



**UNLOCKING
THORACIC PAIN**



**EXPLAINING
SPRAINS & STRAINS**



**CUCUMBERS
FOR HEALTH**



**JOINT-FRIENDLY
ACTIVITIES**

OUR CENTRE LOCATIONS

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**NEW CLIENTS AND MEMBERS ARE
WELCOME.**

**THANKS FOR YOUR REFERRAL TO OUR
CENTRE.**

**WE WISH YOU ALL GOOD HEALTH FOR
2025.**

**DR DARREN IS ON LEAVE FROM 12TH
JANUARY TO 3RD FEBRUARY.**

**WE ARE NOW OPEN IN WAUCHOPE 4
DAYS PER WEEK.**

Dr Darren J Gray

Chiropractor, Certified Rehab Therapist

BSc, MChiro, MClinRehabNeuro (MCAA, ClinFellAAFN)

Dr Melinda Burke

Chiropractor

BChiropractic, MastChiropractic

Port Macquarie Monday–Saturday

**Wauchope Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
and Friday**

*We attempt to cater for same day
appointments, however forward booking
your appointments is always recommended
to avoid disappointment.*

Balancing act:

the hidden strain of carrying a toddler on your hip

Life with young children is demanding, and carrying a baby or toddler on one hip is a common habit that feels natural and convenient.

However, this position can strain your muscles and joints, leading to discomfort, fatigue, or even chronic pain over time. Understanding how this habit affects your body and learning ways to minimise strain can help prevent these issues.

Potential problems:

- **Pelvic problems:** The pelvis supports the spine and torso, much like the floor supports a house. Carrying a child on one side causes the pelvis to tilt and shift outward, similar to the walls of a house on uneven foundations. Over time, this can strain the sacroiliac (SI) joints, which connect the pelvis to the lower spine, potentially leading to joint instability, muscle tension, nerve irritation, inflammation, and pain.
- **Lower back pain:** A tilted pelvis forces the lumbar spine to shift, adding strain. Additionally, carrying a child on one hip often means multitasking. This involves awkward movements like reaching and bending, which can result in chronic lower back pain.
- **Upper body tension:** Holding a toddler with one arm engages your shoulder, neck, and upper back muscles unevenly, which may lead to muscle tightness, knots, and discomfort. You

might have felt this in your shoulder and neck on the carrying side. This tightness can sometimes lead to tension headaches or worsen neck pain.

Preventing problems:

- **Switch sides:** If carrying a child on your hip is unavoidable, alternate sides frequently. This helps prevent one side of your body from becoming overworked, reducing the risk of pain and muscle imbalances.
- **Limit carrying time:** Avoid holding your toddler in the hip carry position for long periods to lessen strain. Use a stroller when possible, or ask for help from family and friends.
- **Strengthen core muscles:** A strong core supports the pelvis and spine, helps bear additional weight, and improves posture. Strengthening your core can also aid recovery from abdominal separation caused by pregnancy. However, consult your healthcare provider to ensure the exercises are safe and suitable for your recovery stage.
- **Practice good posture:** When bending and moving, hold your child close to the centre of your body, bend your knees instead of your back, and keep your feet hip-width apart for stability. Set your child down before lifting items to avoid awkward positions and extra weight-bearing. Good posture reduces strain on muscles and joints, and keeps you balanced.

While the hip carry is convenient, be mindful of its effects on your body. If you need help, we can assess your posture and movement patterns and provide targeted advice to manage strain and improve your comfort.



Small changes in how you carry your child can protect your body from long-term pain and strain.

Stay active: preventing and treating sprains and strains

Sprains and strains are common injuries, especially during our active younger years. Vigorous exercise increases the risk, but it tends to decline after your forties. Knowing how to prevent and manage these injuries is essential for staying active and healthy.



torn, such as during heavy lifting, sudden rapid movements, or repetitive activities like running. Symptoms include pain, cramping, muscle weakness, and tenderness.

Ways to prevent sprains and strains

While you can't eliminate the risk entirely, these tips can help reduce your chances of injury:

- **Warm-up properly:** warming up improves joint flexibility, boosts muscle performance, and improves nerve coordination.
- **Strengthen muscles:** building strength increases stability, support and function, and reduces injury risk.
- **Mind your movement:** use correct form and technique during exercise and daily activities. Avoid sudden movements or overloading muscles and joints.

How do sprains and strains differ?

Although sprains and strains sound similar, they affect different parts of the body and require tailored care.

Sprains involve the stretching or tearing of ligaments—the strong, fibrous tissues that connect bones to each other. Sprains often occur when a joint is pushed beyond its normal range of motion, such as rolling your ankle or landing awkwardly during a jump. Signs of a sprain include pain, swelling, bruising, and reduced joint mobility.

