

Men's health has lasting and major impacts!

Hi from your health care team.

In our last newsletter, we showcased a number of aspects of women's health and some approaches to consider and implement. This time we look at the other half of the population - men!

Men manage their health differently to women: they are more likely to use competition, they push themselves in work and sport; and sometimes by even ignoring or 'downplaying' symptoms can be a useful strategy. We hope that you will find the information on these pages helpful.

In case you are unaware, we regularly publish interesting and informative articles and links to health news on our Facebook page: @hpChiropractic We always keep our page in the same style as our office.

Over the past 2 months, we have reviewed and upgraded our website and added content about many different conditions that we treat. Further changes are in progress on the techniques and services that we offer, and also on injuries that we manage. It is a good resource for conditions that you may suffer.



Exercise Physiologist Kübra Erdiñç and her Tai Chi class on Ritchie Benaud Oval

The importance of spinal health for men:

Men need strong, flexible capable and resilient backs to be able to operate in their world. Without a healthy spine, they will not be able to perform the jobs and roles they are called upon to do. As men are so often defined by their work, they will be glad to know that when they need to use their back, it will be ready and happy to perform. Even if the task is long or dull, a man's back will need to be ready when it's time to move or work.

Many men are renowned for not taking great care of themselves; attending to work priorities before their health; or waiting and leaving seeing a health professional about a disorder to the last minute.

Some of the obvious conditions that men suffer include acute lower back pain, disc problems and sciatica, neck pain and chronic spinal pain.

Here at Health *plus* Chiropractic, from our decades of experience, we have certainly seen many more men than women suffer from severe acute lower back pain and some of the worst cases of sciatica. Many of these have been due to job demands: heavy and repetitive lifting; exposure to vibration; or prolonged driving. You can imagine the occupations: landscapers, truck drivers: builders and tradesmen.

In addition, other factors that are involved with these spinal disorders include smoking, obesity and/or diabetes. Seeing cases of back pain every day means we can concur with researchers that it is often a combination of factors such as the above, why someone suffers more, for longer or faces more hurdles when trying to fix their back.

Another example of how the problem builds, is that while the daytime occupation may be very active and demanding, the 'recovery' by sitting for hours - slouching on the sofa of an evening makes the issue worse. Repetitive bending - even without lifting any weight, squeezes water out of spinal discs. This would be a lesser factor if the sitting at home did not occur, but sitting also does the same squeeze, leading to disc dehydration. This intervertebral disc dehydration makes the disc age and thin much faster than normal leading to possible rupture and conditions such as disc herniations and sciatica. Compared with simple lower back pain, disc diseases are more serious and take much longer to manage. As you realise, these back problems are everyday conditions for us to look after, though we'd rather not see anyone suffer.

Men are also well represented in the numbers of older people suffering from strange sounding but very common diseases such as spinal stenosis and sarcopenia. Lumbar spinal stenosis is a common degenerative condition causing back and leg pain and renders the person unable to walk far, or stand up for long periods. Sarcopenia is progressive muscle loss usually occurring in old age. This makes men frail and very weak. Clearly both of these conditions are very limiting and incapacitating. Another problem in this age group are balance disorders, and they impact the spine by reducing the ability to stabilise joints and make them work precisely. As chiropractors, with our training and spine focus, we can identify these problems are managed well - hopefully improving quality of life and making men feel stronger again.

The Top 5 Killers of Men (& how Exercise can Help)

Men, we need to talk! Your current lifestyle choices could be increasing your risk of a chronic disease and putting your life in danger.

Let's explore the top five diseases that are causing the premature death of Aussie men, and how exercise and a healthy lifestyle can help to prevent them!

The Countdown...

5. CHRONIC LOWER RESPIRATORY DISEASE (CLRD): Killed 4,268 Australian men in 2017.

WHAT IS IT? CLRD is the collection of conditions that causes damage to the lungs and restricts airflow. It consists of a number of conditions including emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and chronic bronchitis. These conditions all affect the lower respiratory system.

HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP Physical activity throughout life may reduce a person's risk of COPD and decrease symptoms such as breathlessness.

High levels of sedentary behaviour, like sitting, increases your risk of COPD, regardless of exercise time.

Older adults who are physically active have better lung function compared to adults who are not physically active.

