



YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

JULY/AUGUST 2026



HOW BALANCED IS YOUR BODY?



BACK PAIN AND FATIGUE



ENERGY-BOOSTING FOODS



UNDERSTANDING THE SI JOINTS

OUR CENTRE LOCATIONS

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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.

WHY YOUR BODY FEELS TIGHT OR ACHY AFTER SLEEPING

Do you feel a little “rusty” first thing in the morning, especially when you move your neck or back? If your body feels a bit tight or less flexible when you wake up, it’s usually related to how your joints, muscles, and spinal discs respond after hours of being still – not simply a sign that you’re “getting old.”

Why joints can stiffen overnight

Your fingers, knees, and hips are synovial joints, which contain lubricating fluid that helps them move smoothly. When you stay still for a long time, like overnight, this fluid doesn’t circulate as much, and joints can feel a little stiff or less mobile.

It’s similar to how a car engine runs more smoothly once it has warmed up.

As you age, the structures in your spine gradually change. Spinal discs tend to lose some of their water content and elasticity, while joints may experience normal age-related changes.

These adjustments can affect how well your spine moves and absorbs nutrients, and may make it feel less flexible, contributing to tightness, particularly after long periods of inactivity.

Arthritis is also one of the more common reasons people wake with achy or uncomfortable joints that gradually ease as they start moving.

What can help ease tightness?

Tissues do change with age, and arthritis can contribute to reduced mobility, but that’s not the whole story. Lifestyle plays a big role in how flexible and comfortable you feel. Activity levels, sleep habits, body weight, and smoking can all influence joint and muscle health.

We’re all designed to move, and regular activity helps keep joints and muscles comfortable and working well. If your bike is gathering dust, now is the time to use it again! Cycling is an example of a low-impact, joint-friendly way to stay active.

It can also help to include resistance training, such as light weights, bodyweight exercises, or resistance bands, to support muscle strength and joint stability. Activities like walking, yoga, and gentle stretching are all good ways to “oil” your joints.

A little movement most days is often more beneficial than one intense workout every now and then.

Sleeping positions are important

Most people sleep on their back or side, which is usually more comfortable for your spine. Sleeping on your stomach may place your neck and lower back in more twisted positions for long periods. This can place extra strain on these areas and may contribute to tightness or discomfort in the morning.

When should you get it checked?

Mild stiffness that eases within 20–30 minutes of moving is often mechanical — joints, muscles, and discs becoming active after rest. However, it’s important to seek professional advice if:

- Neck or back discomfort regularly wakes you in the night, or often lasts longer than an hour in the morning
- Your joints are swollen, warm, or red
- You have unexplained weight loss, fever, or unusual fatigue
- Pain is severe, worsening, or follows a fall or injury

These issues can sometimes point to other health conditions that may need further investigation.

If discomfort persists or starts limiting your usual activities, an assessment can help identify possible contributing factors. Care may include personalised advice on movement, exercise, and lifestyle strategies to support comfort and mobility.

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

Why back pain and tiredness often go hand in hand

Have you noticed that a sore back and tiredness often show up together? If back pain is affecting your daily life and leaving you feeling drained, you're not alone. The reasons are real, so let's take a look.

Movement is important

When you move, you usually feel more energised, but when you're in pain it's natural to move less. You might try to ease pain by sitting or lying down more, or avoid your usual walks or exercise.

Over time, long periods of sitting or inactivity can contribute to stiffness and weaken the muscles that support your spine, which may make back pain feel worse.

That's why staying active is often encouraged, rather than bed rest. Gentle, regular movement may help reduce stiffness and improve function.

Sleep and mood can be affected

Back pain can make it harder to find a comfortable position or stay asleep through the night. Poor sleep can then contribute to increased pain and fatigue the next day, creating a difficult cycle.

There's also a strong link between chronic back pain, mood, and tiredness. When you have high levels of fatigue, you may experience increased pain sensitivity, lower mood, and reduced activity levels.

Stress and worry can add to this. It's common for people with ongoing pain to find their mind repeatedly focusing on unhelpful thoughts like, "I'm so sore", "How long will this last?" or "Will it ever get better?" This stress response can increase muscle tension and make pain more noticeable.

Breaking the pain-fatigue cycle

Simple actions can sometimes help ease strain on your body and support recovery. These may include:

- Reducing long periods of sitting with short walks or movement breaks
- Gentle stretching or mobility exercises
- Heat or ice, depending on what feels helpful
- Relaxation or breathing techniques, especially before bed
- Good posture – whether sitting, working, standing or walking

Back pain can often be influenced by a combination of physical and lifestyle factors. Understanding what may be contributing to your symptoms can help reduce stress and support recovery.

With appropriate care and small, consistent daily changes, many people notice improvements over time and are able to return to their usual activities.

