

YOGA & BACK PAIN

It is said that 80% of the population will experience back pain at some stage in their lives. Often this is dealt with by taking painkillers, sometimes long-term.

One major source of back pain is injury-from falls, sports, lifting, etc. However many injuries may occur without our knowledge, preventing the spine from moving properly, leading to pain and inflammation. The injury can be to a small area but inflammation produces toxins, which in turn, affects surrounding tissues and the pain becomes more widespread.

A healthy spine is flexible and able to absorb lifting and even some falls but poor postural habits create inflexibility and sudden movements can damage soft spinal tissue. Poor posture can start early in life when we sit slumped over desks or computers at school or in soft easy chairs which curve the spine. Sometimes postural habits are caused by long-term emotional stress or strain.

Once there is limited movement in a specific area the joints above and below need to move more in order to compensate, in turn putting undue strain on them.

The many physical and hormonal changes of pregnancy can create various back disorders as the centre of gravity changes, ligaments loosen and weight is gained. It can also wake up the "body memory" to old injuries or even exacerbate existing ones. All of this can make for a miserable time when one should be able to enjoy this period in life.

Post-natally the ligaments are still loose and new mums tend to do a lot of lifting and carrying and awkward manoeuvring of babies, toddlers, buggies and car seats, etc.

Both yoga and massage can act in either a therapeutic or preventative way by improving muscle tone and joint lubrication, removing toxins, encouraging relaxation, improving breathing and circulation. The spine can be strengthened, improving flexibility and posture.

Bernadette King BWYDip, ITECAPMDip, ITECIHMDip is a widely experienced yoga teacher and a massage therapist/healer. She offers therapeutic massage, Indian Head Massage, 1-1 yoga tuition /therapy as well as hatha yoga classes, pregnancy yoga & mum & baby yoga yoga.

She has recently opened a treatment room in Sheel Pharmacy, 312-4 Lewisham Rd, SE13 and is offering a 10% discount to Families Southeast readers who come for treatments during Jan/Feb 2005.

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