



The Source of Wellness Natural Health Centre

Your Feel Better Naturally News

WINTER 2010

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Welcome – Is the Cold Freezing Up Your Neck & Shoulders?

It's a very chilly winter, so if you are having trouble staying warm, be mindful of the effect the cold has on our neck, shoulders and lower back.

First, if you are getting the sniffles pick up Nature's Way combined Vitamin C | Garlic | Horseradish tablets (from Coles | Woolworths | chemist | health food store). Take 2 tablets 3 times per day at the onset of a runny nose or chesty cough. They work a treat in drying out your respiratory system and are very economical at approximately \$20 for a 200 tablet tub.

For many the cold makes existing neck and shoulder problems worse and we have some handy tips to keep you mobile (see our Lifestyle section). Plus our Qi Gong (like Tai Chi) workshops Thursday 5 August 6.15pm and Friday 7 August 9.30am (see What's New).

It can also make migraine & headache sufferers feel worse - we have great success in stopping these episodes using Craniosacral Therapy and also have tips in this newsletter to help you at home (see Body update).

And stop daily stressors ending up as a pain in your neck and shoulders (check out our Mind update). Plus everything you wanted to know about pillows - what to buy, what to look for (see our What's New section).

Wishing you all joy & the causes of joy, now and always

The Source of Wellness Team

Body – Migraines & Headaches - We Have The Solution

Headaches are annoying, and migraines can be debilitating. So what causes these two different types of head pain?

Headaches can be felt anywhere in the head and descriptors of the pain vary such as, 'thumping', 'pulsing', 'squeezing'. Headaches are generally caused by:

muscle tension in shoulders | neck | jaw which travels up into muscles and fascia (connective tissue) that cover our skull (the muscle tension can be caused by skeletal and muscle use imbalances, poor posture, eye strain)

dehydration which causes cranial membranes and muscles to shrink & contract (from lack of water or too much alcohol)

sinusitis from a cold or chronic condition (the mucus inside your sinuses exerts an outward pressure on the skull), hayfever has the same effect

dietary reactions such as caffeine or nicotine withdrawal, low blood sugar, etc

Migraines are more intense than headaches and can affect vision (blurry, migraine auras, light sensitivity), inability to move your head, needing to lie down, thumping or pulsing in one or both eyes, vomiting, nausea, irritability, and depression.

Reasons for migraines encompass the same as for headaches but have a stronger internal trigger such as food-related reactions, menstrual cycle | hormonal imbalances, poor posture, physical exertion, stress and fatigue.

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Body – Migraines & Headaches - We Have The Solution

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We have great success (99% success rate as long as patients follow our advice and treatment plan) in treating migraines and headaches using Craniosacral Therapy | Remedial Treatment | Exercises & Stretches. We look at your overall posture, especially pelvic alignment and shoulder | neck | jaw tension, lifestyle, and cranial bone dynamics.

Migraines are your body's stress-release valve. The pressure of your daily routine builds until the body cannot cope, the migraine occurs, you have to slow down and do nothing for a day or two. Everything relaxes and you recover...until the pressures of life build and you experience the next migraine.

Headaches are a reaction to current stressors (rather than the longer build-up for migraine sufferers). And usually either muscle tension or dehydration related immediate to that day.

If you experience a migraine or headache, this is a sign of dysfunction in the body - a signal that something is out of balance or out of alignment. Frequency of these conditions is not a normal occurrence. Relying on pain medication abates the symptoms but not the cause.

Migraine and headache treatment plans quickly see a result for the patient as long as the exercises we give you to strengthen and stretch different areas and other advices are followed. Please call 9361 0800 to make an appointment to get rid of your headaches and migraines.

Mind – Stop Daily Stressors Living in Your Shoulders

Here is a simple body-mind experiment, we would like you to try....

First, sit quietly, clear your mind, breathe in and out slowly 3 times. Now we ask you to,

1. Think about someone or something you love - notice the changes in your body
2. Think about something or someone who you really do NOT like - notice the changes in your body

For most people, if you think about something / someone you like - you'll smile, your body will relax, your facial tension softens, you experience feelings of happiness and joy.

And by thinking of something or someone you do not like - then you tighten muscles, jaws, twist in your chair or tilt your head, your stomach tightens, breathing may become shallower.

From this simple experiment you have noticed the contrast in how what you think, creates bodily tensions. Over a period of time these ritual tightenings become a 'tension pattern' which your body repeats every time you are in an unhappy or stress-inducing thought process.

Unfortunately the unhappy thought process / tension pattern has a longer & stronger effect on your body than the happy thought process. For many this tension pattern involves tightening the muscles at the base of neck / upper shoulders, the base of the skull, the jaw, and drawing up one hip - causing pelvic imbalances.

Drawing up the shoulders is a protective instinct guarding the neck, which is the thinnest part of our body and holds the all-important spinal cord, from not only physical threats but also people who are literally causing you 'a pain in the neck'.

