COASTLINE Chiropractic CENTRE

YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

MAY/JUNE 2026

THE ANKLE CONNECTION

SMARTER STANDING

ACTIVATE YOUR INNER SUPPORT

SEAWEED SUPERFOOD

OUR CENTRE LOCATIONS

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NEWS

Dr Darren, Presenting and Speaking at National Conference, Brisbane, 14th May and 15th May. Will be away from 14th May to 18th May.

Dr Mel will be on Annual Leave from 9th May to 24th May.

King's Birthday Public holiday on Monday 8th June.

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.

How your hips affect lower back comfort

We often think of the body in parts – hips, pelvis, spine – but in reality it works as one connected system. Your hips connect your lower body and spine, and help you to bend, walk, twist, and change direction smoothly. When hip movement is limited, your lower back often has to work harder. Over time, this may increase strain on the joints and discs in your spine.

Try this simple test: squat down to pick something up. Now try again while keeping your hips as still as possible. You'll likely feel your back working harder and notice the movement is more limited.

How sitting affects your hips and glutes

Prolonged sitting keeps the hip flexors – the muscles that lift your knees towards your chest – in a shortened position. Over time, this may cause tightness and limit flexibility. This can change how the pelvis and spine move together.

At the same time, your glute muscles tend to be less active when you sit for long stretches. They may provide less support and power when you stand, walk, or climb stairs. This combination of tight hip flexors and underused glutes can alter your posture and the way you walk. Gradually, these changes may set the stage for overload and discomfort in the hips and lower back.

Signs that your hips may be restricted

Possible signs include:

- Trouble comfortably crossing your legs
- Difficulty bending for activities like putting on socks or tying shoelaces
- One hip consistently feels "tighter" than the other
- Pain or aching around your lower back or groin
- Hip stiffness first thing in the morning, or after sitting for a while

These signs are not a diagnosis on their own, but they're a good prompt to pay attention to your hip mobility.

Why your back may have to work harder

When your hips don't rotate or extend properly, your body finds workarounds. Everyday tasks, like walking, lifting, or getting in and out of the car become harder. Your lower back picks up the slack.

Repeatedly bending or twisting through the spine instead of the hips can irritate joints, muscles, and discs – like forcing a door to bend in the middle instead of at the hinges. Over time this extra load may contribute to stiffness, muscle spasm, and back pain.

Tips to support your hips and spine

Take breaks from sitting about every 30 minutes. If possible, use a sit–stand desk, (see our article on standing desks for posture tips). Add simple hip-flexor stretches and glute-strengthening exercises, such as bridges, comfortable squats or sit-to-stands, to help improve strength and mobility. Focus on slow, controlled movement and good form.

Chiropractors assess how the hips, pelvis, and spine move together, not just where pain shows up. We check joint mobility, muscle balance, and posture, which helps guide care aimed at improving movement and overall comfort.

Strong muscles and mobile joints work together. These articles explore their connection and show simple ways to help keep your whole body balanced and supported.

Standing Strong: is a standing desk working for you?

Reducing long periods of sitting is important for overall health – standing desks can help but they're not a magic fix. Without the right preparation, you may be simply swapping sitting discomfort for standing aches.

Why standing may be uncomfortable

Some people notice backache when using a standing desk. Often, this happens when they switch suddenly from long periods of sitting to long periods of standing. It's like jumping straight into heavy weights at the gym instead of building up slowly.

Muscles and joints accustomed to chair support suddenly have to work harder. If your hips are stiff, your glutes or core weak, or you have existing spinal issues, your lower back and spine can take the strain.

Core and posture muscles

Think of your core and postural muscles as your body's foundations; when they're strong, everything else remains stable. These muscles work together to support movement and share load between joints and discs. Constant muscular adjustments help keep your spine aligned, reducing strain on the lower back.

Supporting these muscles starts with posture: stand upright but relaxed, keep your knees soft. Balance your weight evenly through both feet, and align your ribs over your pelvis with shoulders relaxed.

What are your feet doing?

Standing can tire the foot arches, calves, and back. Wear supportive shoes and consider using an anti-fatigue mat.

Stand with feet about hip-width apart or slightly wider. Shift your weight from side to side or rest one foot on a footrest. Alternate sides. You could also try a gentle stepper if it feels comfortable.