4. STROKE: Killed 4,302 Australian men in 2017.

WHAT IS IT? A stroke occurs when blood flow to or within the brain is affected. This results in a lack of oxygen and nutrients to areas of brain causing cell death of that area. There are 2 types of stroke, Ischemic and Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA). A TIA is a temporary blockage that results in no permanent damage. However an Ischemic event is the most common and is either a blockage in the brain (thrombotic), a blockage that travels to the brain (embolic) or a rupture on the brain (hemorrhagic).

HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP Many lifestyle factors can increase a person's risk of stroke such as; smoking, high blood pressure, artery disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity and a lack of physical activity. Being a male also increases your risk of stroke, which is why it's so important to reduce other risk factors.

Any exercise, when compared to no exercise, protects against the risk of stroke

Older men who are moderately physical active are least likely to have a stroke

Moderate to high levels of physical activity reduces risk of all stroke

Exercise decreases your total risk factors by: Decreasing blood pressure; Decreasing total cholesterol; Managing / Controlling weight

3. DEMENTIA: Underlying cause of death for 4,870 Australian men.

WHAT IS IT? Dementia is a collection of symptoms that affect the brain, it includes conditions such as Alzheimer's, Vascular disease, Lewy bodies dementia and Huntington's disease. Dementia affects a person's ability to think, how they behave and their ability to complete everyday tasks. An average of 36 people per day die due to dementia. In 2019 there are 447, 115 Australians living with dementia.

HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP The World Health Organisation have recently released new exercise guidelines to assist in the prevention of dementia. Evidence is piling up to prove that the more active you are in life, the lower the risk of Alzheimer's disease. On top of that;

Aerobic exercise (walking, cycling, swimming) improves cognitive function

Physical activity maintains performance in memory

2. CANCER OF THE LUNGS, TRACHEA & BRONCHUS: Killed 4,911 Australian men.

WHAT IS IT? The technical term: "Malignant neoplasm" of the lungs, trachea or bronchus; which translates to cancerous tumor affecting one of these organs.

HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP Exercise can decrease the risk of lung cancer in both current and former smokers.

1. ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE: Introducing the biggest killer of Aussie men - causing 10,514 deaths in 2017

WHAT IS IT? Ischemic heart disease occurs when the arteries of the heart become blocked and therefore oxygen delivery to the heart is limited. Symptoms vary person to person and unfortunately the first sign of ischemic heart disease can be when you have a heart attack.

HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP Poor lifestyle choices will increase your risk of ischemic heart disease. Being physically active decreases your risk of developing heart disease by:

Weight Management - Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for heart disease, and regular exercise helps to keep you at a healthy weight. Reduce your stress - exercise can help to reduce and manage stress.

Massage is a tool to be used by men

You're training on a regular basis and you recognise that, even with regular stretching, certain muscles are still pretty stiff and uncomfortable. You also know that the last time you heard about a massage was when your girlfriend did it with a bunch of her friends for a bridal shower, which just sounds way too girly. Then there was that guy in accounting who wandered off from the annual sales meeting to do something that sounded vaguely illegal. No worries, massage at Health plus Chiropractic is totally professional and beyond questionable.

If you're actively involved in any kind of sport or workout on a regular basis, a good massage soothes and relaxes muscles that are tight and can ease soreness from injury and even help in recovery. If you feel like your body is slowing down and 'stiffening up' massage is used by many men to keep the body as good as they can. Young men, even teenagers use massage to be able to push their body towards its potential.

Don't be confused by the various types of massage. They're all great, but each offers its own philosophy and specific benefits.

Swedish massage is probably the most familiar to you, particularly because it follows more Western traditions of anatomy and physiology. This therapist will use broad general strokes, known as effleurage, to start; then moves on to target specific problem areas. Some men will choose this style and not just because they are stressed and need relaxing.



Deep tissue massage builds on the Swedish tradition, utilizing pressure to release chronic muscle tension. It gets into deeper layers of muscle tissue, tendons, and fascia (the material you're engaging when using a foam roller). It's said to reduce blood pressure and stress hormones and is specifically used to treat things like limited mobility, repetitive stress injuries—like carpal tunnel syndrome or tennis elbow—or sciatica. The deep pressure breaks up knots of muscle and scar tissue to relieve pain and stiffness and increase flexibility.

Sports massage is based on any or all of these techniques, and should definitely be incorporated into your regimen, particularly if you are training for a specific event like a marathon, triathlon, a regular soccer game, or even a 5K. If you haven't had a massage (or haven't in a while), don't jump into it the day before your event. Go every week or two early on in your training calendar, then around two days before the actual bout. Do it again two or three days after you compete, too. This practice can help prevent injuries due to overused and stressed muscles ahead of your competition, then reduce recovery time post-event.

