IN HAND

RSIACT
THE RSI & OVERUSE INJURY ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT

Newsletter of the RSI and Overuse Injury Association of the ACT—supported by the ACT Health Directorate

Summer 2022

Start 2022 feeling tall

See our checklist on page 2





Neutral wrist posture

Our Services

HELPING PEOPLE WITH RSI

- Telephone information service
- Referrals
- Guest speakers
- Events and exercise programs
- Treatment options
- Ergonomic devices
- Voice-operated computing
- Workers' compensation
- Research, tips and tools for daily life

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The RSI & Overuse Injury Association of the ACT can be contacted at admin@rsi.org.au

https://www.facebook.com/RSIACT/

Tips and Tools

Mindful breathing for pain control

University of Michigan

It's long been known that meditative mindful breathing helps with health conditions, including pain.

- Researchers at the University of Michigan have analysed two types of breathing control exercises, traditional mindful breathing and virtual reality 3D-guided breathing
- These exercises are said to reduce pain by regulating the part of the brain responsible for processing pain, the somatosensory cortex
- Traditional breathing uses a process called interoception, where attention is drawn to the body's internal systems, which activates the brain's frontal regions. This exercise is said to compete with pain signals and interfere with the somatosensory cortex and the brain's ability to process pain.
- It is said that traditional breathing mimicks a painkilling effect, drawing focus to internal organ functions (heart beat, for instance).
- The VR group used special glasses and watched a pair of virtual reality 3D lungs, creating an audibly and visually immersive experience. This process, exteroception, also inhibited the functioning of the somatosensory cortex, drawing attention to external stimuli.
- Both work to control breathing, but in different ways. Traditional breathing focuses on internal processes, while the VR breathing immerses individuals in external stimuli.
- One potential limitation to traditional mindful breathing is that it requires attention for an extended period of time, on a rather 'abstract experience'.
- Researchers recommend that VR breathing may be more accessible to individuals, particularly those who have not had many experiences with controlled breathing, because it is a deeply immersive exercise.
- Researchers are looking into ways they can convert this experience into a mobile application, so that it can be made more accessible to chronic pain sufferers.

Track your mood

Daylio Mood Tracking App (https://daylio.net/)

Track your mood, activities, behavioural patterns that influence and are influenced by your RSI or other chronic conditions.

Choose and customise your tracking categories (for instance, physical health, nutrition, sleep, pain, self-care, emotional wellbeing, relationships, work, hobbies, treatment/management techniques). You can choose from different fields and make notes or include photos. For example, you could record treatments and outcomes.

The app produces weekly and monthly insights into what makes an excellent day for you!

EMAIL US ABOUT YOUR TIPS AND TOOLS!!

Tennis Elbow - A Practical Home Approach

How to treat tennis elbow at home Author: Dr Graem Blennerhassett

In this article we show you how to effectively treat tennis elbow at home
Tennis elbow is a painful condition where prolonged abnormal tension in your forearm muscles causes the site where they are attached to become inflamed and painful. While much attention is given to the inflamed site where the muscles attach, the critical and often overlooked issue is to eliminate the cause of abnormal tension.
The key elements of home therapy for tennis elbow are to:

- initially reduce the inflammation: eg. rest and possible applications of ice,
- help reduce abnormal tension by i) modifying activities and ii) treating tight muscles with massage or trigger point therapy, and finally
- as the tennis elbow heals possibly use stretches and exercises to help rehabilitate any muscles that have deteriorated due to the condition.

For other strategies see the link below

- https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2021/11/how-to-treat-tennis-elbow-at-home

Mindspot - Online course

MindSpot is a free service for Australian adults who are experiencing difficulties with anxiety, stress, depression and low mood. They provide assessment and treatment courses, or they can help you find local services that can help.

The first step is a 16-page assessment with several multiple-choice questions per page. The assessment asks about your symptoms of depression and anxiety.

There are various courses available to help with anxiety and depression. As soon as one set of courses start, then another set is published with a start date of only a few days later. This means there is no long wait to do a course. If you do not want to do a course there are various other options available, including contacting other Australian organisations who may be able to help you. It's worthwhile checking if this might work for you on Link: https://www.mindspot.org.au/

Pain and Age - A Perspective that we should reconsider

People living in pain face a multitude of complex barriers and unique challenges. These challenges often increase as we get older. It is common for people, as they age, to feel that they are listened to less often and their opinion is held less highly by those around them. This is especially true when it comes to pain. Many older people and their carers believe that pain is a normal part of ageing and there is little potential for improvement. No-one wants to be seen as someone who complains too much. Asking for help is not always easy, especially if you are seeking “not to be a bother because pain is just a part of getting older.”

Source: https://www.painaustralia.org.au/pain-and-ageism-we-have-to-do-better

Your mobile phone: RSI issues & solutions

Overview: it is possible to get a hand injury from holding or using your phone too much. Activities such as texting, swiping and scrolling on a phone too often can lead to some physical health issues, like eye strain, neck pain, issues with hands, wrists and thumbs.

Dr. Jessica A. Frankenhoff, an orthopaedic surgeon at Virginia Commonwealth University, said these problems are typically minor and easy to treat, and permanent injuries are rare. The key is early intervention, using the tips presented at the end of this article.

There are different types of hand pain that can be associated with overusing your phone, which could potentially lead to inflammation, swelling or tenderness in one or more joints. These can include: "texting thumb", tendonitis, arthritis and even carpal tunnel syndrome.

Texting thumb — Pain, inflammation and swelling of thumb tendons caused by repetitive motion.
Tendonitis — Inflammation of a tendon, which is the cord attaching a muscle to a bone,
Carpal tunnel syndrome — A numbness, tingling, or weakness caused by a pinched wrist nerve.

It's not just the thumb that can become overused; other fingers and even your elbow can be strained from working on laptops or watching devices in bed. You may flex your elbow in a way that kinks a nerve, affecting the pinky and ring fingers.

Elbows can suffer if you spend too much time holding your phone to your ear, resting your elbow on a desk or keeping your arm bent at an acute angle while using a computer mouse. These positions can contribute to cubital tunnel syndrome, which is increased tension in the tunnel through which the ulnar nerve passes in the elbow. Symptoms of cubital tunnel are numbness and tingling in the ring and pinky finger, as well as soreness on the inside of the elbow or forearm.

This doesn't happen overnight, it is years and years of compression. Unfortunately some people are more predisposed to these injuries due to a smaller canal and cubital tunnel or postural issue.

Tips from the RSI Association:
- Avoid positions that keep your elbow flexed.
- Take breaks, switch hands and stretch.
- Use a pop socket to get a better grip on your phone.
- Use hands-free options when you're talking on the phone, instead of holding it.



Using your voice

You can also use your voice to do things with your phone. You will need to be connected to the Internet to do this (either have Wi-Fi on or use mobile data). If you have an Android phone touch the microphone symbol located in the google search bar and when it says it is listening say "call then mention either one of your contacts or an organisation that is in Google Maps". It will then make that call. To write an SMS put the cursor in the text box then touch the microphone located on the right-hand side just above the keyboard (but not the one to the right of the text box). When it says it is listening say what should go in the SMS. You can also say such things as "newline", "full stop". You may need to train yourself not to stutter and to know what you want to say before speaking.