

# Avoiding work-related aches & pains

Winter 2005/Spring 2006



THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY  
www.csp.org.uk

## FIT to WORK exercises

Try to arrange your work to achieve a mix of sitting and moving around. Get your body moving by doing a few exercises every hour or so. This will increase circulation, send more oxygen to the brain, and help you stay alert. All the exercises should be done gently. Sit comfortably and take five slow, deep breaths before starting the exercises. Breathing should be relaxed throughout. Repeat all exercises three times.

**Stretch:** Stand up and put the heel of your hand into your lower back. Draw your elbows back and down. Keeping your head and neck steady with chin tucked in, slowly arch your back and look to the ceiling.

**Back of forearm and wrist stretch:** With your elbow straight, tuck your thumb in and make a gentle fist. Bend your wrist forward gently stretching the forearm muscles, wrist and fingers. Hold for five seconds.

**Chin tuck:** Sitting tall, imagine you are suspended by a piece of string from the crown of your head. Keeping eyes level with the horizon, tuck your chin in to make a double chin. Hold for five seconds.

**Forward press:** Gently interlock your fingers. Press your palms away from your body, gently stretching the forearm muscles, fingers and the muscles between your shoulder blades. Hold for five seconds.

**Elbow flare:** Put your hands behind your neck, loosely grasped. Keep head and neck tall. Squeeze below the shoulder blades and take elbows back, taking care not to press on the neck. Hold for five seconds.

**Side to side turn:** Sitting slightly forward in your seat, rotate your mid- and upper-back to the right, holding on to the backrest of the chair with your left hand. Hold for five seconds. Do the same in the opposite direction.

**Neck turn:** Rotate your head left then right, taking care to keep your eyes on the horizon and aiming your chin at your shoulders. Use your eyes to focus on something in the distance.

**Shoulder retractions:** Stand or sit up straight. Pull your shoulders back behind you, squeezing shoulder blades towards each other. You should feel the stretch across your chest. Hold for five seconds.

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More and more of us spend our working days carrying out repetitive activities in static postures. Bad posture, failure to take regular breaks and poorly positioned furniture and equipment can lead to conditions such as WRULDs and spinal pain and stiffness. Aim for a balance between sitting and moving around and if possible vary your tasks.

Performing a few simple exercises every hour or so can help reduce your risk of developing work-related aches and pains. You'll also boost your circulation which sends more oxygen to your brain and helps you stay alert. If you are experiencing any work-related symptoms, seek advice and help early.

Sit comfortably and take five deep breaths before starting the exercises. Breathing should be relaxed throughout and all exercises should be done gently. Repeat each exercise three times.

www.physiosolutions.co.uk

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For massage therapy appointments or further information telephone Clare Murphy (massage therapist) on 07980 580488

### Opening Hours:

Monday: 8.30am - 7.30pm  
Tuesday: 8.30am - 7.30pm  
Wednesday: 8.30am - 7.00pm  
Thursday: 8.30am - 7.00pm  
Friday: 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Saturdays: 10.00am - 12.30pm (first & last Saturday of the month)

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Welcome to the New Year edition of Physio Solutions. I hope you that you all enjoyed the Christmas break and are refreshed and raring to go for 2006!

The New Year has brought some changes at the clinic and on that note I have the pleasure of announcing two new additions to the Physio Solutions team, Rachel Brunt (left) & Helen Jeremiah (right).

Rachel is our new full-time physio and comes to us from a large busy practice in the City. She has a post-graduate diploma in Orthopaedic medicine and has extensive clinical experience. She enjoys treating a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions ranging from work-related and spinal conditions to sports injuries. She also has a special interest in postural correction incorporating the principles of Pilates and muscle balance.



Helen is our new evening physio and is currently doing her Masters at University College London in advanced neuromusculoskeletal physiotherapy. A keen runner herself, she is very interested in sports-related injuries and has a special interest and experience in shoulder injuries.

We also sadly said goodbye to Caroline Trotter who relocated to Australia prior to the birth of her second child.

There was some debate as to the best subjects to cover in this issue as we have a good deal of information to impart from recent continuing professional education courses. These ranged from the latest research and advances in work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) and work station assessments, to management of pregnancy-related spinal pain.

In the end we decided to focus on a topical matter - namely fitness to ski - and for those of you not headed to the mountains some office based exercises to help alleviate stiffness commonly experienced in sedentary jobs.

If you would like us to expand on any of the matters listed or indeed any other topics of interest in future issues please either write in or email us at hs@physiosolutions.co.uk

With best wishes,

Helen Skehan, Practice Principal

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## In this Issue

Off to the Alps? - check out our helpful hints in our guide to injury prevention and pre-holiday exercises to enhance the enjoyment of your holiday.

Desk exercises - Some simple exercises that can be carried out at work.

