For Appointments Call (02) 6771 2177

LAKE ROTOKAKAHI - NEW ZEALAND FEBRUARY 2025

How Your Brain Changes Your pain

Pain is a complex and deeply personal experience, shaped by both physical and psychological factors. Understanding how the brain processes pain can help improve management strategies and overall well-being.

All pain, regardless of its cause, must be recognised and processed by the brain for you to become aware of it. Pain is actually a vital part of human survival—it alerts you to potential danger, encourages rest, and in many cases, protects damaged tissue. When the body loses its ability to perceive pain, the consequences can be severe, leading to further injury and even death.

There is a rare condition known as congenital analgesia, where individuals are unable to feel pain. While this might sound like a superpower, it is actually a dangerous condition. Without pain as a warning system, people with this condition are at high risk of serious injuries, infections, and even early death.

Pain Isn't Always Linked to Tissue Damage

While pain is crucial for survival, sometimes the body's pain response can go awry. A well-known example is phantom limb pain, where amputees continue to experience pain in a limb that is no longer there. In some cases, simply looking at a mirror image of the uninjured limb moving can trigger pain sensations on the amputated side—this is due to the brain's complex way of processing sensory information.

Another example is chronic pain conditions such as fibromyalgia, where pain persists despite no clear injury or damage. This highlights the role of the nervous system in amplifying pain signals beyond what would normally be expected.

The brain can also ignore pain

Have you ever noticed a bruise without remembering how you got it? That's an example of tissue damage occurring without significant pain. Perhaps you were distracted at the time it occurred, but it is also possible for the brain to ignore pain signals that it doesn't consider dangerous.

Feeling in control of your pain can also impact how intensely it is felt. Chronic pain that persists without relief can be incredibly distressing, particularly when it limits your ability to participate in normal activities.

How Your Physiotherapist Can Help

Physiotherapists are trained not only to treat injuries but also to help you manage pain effectively. This may include a combination of hands-on therapy, exercise programs, and education about pain science. In some cases, techniques such as mirror therapy, mindfulness, and cognitive strategies may be used to help retrain the brain's response to pain.

If you are struggling with pain, don't hesitate to speak with your physiotherapist. Understanding pain and learning effective ways to manage it can make a huge difference in improving your quality of life.

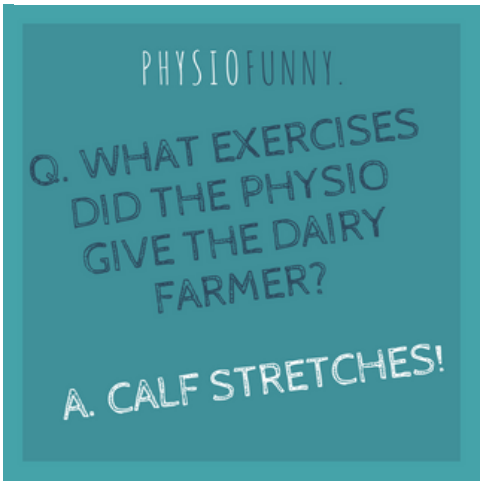
Ankle Sprains

Improving your balance is a simple way to help prevent ankle sprains. Poor balance can also be a predictor for future injuries. A quick test is to see if you can balance on one leg for two minutes.

Brain Teasers

What does this puzzle mean?

NINE
CUMULUS



Gluteal Tendinopathy

What is Gluteal Tendinopathy?

When tendons are repeatedly placed under more tension than they can deal with, they can have a failed healing response. This can cause changes to the structure of the tendon and is known as a tendinopathy. When this occurs in the tendons of the gluteal muscles it is referred to as gluteal tendinopathy.

The gluteal muscles are three large muscles located at the back of the pelvis that provide most of the muscle bulk of buttock region. These muscles work together to keep your pelvis level when standing and are responsible for many movements of the hip. They play an important role in standing, walking and running.

The two deepest gluteal muscles, gluteus medius and gluteus minimus, attach from the center of the pelvis (the sacrum) and insert into the bony outer region of the upper thigh, called the greater trochanter via the gluteal tendons.

What causes tendons to develop tendinopathy?

Tendons, like muscles, skin and bones are living tissues and their strength and elasticity is influenced by a variety of factors, including hormones, age, how often and how much they are used. Rapid changes in activity levels or simply performing the same tasks too often can place a tendon under more stress than it can tolerate and it begins to break town. Recently it has been shown that tendon health is also negatively affected by compressive forces, which can occur from blunt trauma or even habits such as crossing the legs, or sleeping on your side on a hard mattress.

What are the symptoms of Gluteal Tendinopathy?

When gluteal tendons are affected by tendinopathy, a typical pattern of sharp pain at the outside of the hip with specific movements is present. The pain is usually worse with walking, going up and down stairs and running. The pain can become quite severe, and eventually can impact day-to-day activities. In some cases, prolonged inactivity—such as sitting for extended periods—can worsen stiffness and discomfort.

How can physiotherapy help?

A thorough assessment is required for an accurate diagnosis and once gluteal tendinopathy is confirmed, your physiotherapist will be able to identify which factors have contributed to your condition and help to address these. It has been shown that specific loading exercises and muscular retraining can stimulate the tendon to heal and remodel the collagen fibres into a more organized pattern again. Your physiotherapist can investigate any postural habits or activities are contributing and address these as required.

None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your injury.

Answers: On cloud nine

Roasted Carrots and Whipped Feta

Ingredients:

450g Carrots, peeled
15ml Honey
1 Tbps smoked Paprika
Salt, pepper,
200g Feta,
60g Greek Yogurt
30ml Olive Oil
30ml Lemon Juice
1 small Garlic clove
200g Hummus
Fresh Parsley

1. Toss carrots with oil, honey, paprika, salt, and pepper. Roast at 200°C for 25-30 min, flipping halfway. Drizzle with 15ml lemon juice.
2. To make whipped feta, blend feta, greek yogurt, olive oil, 15ml lemon juice, garlic and honey in processor until smooth. Adjust consistency with a splash of water or oil if needed.
3. Spread hummus on a plate, top with roasted carrots, and garnish with whipped feta and parsley.

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Opening Hours:

Mon-Fri: 8:30am-6:00pm
Sat: By Arrangement