Movement, breaks and set-up

The goal isn't perfect posture or staying still. Frequent movement is essential – try changing position every 20-30 minutes, alternating between sitting and standing if you have a sit-stand desk.

Build in micro-breaks: shoulder rolls, calf raises, gentle hip shifts, or short walks can help 'reset' your body.

Desk set-up matters too: your elbows should rest at about 90 degrees with straight wrists, and the top of your screen should be at, or just below eye level to avoid straining your neck.

If discomfort persists or worsens, we can help identify possible contributing factors and provide advice on your desk set-up.

How Well Do You Know Your Body?

Test your knowledge of muscles, joints, posture, and nutrition.
Fill in the blanks using clues from the articles in this newsletter. Have fun and see how many you can get right!

1. **Hip mobility**
   Prolonged sitting keeps the _____ in a shortened position.
   When hip movement is limited, your _____ often has to work harder.

2. **Ankle health**
   Good ankle mobility doesn't just help the joint itself – it also improves _____, coordination, and control.
   You may have an ankle issue if you notice difficulty keeping your _____ down in a squat.

3. **Standing desks**
   Build in micro-breaks: shoulder rolls, _____, gentle hip shifts, or short walks can help reset your body.
   The goal isn't perfect posture or staying still. Frequent _____ is essential.

4. **Core stability**
   Strong core muscles help you move efficiently, support your joints and _____, and make everyday activities easier.
   If your deep _____ isn't engaging well, other muscles may compensate, sometimes leading to stiffness or discomfort.

5. **Seaweed nutrition**
   Seaweed is rich in _____ – often more than dairy products or eggs provide.
   Seaweed contains _____ that protect cells from damage linked to long-term conditions.

Answers are on the back page.

Seaweed: a nutrient-rich treasure from the sea

Seaweed has been part of many traditional diets for centuries and offers an impressive range of nutrients. Here, we focus on dried seaweed as it's the easiest form to find and enjoy.

An iodine source (but watch your intake!)

Seaweed is rich in iodine – often more than dairy products or eggs provide. Iodine supports thyroid function, helping regulate metabolism and energy levels. However, too much iodine can disrupt thyroid balance, so moderation is important.

Calcium and mineral support

Some seaweed varieties, such as wakame, provide calcium. Seaweed is also rich in magnesium, which helps your body absorb and use calcium more effectively, making it a helpful plant-based option for bone health.

Antioxidants and anti-inflammatories

Seaweed contains antioxidants that help protect cells from damage, which may be linked to long-term conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

Nori and kelp also contain compounds that may help reduce chronic inflammation, which may contribute to illness over time.

A plant-based omega-3 boost

While fish are the main source of omega-3 fatty acids, some types of seaweed contain small amounts, providing a plant-based source of these essential fats. These healthy fats support brain and heart health and may also help reduce chronic inflammation.

An ally for weight management?

Seaweed contains alginate, a fibre that may help promote fullness and support appetite control. Some studies suggest it may also influence fat absorption, although more research is needed.

A few things to keep in mind

Seaweed can absorb minerals from the ocean, including contaminants like arsenic or lead, so choose products from trusted sources. Start with small amounts, as the high fibre content can be a bit much at first.

Whether sprinkled over soups or salads, blended into a smoothie, or enjoyed as a snack, dried seaweed is a simple way to boost your nutrient intake.

Try our healthy sushi recipe for an easy way to use seaweed.

Understanding deep core stability

When you think of core muscles, you might picture six-pack abs – but your core is much more than that. It's a group of deep muscles that wrap around your torso like a natural "corset", working together to stabilise your spine and pelvis.

Strong core muscles help you move efficiently, support your joints and spine, and make everyday activities easier. If your deep core isn't engaging well, other muscles may compensate, sometimes leading to stiffness, tiredness, or recurring discomfort in the lower back or pelvis.

Build your core from the breath

Start with simple, controlled breathing, then add movement.

Lie comfortably and place one hand on your lower abdomen. Inhale through your nose, letting your ribcage and belly expand. Exhale slowly through pursed lips, gently drawing your lower abdomen inward. Keep the effort light – about 20-30% of your maximum. Repeat for 5-10 breaths, once or twice daily.

As you exhale, you may notice a gentle lift in your pelvic floor. This is natural. The core and pelvic floor work as a team.

