

PhysioBiz

Health newflashes

for bodies busy moving, working, playing, being.



Who you gonna call? The Painbusters!

Welcome to PhysioBiz, with healthcare advice and information you can trust and rely on, brought to you by the South African Society of Physiotherapy!

Say, “So I saw my physiotherapist today,” and everyone involved in the conversation immediately assumes you’ve got a dicey knee or shoulder injury sustained while cycling, running or lifting weights – or that your neck and shoulder muscles have seized up from too much screen work.

And those are good reasons to call your physiotherapist, no question. What many people don’t realise is that physiotherapy should be your first call for many other causes of pain, discomfort or debilitation:

Face pain

Many people suffer from severe pain in their cheeks, temples and face or headaches that radiate up from the side of the face, and don’t realise that what’s at fault may be the temporal mandibular joint, the joint that connects your jaw to your skull. This may be a sign of stress – often it results from unconsciously grinding your teeth together – or it may be a result of some problem inside the joint itself. Physiotherapists can assess the problem and use hands-on soft tissue and joint techniques to ease the pain – as well as teaching you movements and management techniques you can use at home to stay pain-free.

Headaches

When headaches are caused (wholly, or even in part) by problems with muscles, joints and bones, the headache-busters supreme are physiotherapists who’ve taken a special interest in Orthopaedic Manual and Manipulative Physiotherapy. Pounding, debilitating pain in your head may be caused by problems with cervical joints and the muscles around them, and no painkiller is going to make this go away.

Trained hands and brains can get joints moving and melt stiffness, stretching muscles and getting you to move against resistance. Good advice and a home exercise programme will help to maintain the improvement.

Pain in the ribs or sternum

Does it hurt when you cough? Is there pain running round your chest, from back to front, or shooting right through so that you think you’re having a heart attack? If you push on the cartilage in front of your ribcage, where the ribs join your breastbone, does it cause a stabbing pain?

Your rib-cage is a rather wonderfully mobile thing attached to spine at the back and the sternum at the front, and has muscles between ribs to perform the action of breathing. All of these ligaments and muscles can be affected by falls, car accidents or strain and unusual actions, and physiotherapists with a special interest in Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy have a thorough understanding of how that can cause very sharp and movement-limiting pain. And with hands-on techniques, they can help free up the rib joints and soft tissues so you can move again.

Throbbing, stuffy head

You know the feeling: that stuffiness, tightness and pain across your face, a drip running down the back of your throat... sinusitis is often the result of a viral or bacterial infection, but it can also be triggered by irritants in the air. And with a drier atmosphere thanks to changes in our climate, more and more people are sufferers.

Physiotherapists can help you manage this debilitating condition. They use electrotherapy techniques such as ultrasound and laser to help the sinuses drain, reduce inflammation and speed healing, as well as hands-on upper neck joint techniques to help break up the stuffiness.

Find a physiotherapist with a special interest in Orthopaedic Manual and Manipulative Physiotherapy at www.saphysio.co.za.