WORD SEARCH

CHRONIC

ENERGY

FATIGUE

FIBRE

IRON

JOINTS

LENTILS

LIGAMENTS

METABOLISM

MOBILITY

MOVEMENT

MUSCLES

NUTRIENTS

OXYGEN

PAIN

PELVIS

POSTURE

PROTEIN

SACRUM

STRENGTH

F	R	S	A	C	R	U	M	C	J	W	V	R
I	S	N	E	G	Y	X	O	H	M	A	I	T
B	N	J	P	H	R	T	V	R	E	S	A	U
R	P	O	S	T	U	R	E	O	T	T	I	I
E	E	I	R	T	R	T	M	N	A	N	H	Y
P	L	N	L	I	F	A	E	I	B	E	T	G
R	V	T	E	E	P	M	N	C	O	I	G	R
O	I	S	N	I	A	P	T	L	L	R	N	E
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O	H	T	L	T	Y	R	N	K	A	O	O	U

Support your energy with these healthy foods!

Always running low on energy? Your diet helps provide what your body needs to keep you going throughout the day. Here are some nutrient-rich foods that support everyday health.

Iron-rich foods

Iron helps red blood cells carry oxygen around the body. Without enough iron, you may feel tired and weak. Good sources include lean red meat, poultry, seafood, lentils, beans, tofu, dark leafy greens, and nuts and seeds.

Vitamin C-rich foods

Vitamin C helps your body absorb iron from plant foods, making it an important partner for maintaining healthy iron levels. Excellent sources include citrus fruits, kiwifruit, strawberries, capsicums, tomatoes, and other fresh fruit and vegetables.

Vitamin B12-rich foods

Vitamin B12 is important for energy metabolism and healthy red blood cell production. You'll find it in eggs, dairy foods, fish, lean meats, and fortified plant-based products.

Whole grains and energy-rich carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the body's preferred source of fuel. Foods such as oats, whole grain bread, brown rice, quinoa, beans, lentils, and sweet potato provide a steady source of energy, while their fibre helps you feel satisfied for longer.

Protein-rich foods

Protein helps build and repair muscles and other tissues throughout your body. Including protein with meals and snacks can help keep hunger at bay.



Good choices include fish, chicken, eggs, dairy foods, legumes, tofu, nuts, and seeds.

Healthy fats

Healthy fats provide a concentrated source of energy and support many important body functions. Including a variety of healthy fats can help support overall nutrition. Sources include avocados, olive oil, nuts, seeds, and oily fish such as salmon.

Why water matters

Even mild dehydration can leave you feeling tired and less focused. Drinking enough water throughout the day helps with concentration, physical performance, and overall wellbeing.

Sacroiliac (SI) joint dysfunction and pain



Many people have heard of the “SI joints,” but may not realise that these joints can be a source of low back, buttock and sometimes leg pain. It's often overlooked, or mistaken for a disc or hip issue, so it's worth a closer look.

SI joint anatomy and function

The SI joints connect the triangular sacrum at the base of your spine to the ilium bones of the pelvis. They have strong ligaments

and irregular joint surfaces, which make them very stable.

Unlike the hip or knee, they don't have a large range of motion. Instead, they allow small movements that help transfer load between the spine and legs.

In essence, these joints act like a stable “bridge” between your upper and lower body, supporting everyday activities such as walking, bending, and lifting.

Causes and risk factors

SI joint dysfunction may occur when the joint moves too much or too little. It can be affected by pregnancy, pelvic injury, falls, or lifting and twisting movements.

Factors such as arthritis, previous spinal surgery, and differences in leg length may also increase stress on the joint over time.

Common symptoms

SI joint-related pain can be felt as an ache

or sharp pain on one side of the lower back, just off the spine. It can spread into the buttock or down the thigh.

It may feel worse with prolonged standing, walking uphill or stairs, rolling over, and activities involving bending and lifting.

Assessment and management

Assessment begins with a discussion of your symptoms, including where the pain is felt, how it started, and what makes it better or worse.

We also assess posture and movement to see how your spine, hips, and pelvis work together. In some cases, specific clinical tests may be used, and imaging such as X-rays or scans may be considered if clinically appropriate.

Management may include exercises to support pelvic stability, advice on movement and posture, and strategies to reduce strain during daily activities.

SLOW COOKED MOROCCAN CHICKEN

A flavourful, nutrient-rich dish packed with lean protein, fibre, and vegetables. Serves 4.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g skinless chicken breast or boneless thighs, chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp each ground cumin, coriander, paprika
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 zucchini, sliced
- 1 400g can cherry tomatoes
- 250ml low-sodium chicken stock

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat olive oil in a large pan, add chicken and cook until browned, about 4-6 minutes. Transfer to slow cooker.
2. In same pan, add onion and garlic and sauté for 2-3 minutes. Stir in spices and cook for a minute until fragrant. Add mixture to slow cooker.
3. Add drained chickpeas, sliced zucchini, and tomatoes to slow cooker. Pour in chicken stock; stir well to combine all ingredients.
4. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 3-4 hours, until chicken is cooked through.