As you move through everyday tasks, try coordinating your breath and core. For example, when standing up from a chair, exhale and gently 'zip' up from your lower abdomen to your ribcage. Do the same when lifting objects, hold them close, bend your knees slightly, and exhale as you engage your core.

Bird-Dog for core strength

Start on your hands and knees with a neutral spine, hands under shoulders and knees under hips.

Extend one leg back and the opposite arm forward until they're level with your back.

Hold for 5-10 seconds, breathing normally. Exhale, maintaining a gentle 'zipping' sensation from your pubic bone to your belly button.

Complete 5-10 reps on each side.

Building core coordination and strength takes regular practice. Most people notice improved control and reduced discomfort within 3-4 weeks of daily practice.

From a chiropractic perspective

If you experience back discomfort or find it hard to activate your core, a professional assessment can help identify contributing factors. Chiropractors can check how your deep core is working, and provide a tailored plan to support muscle function and spinal movement – from the inside out.

NO-MAT HEALTHY SUSHI ROLLS

Dried nori adds a health boost, and a tasty umami flavour to your meals. This simple method makes sushi rolls in minutes - no special sushi mat needed!

INGREDIENTS

- 1–2 nori sheets
- ½ cup cooked sticky rice
- Veggies: avocado, cucumber, carrot, capsicum (thin strips)
- Optional protein: cooked tuna, salmon or chicken pieces
- Optional sesame seeds

For the dip:

- 2 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp lemon or lime juice
- ½ tsp grated ginger (optional)

METHOD

1. Place nori sheet shiny side down on a clean surface or baking paper.
2. Spread rice in a thin layer, leaving a 2cm gap at the top.
3. Place veggies and optional protein across the middle. Sprinkle sesame seeds if desired.
4. Fold edge over the filling and keep rolling until sealed; use a little water on the top edge if needed.
5. Slice into bite-sized pieces. Serve with soy sauce or the dip.

QUICK TIPS

Roll gently to avoid tearing the nori.

From the ground up:
why ankle mobility matters for your whole body

Ankles are the quiet workhorses of your lower body, but if they lose mobility, other joints – including your knees, hips, and spine – may have to compensate. This can increase strain on these areas and affect your posture.

For example, if your ankles can't bend properly when you squat down, you may lean forward more, putting extra stress on your hips, lower back, and knees.

Good ankle mobility doesn't just help the joint itself – it also improves balance, coordination, and control. By supporting the deep core and thigh muscles, mobile ankles help keep the legs and spine steady and may lower the risk of injury.

Possible indicators of ankle issues

You may notice the following signs:

- Recurrent injuries or a sense of your ankle "giving way" on uneven ground.
- Difficulty keeping your heels down when squatting.
- Back or hip discomfort during lunges, on stairs, or walking downhill.
- Ankle stiffness first thing in the morning or after sitting for a while.
- Pain or swelling around the ankle that develops after activity.

Common causes include previous sprains that were not treated or fully rehabilitated, tight calf muscles, and wear and tear.

A chiropractor's perspective

Chiropractic care may include an assessment of the whole body, not just the affected area. This can involve checking foot posture, ankle motion, balance, hip control, and spinal alignment. Care may include adjustments, soft tissue work, and exercises to support movement, balance, and coordination.

Ankle mobility and strength tips

These are generalised starting tips; your chiropractor can provide personalised stretches for you.

- Calf and ankle stretches: While seated, extend one leg with your heel on the ground. Keep your knee straight and gently bend your ankle until you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold 20–30 seconds, but stop if it's painful. Repeat 3 times each side.
- Ankle mobility: Move your ankle slowly up and down, side to side, and in gentle circles.
- Balance: Stand on one leg with your knee straight, or bend it slightly to increase the challenge. Hold for up to 30 seconds. Use support if needed.
- Whole-body movement: Include comfortable squats, step-ups, and walking to support ankle coordination with hips and trunk.

If you've had an injury or surgery, it's best to consult a health professional before starting new exercises. Otherwise, regular gentle ankle exercises and stretches can help keep your ankles strong and mobile.

APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Your next appointment is on _____ at _____

Date Time

Puzzle Answers:

1. hip flexors / lower back
2. balance / heels
3. calf raises / movement
4. spine / core
5. iodine / antioxidants

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

COASTLINE Chiropractic CENTRE

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.