We understand that some men are uncomfortable with the idea of being massaged or touched by other men. Yet, many of our biggest and toughest male patients are very willing to be massaged by Gary and wouldn't skip their regular massages for anything. If you prefer, it is even possible to be massaged while fully clothed. Also, the massage therapist can still work with a towel covering you. Pressure point techniques can be applied to soothe aching or painful muscles - this therefore is a version of a standard sports massage at an outdoor event. Always, always, the therapist wants and needs you to feel as comfortable as you can. The normal and professional approach is that you will be appropriately covered with a towel—even a blanket in some cases, to keep your body warm and blood circulating.

Foot care is for men too!

You're on them all day- whether they're in steel-caps on a construction site, dress shoes in an office or joggers at the gym- but men's foot care is an often-neglected part of men's health that is also rarely discussed. And when your feet are not in peak condition, they may not be able to keep you up and about to do all the things you enjoy.

But you don't need to be embarrassed about funky feet issues - we all have them, both men and women! Here are some of the common foot conditions that may affect you:

Athlete's Foot - Sweaty feet? Itchy, peeling skin? It's probably a fungal infection called tinea, aka athlete's foot (and no you don't have to be an athlete to get it).

The fungus thrives in a warm, moist, dark environment- that's why it can become a big problem on the feet, especially between the toes. Make sure you wear good quality cotton socks and change them regularly, air your shoes out frequently and wash and dry your feet thoroughly every day (especially between the toes). Purchase an anti-fungal treatment from the chemist and apply according to instructions, and if the problem persists you may need to see a Podiatrist.

Warts - Just like athlete's foot, warts also tend to show up in warm, moist environments like the feet. They are caused by a virus and are often picked up by walking around barefoot in public spaces such as swimming pools and gyms. So make sure you keep your feet clean and dry as much as possible, and avoid going barefoot in public areas or sharing footwear. If you do discover a wart, you may need to see a Podiatrist or medical professional for removal and treatment.

Achilles Pain and Shin Splints - These are common "weekend warrior" sports injuries caused by overuse, and usually a sudden surge in activity levels (especially when the body not conditioned for such). In Achilles tendonitis, pain and inflammation develop in the Achilles tendon- where the calf muscle connects to the heel bone. It is important to address this as soon as possible because if left too long it can lead to a more serious tear or rupture of the tendon. Shin splints is pain and inflammation of the muscles along the anterior leg (shin area) and is usually felt a day or two after vigorous activity.

Your podiatrist can assist with assessment and diagnosis of these conditions and exercise advice, footwear and orthotic prescription if required.

High Arch/Low Arch - Lots of foot and leg symptoms/ conditions are contributed to by the person's foot type and how the feet function during gait (walking and running). For example, a high arch foot is linked to tendonitis, hammer toes and joint pain, and low arch feet have been linked to shin splints, plantar fasciitis and knee/hip pain. A podiatrist is trained in biomechanical gait assessment and can pin-point the cause of many of these conditions then provide advice on footwear and prescribe orthotics to address the cause.

Gout - Gout affects 9x more men than women, and is a painful inflammatory-arthritis condition that is caused by a build-up of uric acid that form crystals around the joints, commonly affecting the big toe and ball of the foot. There are many causes of gout, one being diet. It has been called the "disease of kings" because it is linked to a diet high in alcohol, red meat and seafood. Your GP will usually run a series of blood test to assist in the diagnoses and management of gout, and a Podiatrist can help in symptom management through things such as padding/deflection, innersoles and footwear.

Ingrown toenails, corns and callus - Improper nail care and sometimes damaged or oddly-shaped toenails can result in an ingrown toenail which can then become infected. These should be professionally treated and may require surgical removal under local anaesthetic. Your Podiatrist can also advise you on how to correctly cut your toenails to prevent future occurrences.

Corns and callus are areas of thickened skin that build up in areas of high pressure, and are often caused by poor footwear but can also be due to an underlying foot deformity. A Podiatrist can safely remove these areas of hard skin (called debridement) and help identify and address their cause.

So, always remember the important function your feet serve and give them the attention they deserve. Many conditions, if addressed early enough, can be effectively managed and prevented from turning into something more serious and debilitating. See our friendly Podiatrist, Melissa Sandy, if you are having any concerns and she will help you to get back on your feet!



Health plus
Chiropractic

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