Research has also proven that our recovery from high intensity exercise is slower and our blood lactate (the post exercise achiness) is higher when we are sleep deprived.

Some scary facts about sleep deprivation

- 13 – 23 hours of sleep deprivation decreases your reaction time between 9% - 31%
- The same level of deprivation can decrease hand eye coordination by up to 200%
- 16 -18.5 hours sleep loss has the same effects on performance as a blood alcohol level of 0.05 which is the legal limit for driving a car.

HOT TIPS FOR A BETTER NIGHTS' SLEEP

Exercise regularly	The morning is the best time to exercise and try to avoid exercising close to bed time.
Moderate caffeine, sugar and alcohol intake	They can affect your sleep quality.
Create a sleep-conductive environment in your bedroom.	Keep the lights low, the air ventilated and make sure you have a supportive pillow.
Don't watch TV in bed	Bed is for sleeping!
Create a consistent bedtime routine	Go to bed when you are tired and follow the same steps every night. This will signal to your brain that it is time to slow down.
Get up at the same time every day	The more regular your routine the more your body will learn to wind down and gear up, even on the weekends.
Calm your mind	Try some relaxation or breathing techniques to lead you off towards slumber.

If you have tried all of these tips and are still having trouble ask your Physiocise Physio for more specific advice.

Massage Therapy Benefits



Sandy Templeton with masseuse Irene Marcar

SANDY TEMPLETON has been a Remedial Massage Therapist for over 20 years and has been associated with Physiocise since 2005. She is also an Occupational Therapist with 10 years experience in assisting injured workers return to the workforce and now runs her own business Massage at Physio.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED IF A MASSAGE COULD ASSIST YOUR PHYSIOCISE PROGRAM?

Do you have the perception that a massage is an indulgent relaxing thing to do only when you want to spoil yourself?

Well, this may be the case for those who aren't experiencing pain, but for many, a professional remedial massage can be the difference between coping and crashing. If your muscular system is extremely "wired" or "bound up", then the brain registers this as stress. You may feel it as tension, achiness, soreness or inability to sleep well. This is because chemoreceptors in your muscles are going berserk and need to be calmed down. That's where massage can be of assistance.

Your Physiocise therapist will often recognise that your muscles are working overtime to keep you upright and in order for you to feel your body better in space, you will need "releasing" in certain muscle groups. Massage at Physio, understands the unique needs of your body type and can tailor a massage program to suit Floppies, Flippies or Stiffies. We will consult with your teaching physiotherapist so that we can best know how to target your stressed muscles.

Our therapists also participate in the Physiocise program so we have first hand knowledge of the muscular pains you all experience. Often it only takes one treatment to start feeling as if a "load" has been lifted from your body.

We offer a wide variety of therapies including Remedial, Swedish, Sports, Aromatherapy and Hot Stone massage. We are open throughout the year and on various days throughout the week.

Please call Sandy for enquiries or to make an appointment on 0438 587 962.

Kay's White Chocolate Bark Recipe

KAY FITTON one of our newest Physiocise teachers has this brilliant and colourful treat for you to make for those Christmas festivities.

Serves 8

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| 250g | white chocolate broken |
| 155g | toasted chopped walnuts |
| 65g | dried cherries or dried cranberries |

Line a baking sheet with foil.

Melt chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. (don't let bowl touch the water)

Stir until smooth, then stir in most of the nuts and cherries. Spread onto baking sheet, then sprinkle with the remaining nuts and cherries.

Cool and break into chunks.

Keep for up to 1 week in an airtight container.

Serve with coffee.

