

Human Touch Therapies Newsletter

November 2008

Human Touch Therapies - The Holistic Approach

In Focus: Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)

Have you been experiencing pain, tingling, coldness, weakness or numbness in your shoulders, arms, hands, or even your neck and upper back? And do your daily activities include repetitive actions such as using the computer, working on an assembly line or at a till, playing an instrument like the guitar or the piano, using a knife, pen, or similar tool a lot? Then there is a chance that you are developing a Repetitive Strain Injury, or RSI.

RSI is an umbrella term to describe a group of mostly soft-tissue injuries that are typically a result of repetitive movements combined with physical stress. It primarily affects the muscles, but tendons and nerves can be involved as well.

Common RSIs include specific conditions such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Tendonitis, Tennis & Golfer's elbow. However many people suffer from diffuse RSI, where there is no clear-cut diagnosis, but a range of symptoms and aches exist, and not always in the same area.

Several factors can contribute to RSI or aggravate the condition: poor posture & weak core muscles, previous injuries, accidents, or operations, poor eating or sleeping habits, lack of exercise, emotional or physical stress, improper ergonomics at home or at work, insufficient breaks, and some unconscious habits such as shallow breathing.

If you think you may have an RSI, the first thing you should do is visit your GP to diagnose the source of your problems. This is important as it is possible that your symptoms are actually caused by something else, such as arthritis or thyroid disorders for example.

If other conditions are excluded, your doctor may refer you to a specialist, Fortunately now that more and more people are suffering from RSI these days, the number and variety of treatments and NHS specialists available is increasing too. Ask to be referred to a specialist, e.g. a physiotherapist, who is trained in and has a lot of experience with RSI. If you cannot get an appropriate referral, or if the NHS waiting list is too long, it could be worth going private, even if it's only for an initial assessment.

There are many other therapies out there that treat RSI, both conventional and complementary. Often combining several treatments can be beneficial, such as chiropractic, massage, and Pilates, depending on the cause of your problems. Other examples of therapies treating RSI are osteopathy, Alexander technique, and acupuncture. In extreme cases you could even opt for medication, injections, or ultimately surgery (all via the NHS). But this should really only be the very last resort, as risks and results vary.

Everyone is different and a treatment that works well for one person, may not work at all for another. However anyone can and should do some things to help recovery and prevent recurrence themselves. First of all you'll need to make some changes in the contributing activities in your life. For example if your RSI is PC-induced, get your workstation assessed and adjusted if necessary. And more importantly: get up and walk around regularly. Initially you might need to take short breaks every 20 minutes.

Welcome...

...to the November edition of the Human Touch Therapies Newsletter! I hope you enjoy reading it!

The website has been evolving a bit, but the new layout and logo are still in the pipeline. Hopefully it will be updated very soon.

Winner of free treatment

The winner of this edition's prize draw will be e-mailed today. Congratulations!

Other stuff

Human Touch Therapies is moving! I have now started practicing at the newly opened Berkeley Centre in Clifton:
<http://www.theberkeleycentre.co.uk/> (This website will go fully live in the next week or so.)

They will be organising a big opening weekend on 15-16th November, offering FREE taster sessions and a look around the building. Let me know if you're interested in coming along and I'll e-mail you the flyer.

My new hours and rates are on my website:
<http://www.humantouchtherapies.co.uk/Prices.aspx>

Please note that I will unfortunately have to stop working on Alma Vale Road after next week.

If you have any questions about my services or The Berkeley Centre, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I hope to see you all on the 15th/16th!

I have now finished the Practitioner's course Intercultural NLP and am looking to start developing this side of the business soon.

Later this month I will be doing an advanced 3-day workshop on Deep Tissue Massage at the Bristol College of Massage and Bodywork.

Human Touch Therapies
Jenny Dalhuijsen

During your breaks, or otherwise at home, several times a day, do some appropriate stretching exercises. Additionally improve your posture by strengthening the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen. Get a Swiss fit ball for example and start with beginner exercises. Build some moments of relaxation into your life, where you switch off your brain and you can just be with yourself, focussing on your body and your breath. Yoga and meditation are great for this, even if you only practice 10 minutes a day. Or you could go and book a nice, relaxing massage.

And think about what else could be contributing to your condition. Are you still enjoying your job? Are you in a stressful relationship? Do you consume a lot of processed or refined foods, or alcohol? Are you getting enough sleep, exercise and fresh air? Do you have any hobbies or engage in activities you enjoy? Do you put more physical effort into daily activities such as brushing your teeth than necessary? Are you breathing shallowly or do you even hold your breath a lot without realising it? Making changes here can do more to help you recover than any treatment or therapy!

Some more useful information about RSI, chronic pain and exercises:

www.rsi.org.uk
www.selfcare4rsi.com
www.exercise.about.com/cs/abs/l/bl_core.htm
www.rsiwarrior.com/stretch.html
"Effortless Pain Relief", by Ingrid Bacci (available from Amazon)

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