



Kay McLorn MCSP is the Practice Principal of Blackstone Physiotherapy.

Pain, posture, physiotherapy and pilates

Kay McLorn from Blackstone Physiotherapy discusses ways of effectively dealing with pain.



Pain is caused by stimulation of specific nerve endings in the body, known as nociceptors. Pain in muscles is caused by an acute or chronic overload. An example of an acute overload is cutting the entire hedge on a Saturday or increasing your weekly run by too many miles. A chronic overload is usually caused by poor posture over a period of time in standing or in sitting. This overload leads to a pain reflex, causing muscle spasm, rigidity or guarding, resulting in immobilisation of the limb or your back, for example. You then start changing your posture or habits to compensate for the pain, and in turn it feels like your pain is

'spreading' and you might feel very stiff!

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy is effective in the relief of pain caused by joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons. Physiotherapy treatment can consist of massage, joint mobilisations, stretching and strengthening and a home exercise program tailored to your specific needs. During a deep tissue massage, the trigger points, or muscle spasm is released. When a muscle goes into a spasm, there is a constriction of blood to the muscle, meaning that less oxygen and nutrients reach the muscle and the waste products do not get

carried away by the blood. This causes the muscle to tighten even more and sets off a vicious cycle of pain. A massage can improve the blood flow to the muscles, releasing the area of tightness, lengthening the muscle and enabling it to return to normal. This relieves pain and allows you to move normally. After this a stretching program is started to maintain the muscle length and an exercise program is started to prevent this problem from reoccurring in the future.

Joints are made to glide freely and smoothly. A tight muscle overlying a joint can cause this joint to stiffen or 'jam', leading to pain. This can often lead to a build up of pressure and inflammation in a joint. To restore the normal movement, the joint can be mobilised or manipulated to move more freely, or facilitated to glide smoothly once again. Painful joints can also be caused by the degeneration of the cartilage inside the joint, causing irregular joint surfaces. An appropriate exercise or mobilisation program can bring some relief in such a case.

Acupuncture

Another effective method of pain relief is through acupuncture or electroacupuncture. Acupuncture inhibits pain by

promoting the secretion of hormones involved in pain relief and increasing the secretion of hormones needed for healing. It also inhibits the pain receptors of the nervous system. Another benefit of acupuncture is that it relieves anxiety, which is very often associated with pain, leading to relaxation and better sleeping patterns, which is often disturbed when experiencing pain.

Pilates

Pilates is extremely effective at restoring optimum muscle function. This is a form of exercise which is innovative and safe using a variety of floor, mat and special equipment to achieve dramatic effects. With an emphasis on proper breathing and correct spinal alignment you will learn how to control your body, putting you back in charge! Attending well run weekly classes has generally overwhelmingly positive benefits for our clients. There is a great sense of personal, social and mental well being. It can positively change lives.

Individually tailored programmes or attending classes improves balance, flexibility, core stability and strength and ultimately assists in maintaining good posture.

If you are in pain and feel that you could benefit from treatment by a Chartered Physiotherapist then please contact Blackstone Physiotherapy to arrange an appointment.

Pilates Tone mat classes are available in several areas across Northern Ireland. If you are interested in attending any Pilates class and want to be instructed by Chartered Physiotherapists please contact Pilates Tone on 028 9261 1211 for information on your nearest class. One to one sessions are also available or smaller group sessions on request.



**Blackstone
Physiotherapy**

Moira 028 9261 1211
Carrickfergus 028 9332 9932



www.blackstonephysio.co.uk

• Acupuncture • Pilates • Sports Injuries •