

The Health & Wellness Chronicle

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Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

Stretch Out

A few precautions can prevent future pain

Kelli Crosby

You brush your teeth daily because you don't want cavities or gum disease, right? Well, what do you do on a daily basis to prevent tension in your neck? Brushing your teeth offers you preventive dental care, but what if you could learn to be preventive with the rest of your body?

We all have bad daily habits we don't even notice until something starts to hurt. These bad habits are the root cause of many painful conditions. To help prevent pain, however, we can turn these bad habits into good habits that can be worked into our daily routine. Here is some general advice that can apply to almost every part of daily living.

Sit Up Straight.

Sit in a chair with your hands on your hips. Slouch. Feel how your hips roll back (if you're wearing jeans, you'll be sitting on your pockets). Now sit up straight by moving your pelvis forward and centering your weight over your pelvis and off your buttocks.

Sleep on Your Back or Side.

Sleeping on your stomach makes you twist your neck and body in order to breathe. This twisted position is terrible for your spine, especially for prolonged periods during sleep. Check your pillow and make sure it has a thickness that will support your neck in a position neutral to the rest of your spine. Try a

*Those who
bring sunshine
into the lives of
others, cannot
keep it from
themselves.*

-James M. Barrie



Even just a few minutes at work can help turn bad habits into good ones.

Don't Slouch.

Slouching puts strain on your neck and can give you a headache. Your head weighs roughly 10 pounds-about as much as a bowling ball. Your spine is designed to balance that bowling ball when you're in an upright posture. If you slouch, your muscles have to do more work to hold your head up, which makes your muscles tight and angry.

memory-foam contour pillow, especially if you are a side sleeper.

Bend with a Straight Spine.

Bending over with a curved back puts pressure on your disc material and strains the spine. The pressure created during incorrect bending can cause the

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discs to bulge and put pressure on spinal nerves. Your back was not made to lower and raise your body—that's what your buttocks, hips, and knees are for.

Stand with your knees shoulder-width apart and pretend you are going to lift a 50-pound box off the floor. If you are bending your knees and hips and using your legs to lower and raise your body weight, you are lifting correctly. Now, use the same technique to pick your shoes up off the floor. Think about a squatting movement when you need to lean forward, too—such as while washing your face in the sink. Let your hips and knees do the work.

Take Regular Stretch Breaks.

The muscles in your arms and hands get tight when you grip or pull. The muscles in your neck and shoulders get tight when you reach forward or away from your body. Give these muscles a break with a simple stretch.

It only takes 10 seconds to lengthen the tight tissue, which will take pressure off your joints and prevent chronic conditions like tendinitis and bursitis. Watch for opportunities to work in a brief stretch.

Undo Yourself.

Evaluate the position of your body during your daily activities and make sure you "undo" that position during the day. There is no way to teach a stretch for every single activity you do, but if you take the time to reverse the position of the joint and stretch in the opposite direction, you will lengthen tight tissue and reduce repetitive strain on joints.

Tips to Save Your Body

Replacing bad habits with good ones takes time and thought, but the effort is well worth it. Here are some helpful tips to keep you on track.

-- If you keep waking up on your stomach, wear a pair of gym shorts to bed and put a golf ball in each pocket. When you roll onto your stomach, the golf balls will wake you up and you can return to your back or side.

-- When unloading the dishwasher and getting laundry out of the machine, pose

like a tennis player waiting for a serve. The knees are over your toes (but not beyond the toes), buttocks are backward, and shoulders are forward.

-- Don't try to carve out 30 minutes daily for a stretching routine. If you stretch regularly throughout the day, you will be more effective at keeping tissue loose. Remember, it only takes 10 seconds to stretch a muscle—so find those seconds during your day and make the most of them.

-- Think about stretching the same way you think about hydration. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink water; by then you're already dehydrated. If you wait until something hurts before you stretch, you could develop chronic tension that can lead to everything from a headache to tendinitis.

A daily stretching routine will help

prevent future issues and address current ones. Don't wait until it's a problem. Start stretching today and, little by little, your body will thank you.

Kelli Crosby is the author of How to Think Like a Physical Therapist in Your Everyday Life. She graduated in 1999 from the University of North Florida and completed her specialty certification in orthopedic manipulative therapy in 2006.