So next time, someone or something is getting to you:

- breathe slowly, take control through your breath
- do very slow shoulder rolls. Be sure to take the shoulders right up under your ears (squeeze them up and hold until the tension starts to release) and then keeping the squeeze on, roll the shoulders right back and then fully forward
- repeat in the reverse motion taking the shoulders up to the ears and then forward, down and back up - all the while keep breathing slowly in and out

By the time you've finished one set forward and back, the 'painful' person or situation won't have landed as ongoing pain and tightness in your neck and upper shoulders! They will still of course be a pain, but at least it will be external to your body and not something you carry around like a deadweight on your shoulders and in your neck.

Lifestyle – Keep Your Upper Body Joints Limber in Winter

Our natural reaction to the cold is to hunch our shoulders and drop our head. Picture what you do running from warm house to car, sitting outside at the footy, waiting for your train or bus, sitting in a drafty or just plain cold room.

First of all - don't persist. You'll wake with a stiff neck or nagging pain in your neck or upper shoulders.

A few simple lifestyle reminders to prevent the cold stiffening your upper body:

- Rug up - jackets with collars, scarf (men too), women wear your hair down to cover your neck, heat up your kidney area (lower ribs) - if sitting outside for any period of time wrap an extra blanket around your middle to keep your kidneys warm, plus thick, woolly socks or boots to keep ankles warm
- Neck stretches - slowly take ear to shoulder both sides and hold, rotate head full circle forward to shoulder - across back to other shoulder. Prevents cold muscles from overtightening. Repeat in other direction
- Shoulder rolls - do slowly, squeeze shoulders up and hold then take forward (keep the squeeze on), then push down, before bringing up squeezing between the shoulder blades. It takes you through the full range of motion and creates warmth and blood flow to cold, stiff muscles. Repeat in other direction
- Heat bag across shoulders before bed - the warmth will relieve the tension of dealing with a cold day and prevent a build-up of shoulder muscle tightness
- Warm shower once you get home - it's simple but gets the blood going and you feeling toasty before you settle in for dinner and relaxation
- The Source of Wellness treatment. Prevention is much easier and quicker than cure. Act early. By having a monthly treatment you will keep on top of daily and weekly tensions and prevent serious postural changes occurring and pains from developing (or current ones getting worse)

Qi Gong | Meditation Workshops 5 & 6 August : Pillows - What You Need to Know Before You Buy

Qi Gong | Meditation Workshops

We are very fortunate to have Peter Bliss, a well respected Qi Gong (like Tai Chi) | Meditation teacher coming to Perth for a short time only to conduct 2 workshops.

The workshops are 3 hours long and will teach you 4 qi gong | meditation exercises that you can use to relax, unwind and be used as your daily destress practice. Qi Gong is one of the four pillars of good health in Traditional Chinese Medicine (acupuncture, massage, and herbal medicine being the other 3).

Qi Gong enhances your overall performance by:

- Creates clarity of mind
- Useful in relieving illness
- Creates & builds energy
- Relaxes body & mind
- Improves sleep patterns
- Clears blocked | sluggish energy

Each participant receives a free CD and written explanation of the practices to use at home.

Dates are Thursday 5 August 6.15pm and Friday 6 August 9.30am. Places are strictly limited so please book quickly by phoning 9361 0800 or email us if you have any questions. Cost is \$95 and includes the free CD and written exercises. Location will be local to match size of group.

Pillows

Pillows are such an important part of our sleeping routine and at The Source of Wellness we are asked a lot about the right kind of pillow, especially for people having neck | shoulder | back problems.

The ideal sleeping position is flat on your back, with no pillow. That may seem strange, but for perfect neck alignment, no pillow is required. Because of our reliance on pillows and many of us having a head forward posture caused by computer use, doing alot reading, slumping in chairs for long periods - having our head elevated when lying seems necessary for our comfort.

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Qi Gong | Meditation Workshops 5 & 6 August : Pillows - What You Need to Know Before You Buy

Pillows

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But before you throw out the pillow, wait. It is not easy to go from pillow to nothing, so get a good pillow and work on your transition with neck stretches, strengthening exercises and treatment with The Source of Wellness to correct your posture. You may find that when you're very tired or unwell, you'll crave your pillow, so always keep one on hand.

There are many on the marketplace. We'll do a brief overview of the major types:

Feathers - the original pillow. No support if a side sleeper, not good for allergy sufferers, but provides a flattish pillow, good for back sleepers who want the 'feel' of a pillow without the thickness

Foam - no support if a side sleeper, holds dust and mites, very different thicknesses, so may add to neck and shoulder problems if the wrong size

Memory Foam - contours to your neck and head, but if you are having problems it only helps you stay in the problem-causing position. No support when on your side, as it yields to weight of your head

Latex - many different types. Standard features are a contoured top to fit into the curve of your neck, holes to allow the pillow to breathe and not grow mildew, can be mulched in your compost once time for new pillow, great for allergy sufferers, longer life (up to 4 years - dependent on manufacturer's recommendations)

We recommend the latex variety of pillow and support one brand in particular because of its one difference to the rest - it is made to measure.

Pillows Made To Measure enable our practitioners to measure the width of your shoulder and the height of your head, plus note other details such as your preferred sleeping position, type and age of mattress, and your weight. Then a pillow which is designed to match your body and the way you use your pillow is picked for you.

If you would like to know more or book in to be measured (15 minute appointment) please phone us on 9361 0800.



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