Strains affect muscles or tendons, which attach muscles to bones. They happen when these tissues are overstretched or

Treating sprains and strains

Depending on the injury severity and location, ongoing issues like pain, instability, or repeated injuries can arise, so early diagnosis and proper care are vital. Initially, both sprains and strains can be treated using the R.I.C.E. Method (right).

Whether your strain or sprain injury is new or long-standing, we're here to help you recover.



R.I.C.E. Method

Rest

Avoid moving or putting weight on the injured area.

Ice

Apply an ice pack (wrapped in a cloth) for 10 minutes; remove it for 10 minutes then reapply.

Compression:

Use a compression bandage to reduce swelling, but ensure it isn't too tight.

Elevation:

Raise the injured limb above heart level to minimise swelling.

Test your health knowledge

See if you can fill in the blanks in the following sentences

1. A strong _____ supports the pelvis and spine, helps bear additional weight, and improves posture.
2. The _____ area is between the base of your neck and the top of your lower back.
3. The thoracic spine has twelve _____, each connected to ribs, with intervertebral discs in between.
4. _____ is an excellent low-impact workout. Your body weight is supported, reducing stress on your joints.
5. If you struggle with knee issues, _____ strengthens the muscles around this important joint.
6. _____ involve the stretching or tearing of ligaments—the strong, fibrous tissues that connect bones.
7. _____ affect muscles or tendons, which attach muscles to bones. They happen when these tissues are overstretched or torn.
8. _____ contain a type of dietary fibre called pectin, which can support digestive health.

Hint: these sentences can be found in the articles in this newsletter.

Cucumber: a cool and crunchy choice for health

When it comes to refreshing and healthy snacks, cucumbers often top the list. These cool and crunchy veggies are not only delicious, but also offer impressive health benefits. Let's take a closer look.



Hydration heroes

Cucumbers are over 95% water, making them a refreshing way to stay hydrated. Good hydration is essential for many functions, including digestion, circulation, and temperature regulation - especially in summer.

Nutrient-rich

Cucumbers are also nutritional. They're a good source of vitamins and minerals like vitamin K, vitamin C, potassium, and magnesium. Vitamin K aids blood clotting, while vitamin C is known for its immune-boosting properties.

The combination of potassium and magnesium in cucumbers can be beneficial for your heart. Potassium helps regulate blood pressure, while magnesium supports muscle and nerve function.

Joint-friendly summer activities

Long summer days and warm evenings are perfect for staying active, but achy joints can make this challenging. Luckily there are some enjoyable activities that are gentle on your joints. Let's explore three options to keep you moving with ease.

Swim, swim, swim

Embrace the water! Swimming is an excellent low-impact workout. Your body weight is supported, reducing stress on your joints. You can enjoy a full-body workout, strengthen your muscles, and improve your mobility without wear and tear. Swimming laps can also be relaxing, which may help relieve stress.

If laps aren't your thing, try walking, running, or aqua aerobics in waist-deep or deeper water. The resistance of the water not only helps build muscle and improves heart health, but is also kind on joints.

Ready to cycle?

Cycling on a stationary bike or a level path is a fantastic joint-friendly activity. The smooth circular motion reduces strain and avoids jolts that occur during higher-impact activities. If you struggle with knee issues, cycling strengthens the muscles around this important joint. The result is stability without stress.

It's time for a saunter!

Walking is an accessible exercise, and choosing softer surfaces may make all the difference. A cushioned track or grass

Weight management

If you're looking to shed a few kilograms or maintain a healthy weight, cucumbers can help. They're low in kilojoules and high in water and fibre, which can help you feel full. Snacking on cucumbers is a smart choice when you're trying to curb your appetite.

Digestive health

Cucumbers contain pectin, a type of dietary fibre that supports digestive health by promoting regular bowel movements and helping to prevent constipation. Their high water content also softens stools, aiding overall digestion and easing strain on your digestive system.

Antioxidant boost

Cucumbers are rich in antioxidants, which help protect your body's cells from damage. This antioxidant activity may contribute to reducing the risk of chronic diseases and promotes overall well-being.

Skin glow

Cucumbers aren't just for eating; their anti-inflammatory and hydrating properties can soothe irritated skin and reduce puffiness around your eyes.

Whether you're looking to boost your immunity, manage your weight, or support your heart health, cucumbers are a great choice.

minimises the impact on your joints. If you can't walk long distances, aim for frequent, shorter walks. Even terrain will also help.

There are activities that are not so good for sore joints. Let's look at two that are best approached with caution, if at all: running and high-impact sports.

Running on hard surfaces like concrete can put significant pressure on your joints - knees, hips, back, and feet included. The impact can be jarring! If running is essential to your routine, try switching to a treadmill or a cushioned running track. Consider a slow jog or brisk walk for reducing stress on your joints.

Sports like netball, footy, and basketball are hard on your joints. Sudden stops, jumping, and rapid changes in direction are stressful. These movements strain knees, ankles, and hips, increasing the risk of joint pain and injury. Instead, consider swimming or cycling to stay active and fit.