Stretching for 10 seconds can take pressure off your joints and help relieve pain.

Massage Ambiance is Key

Is the Scene Conducive to Your Relaxation?

Nina McIntosh

Ever had a massage but couldn't fully enjoy it because the music was too fast, or the aromatherapy was not to your liking, or outside noise was disruptive? Whatever the issue, feel comfortable knowing that your massage therapist wants you to express your feelings.

The quality of communication between the practitioner and the client is key. By all means, you should speak up about anything that diminishes your enjoyment of, or ability to focus on, your session, no matter whether the problem is the therapist's office or her/his behavior. It's your session, and you have the right to an environment that supports your relaxation.

Having said that, it's not always easy to assert yourself while lying naked on a table. However, your practitioner is a professional and is open to, even seeking, feedback. If you are bothered, others probably are too. Your practitioner wants and needs to know and would much prefer you mentioning

it than choosing to not come back again.

And you may learn something as well. Perhaps that lavender oil you thought was too strong actually helps relaxation and will work wonders for you in a more diluted form. Or maybe the exterior noise is a problem only on Monday evenings, and you can be sure to avoid booking your appointment then.

FIXING THE PROBLEM

The situation may be something easy to remedy, like changing the music or essential oils. But if it's something more complex, like exterior noise from officemates, your practitioner may need time to address the situation.

View the situation as an opportunity to provide important, constructive feedback about the services offered as well a chance to enhance the therapeutic relationship between you and your massage practitioner.

Your massage session is about you. Take

responsibility for communicating your needs, and your session will be all the more healing for it.



Communicating your needs is key.

Coenzyme Q10

The Wrinkle Cure

Air pollutants, toxins, cigarette smoke, cell metabolism, exposure to the sun, and other environmental factors initiate free radicals, which can cause dangerous reactions that destroy cells and damage DNA, proteins, and fats. Free radicals also interfere with collagen production and integrity, resulting in loss of elasticity and, ultimately, aging skin. Although this is a natural and unavoidable by-product of metabolism, an overabundance of free radical damage can cause premature aging and wrinkles. Fortunately, there's a nutritional way to fight the elements.

Coenzyme Q10, also called CoQ10 and ubiquinone, is a fat soluble, vitamin-like nutrient present in virtually all cells and considered the spark plug of the body, helping to produce and regulate energy as well as

fighting free radicals as an antioxidant.

CoQ10 levels are highest during the first 20 years of life and decline with time, so much so that at age 80, CoQ10 levels may be lower than at birth. Yet the body's demand for CoQ10 increases with age. Furthermore, statin (cholesterol-lowering) medications can further deplete the body of CoQ10.

The recommended daily CoQ10 dose is 30 mg, in combination with alpha lipoic acid and vitamins A, C, E, and selenium. Foods highest in CoQ10 include sardines, beef, peanuts, spinach, and albacore tuna. However, it would take a pound of sardines, two pounds of beef, or two-and-a-half pounds of peanuts to provide 30 mg, and cooking foods at high temperatures degrades the enzyme. Consequently,

CoQ10 supplementation is likely necessary to achieve therapeutic effects.

CoQ10 can also benefit topically, as it's a small molecule that can easily penetrate the skin. When CoQ10 is combined with vitamins C and E in creams or lotions, the synergistic effect can neutralize free radicals, thus reducing wrinkles.

Supplementing with CoQ10 is not only a good antiaging strategy for the skin, it can also enhance energy, cognition, heart health, stroke prevention, and immune support.

*If you have built
castles in the air,
your work need
not be lost; that
is where they
should be. Now
put foundations
under them.*

-Henry David Thoreau

Summer is now in full swing. As you schedule your vacation, family reunion, and other outings, don't forget to take time to schedule some down time for yourself and recharge your batteries with massage and bodywork. If you are very (physically) active, it can tremendously decrease your soreness as well as stave of injuries; so, don't forget about taking care of yourself while you're taking care of the kids and everyone else this summer. It has long been documented that massage is not just a luxury item, but has tremendous benefits for day to day living. Please contact the office or book your appointment online now on the Hours and Scheduling tab of our website: <http://motusmassagetherapy.com>, or book on our facebook page at www.facebook.com/motusmassagetherapy. Like our page while you're there and get \$10 off your next session. Thanks in advance and make this a great day because they don't happen by accident!

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