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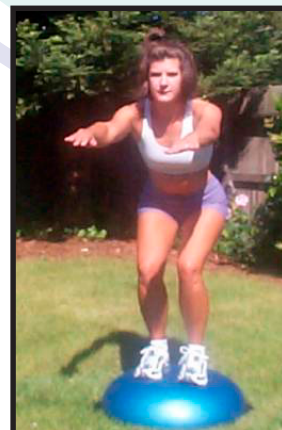
## Get fit for the slopes!

For most people, skiing requires sustained postures and levels of physical activity that are unusual in everyday life. Pre-holiday training is therefore very important to reduce the risk of injury and will also greatly increase your enjoyment of your skiing holiday - even if your primary goal is the après-ski! Skiing is one of the most demanding of athletic activities requiring a combination of strength, balance, athleticism and skill. Sport specific training is required along with a broad-based fitness programme to include the following elements - aerobic and anaerobic activity, quickness and agility, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, coordination and balance.

**Strength Training:** If you have access to a health club, an exercise bicycle or stairmaster are useful pieces of equipment to use. Step, aerobic and circuit training classes provide similar benefits. Many gyms now have ski-specific classes. All of these work the quadriceps and hip musculature as well as provide aerobic training. Outdoor cycling, especially mountain biking is equally effective for building up the larger leg muscles and running up stairs is another option. Build in interval work - short periods of intense activity followed by short periods of recovery just as on the slopes. Don't forget to work on your triceps muscles for those all too frequent occasions when you need to use your poles to help you get across flat sections of piste.

**Balance** is a fundamental requirement for controlled skiing. Balance can be improved by wobble-board and bosu ball (a half-gym ball now found in many gyms- see photo) exercises and various activities requiring a one-legged stance. Running, walking and hiking on uneven terrain all help to develop balance. The abdominal muscles are the key muscle group for maintaining balance in dynamic skiing. It is also important when training the stomach muscles not to neglect the opposing muscles of the lower back.

**Stretching** is extremely important in the prevention of injury, particularly in the cold. The best way to loosen up and prevent a disabling back, neck or hamstring injury is to do at least 5 minutes of aerobic activity prior to skiing and to stretch for at least five minutes. Don't forget to stretch *after* skiing which can greatly help in reducing muscle soreness.



bosu ball

Some useful specific exercises for skiing are as follows:

**1. Single leg knee bends: (increase from 10 to 30 on each leg) fig. 1**

Stand on one leg with your other leg forwards and your hands in the skiing position. Sink slowly to 90 degrees on your supporting leg and rise again slowly.

**2. Lateral thrust: (increase from 15 to 40) fig. 2**

Leap to the side from outside leg to outside leg. A leap in each direction counts as one.

**3. High Bouncing: (increase from 30 secs to 2 minutes) fig. 3**

Stand up-right with feet together and arms held in the skiing position. Jump as high and as fast as possible bringing the knees up on each jump. Variations include bouncing from side to side and forward to backward. May also be done on one leg.

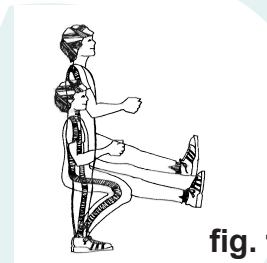


fig. 1

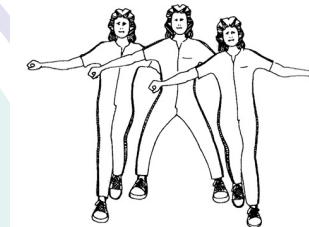


fig. 2



fig. 3

### FINAL TIPS TO HELP AVOID INJURY

**Knee Injuries:** If you have problems with your knee, use of a knee brace and a specialised exercise programme may help reduce your chances of further injury. If you injure yourself on the slopes, don't continue skiing without seeking medical attention. A bad problem can easily be made worse!

**Fatigue:** Do not ski when you are tired. It is not a myth that more ski injuries happen later in the day when muscles are fatigued and less responsive. Resist the temptation to have just one more run at the end of the day.

**Snow conditions:** From March onwards, the lower slopes in many resorts get slushy in the early afternoon which greatly increases the risk of injury, especially to the knees. It is often better to take the lift back to the resort and avoid the lower slopes.

**Hydration:** Fluid intake is also important. You sweat to control body temperature when doing exercise and dehydration can result if this fluid is not replaced. Unfortunately alcohol is a diuretic so doesn't count on the rehydration front!

In the event of injury remember the **PRICE** rule: **P**rotection, **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression and **E**levation. A hot bath is **not recommended** in the early stages post-injury-first 72 hours. The increase in temperature increases the circulation which in turn increases bleeding, swelling and bruising. If symptoms do not settle within 2-3 days see your GP or Chartered Physiotherapist.

If you have a particular query or injury and are going skiing, you may wish to book a consultation with one of our physios for more specific advice and a tailored exercise programme

## New

We are hoping to introduce a diet & nutrition service where a Registered Dietician would offer consultations at Physio Solutions. Nutrition-related assessment and advice, diet analysis, weight monitoring and individual programmes would be available. If you are interested in this service please call the clinic for further information.