Choose activities that promote healthy movement without high impact. You'll find it more enjoyable, and reduce the risk of injury. If you're unsure about what exercise to do, ask us. We're happy to discuss joint-friendly options tailored to your needs.



Cucumber and prawn salad with tangy lime dressing

Get into the holiday spirit with our cucumber and prawn salad and zesty lime dressing – a refreshing and nutritious addition to your festive summer gatherings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 500g fresh prawns, peeled and deveined
- 2 cups baby salad leaves
- 2 cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1 cup of halved baby tomatoes
- Olive oil for cooking prawns
- ¼ cup fresh coriander or mint leaves, chopped
- Salt and black pepper to taste

FOR THE TANGY LIME DRESSING:

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Zest and juice of 2 limes
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Salt and black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cook the prawns: Heat a drizzle of olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Season the prawns with salt and black pepper and cook for 2-3 minutes on each side, or until they turn pink and opaque. Remove from heat and set aside.
2. Prepare the tangy lime dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together all the dressing ingredients. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.
3. Assemble the salad: In a large salad bowl, combine the salad leaves, cucumbers, tomatoes, and cooked prawns. Add the dressing and gently toss everything together until the salad is evenly coated.

Cover the salad bowl and refrigerate for about 30 minutes to let the flavours develop. Garnish with chopped coriander or mint leaves.

Why your upper back aches - and what you can do about it

Do you feel pain in your middle or upper back? You're not alone - around 30% of adults experience thoracic pain each year. The thoracic area is between the base of your neck and the top of your lower back. It can be the source of nagging discomfort, especially between the shoulder blades. But what causes this pain, and how can you find relief?

What causes thoracic pain?

The thoracic spine has twelve vertebrae, each connected to ribs, with intervertebral discs in between. Facet joints hold the bones together, while ligaments and muscles support movement. Nerves exit at each level to communicate with the body. Problems in any of these structures can cause pain and dysfunction.

Some common causes include:

- **Poor posture:** Head-forward, downward-looking posture from using electronic devices can cause mid-back pain. Long periods of sitting and inactivity also reduce thoracic mobility. Slouching, a poorly designed workspace, and improper lifting techniques can further contribute to thoracic pain.
- **Whiplash:** Though often associated with car accidents, whiplash can occur from any sudden motion that jerks the head forward and back, potentially causing both neck and thoracic pain.
- **Joint dysfunction:** The thoracic spine consists of many vertebrae and joints. Dysfunction in these can restrict movement and cause discomfort.
- **Osteoarthritis:** As we age, our spinal joints can "wear down." Osteoarthritis may affect the thoracic spine, especially in older adults, and can cause stiffness and aching.

Reducing your risk of thoracic pain

- **Good posture:** Keep your shoulders back and avoid slumping. When you sit at your desk, rest your feet flat on the ground to ensure your ankles, knees, hips, and elbows are at 90 degrees. Opt for chairs that support the natural curve of your spine.
- **Take breaks:** Limit the time you spend being inactive. If you sit for long periods, schedule breaks to stand up, stretch and move regularly.
- **Eat well and stay active:** A nutritious, balanced diet combined with regular physical activity not only reduces the risk of mid-back pain but also helps maintain a healthy weight, providing added protection for your spine.
- **Ergonomic adjustments:** Adjusting your workspace setup can promote good posture and ease thoracic pain.
- **Strengthen upper back muscles:** The muscles in the middle of your upper back, which help support your spine, can weaken over time. Targeted exercises can improve their strength and help relieve discomfort.
- **Chiropractic adjustments:** adjustments for joint dysfunction may improve motion and reduce pain.

Thoracic pain can range from annoying to disabling, but the correct diagnosis and treatment can make all the difference.



Eating well and being active are the two most effective ways to support your overall health.

APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Your next appointment is on _____ at _____
Date Time

Answers:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Core | 4. Swimming | 7. Strains |
| 2. thoracic | 5. cycling | 8. Cucumbers |
| 3. vertebrae | 6. Sprains | |

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional health advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your health should always be made in consultation with your health care provider. Talk to your chiropractor first.

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you



ON ARRIVAL AT THE PRACTICE

Please see the receptionist upon arrival.

This eliminates the possibility of you being overlooked and enables us to have your information ready.

APPOINTMENTS

Your appointment schedule is designed specifically to obtain the best possible results. Should you wish to change an appointment, we would appreciate as much notice as possible so that other patients can be offered your time.

ONLINE BOOKINGS

We have online booking available. Make your appointment with your favourite chiropractor by booking through

coastlinechiropractic.com.au

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

Prompt payment of your account will help us keep the fees down. However if you are experiencing difficulties with payment at any time please arrange a confidential meeting with our accounts person.

OUR COMMITMENT

This practice is committed to providing the best possible care to all patients. Our staff regularly attend short continuing professional education courses to update their knowledge and techniques.