Serve with cooked couscous or quinoa. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and a squeeze of lemon if desired.



LEFT VERSUS RIGHT: MAKING SENSE OF MUSCLE IMBALANCES

Muscle imbalances between our left and right sides are common. Office workers, athletes, tradies, parents, students – we can all develop them. While small asymmetries are normal, larger differences can affect how you move and may cause discomfort over time.

What effects do muscle imbalances have?

When one side becomes stronger or tighter than the other, it can change how your body moves and functions. This may lead to stiffness or discomfort in areas such as the knees, hips, shoulders, neck, and back.

Your body often compensates for these differences, which can place extra load on muscles, joints, tendons, and ligaments. Over time, this may increase the risk of strain or overuse injuries. For example, always standing with your weight on the same leg can gradually put more strain on your hips, knees, and lower back.

You might notice postural changes, such as one shoulder higher than the other or recurring issues that tend to affect the same side. Your body is working hard to maintain your health.

It's like driving with misaligned wheels — over time, uneven wear can develop.

What causes muscle imbalances?

There are many contributing factors. Repetitive movements at work or during sport can strengthen certain

muscles more than others. Poor posture, past injuries, and natural right- or left-side dominance also play a role.

Inactivity, repeatedly overusing one side, or compensating for pain can all contribute. Habits like always carrying your bag on the same shoulder or holding your child on one hip may increase imbalances over time.

Should you be concerned?

Most people naturally have one side slightly stronger or more dominant than the other. Humans are not perfectly symmetrical and mild differences are normal.

However, it may be worth having an assessment if you notice ongoing discomfort, frequent tightness in one area, or headaches on one side.

More noticeable changes – such as visible differences in muscle size, a clear grip strength difference, or one limb regularly feeling weaker than the other – may also be worth checking, particularly if these changes are new, worsening, or affecting daily activities.

Helpful tips to support muscle balance

Correcting muscle imbalances often involves strengthening weaker muscles and gently relaxing or stretching tighter areas. Varying daily movements and reducing one-sided habits can also help.

Chiropractors may use a combination of hands-on care and exercise advice to support mobility and reduce muscle tension, alongside guidance tailored to your needs.



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.

DR MEL TALKS:

How to do a quick posture reset:

1. Stand your back against a wall, with heels about 2cm away from the wall
2. Roll your shoulders up, back, then down. Allow your mid back and shoulders to lay flat against the wall.
3. Tuck your chin backwards, like you're making a double chin. Aim to get the back of your head against the wall.

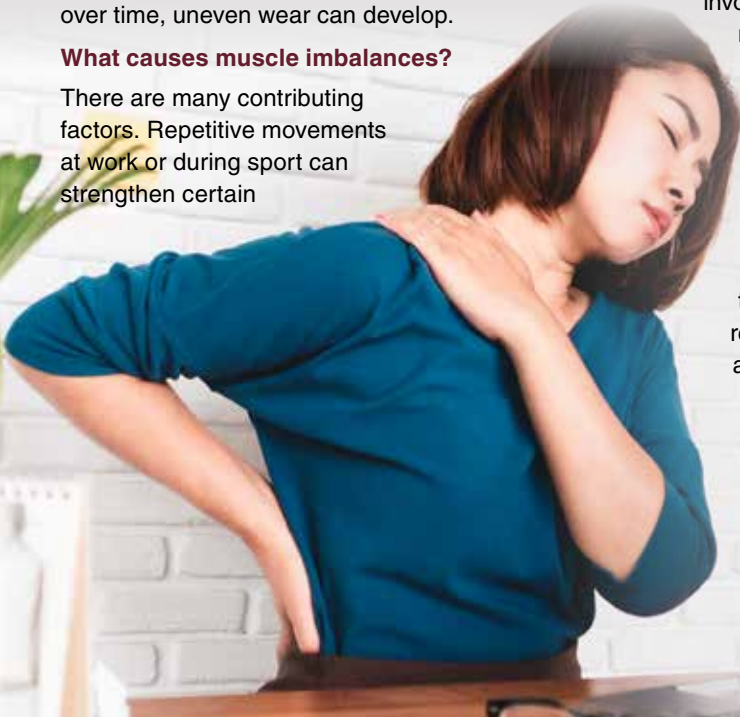
Small resets like this throughout your day can help reduce tension and better support your body.

Your posture matters more than you think; your spine will thank you!

Meet Dr Melinda Burke, chiropractor

Mel brings a warm, personalised approach to care. She enjoys helping patients of all ages improve movement, manage discomfort, and stay active, whether that means supporting growing kids, active adults, athletes, or older patients who want to maintain mobility and independence. With a focus on listening, education and tailored treatment, Mel creates a welcoming space for every stage of life.

For appointments or further information, please contact our reception 02 65839393 or info@coastlinechiropractic.com.au



APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Your next appointment is on _____ at _____
Date Time

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