



Hands On

Wadsworth Osteopaths ■ Newsletter ■ December 2014

This month's theme is Christmas!



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Christmas is coming

Christmas is a time of great excitement for children of all ages but it can bring with it some little problems:

Christmas Trees

Putting up the Christmas tree is a job we all enjoy, the kids join in and everyone has great fun.

But watch out when you are putting it up.

Most of us end up moving furniture to make room for the tree

- If your furniture is heavy or awkward to move get someone to help.
- Push rather than pull – if your weight is behind the item you are moving it is much easier to shift
- Resist the temptation to push your furniture with your knee or thigh – knee ligaments are easily strained in this position. Better to get your hands to it and push properly.

Will it fit?

- If you are using a real tree measure it before you bring it inside. If it is too tall cut a bit off the bottom and remember to take off some of the lower branches so it will fit in the container. Take enough off so the height is right with the tree in its container.

There are various holders and containers on the market. A sturdy tripod is worth looking at. Keep the holder topped up with water to keep the tree alive. A clean cut at the bottom of the stump allows the tree to drink and stay fresh.

- If the tree is heavy or awkward get some help to bring it inside
- Leave the netting on until it is in position. It makes it easier to position the tree and level it before you take the netting off.

Level it

- Before you decorate your tree make sure it is standing up straight. Attempting to straighten it after you decorate is difficult. Use cardboard or wooden packs under the legs of the holder to get the right angle.

Put on the lights, tinsel, baubles and enjoy.

The Turkey

Turkey is still the most popular Christmas bird, what can go wrong with a turkey? Apart from the importance of thawing it out in time (we all remember The Royle Family Christmas battle with the turkey) the main thing to watch out for is putting it in and getting it out of the oven.

If you are one of the fortunate few you will have a high level oven and won't need to bend. A low oven requires you to bend and all osteopaths know that getting turkeys out of the oven is high risk for putting your back out!

So....if you haven't got a high level oven make sure you position yourself in front of the oven (a twisted position makes you more vulnerable), bend your knees rather than stooping with a bent back and try to keep your lower back slightly arched. This is a much stronger position and you are far less likely to hurt yourself if you use it.

Sitting

Getting together with friends and family over the festive season can be wonderful but we tend to do a lot more sitting than usual.

Osteopaths see a lot of back problems which are caused by too much sitting so we recommend

1. Get up and down every so often (ideally every 20 minutes) to avoid getting stiff
2. Watch out for saggy sofas – many modern sofas are long in the seat and a bit on the low side so we tend to slump into them with a curved back. If you have the choice and your back is susceptible to strain choose a more supportive chair. If you do have to sit on a soft sofa it can help to sit on an extra cushion and put one or two behind you to achieve a better position

3. Falling asleep in the chair is not a good idea. Your head will drop forward and it is easy to put strain on your neck muscles and ligaments

Feasting

It is very difficult to resist the lovely food at Christmas time and it is easier to pile the weight on than get it off.

- o Remember your 5-a-day
- o Have a drink or 2 but know when you have had enough
- o Enjoy your treats but not too many

Change of routine

Try to add a bit of exercise to your festive routine. The socialising, the eating and drinking and making merry is great but see if you can add some movement.

- o Winter walks, well wrapped up can be an excellent way to help down the Christmas pud
- o A bike ride is good to get your breathing and heart rate going
- o Swimming is also good exercise if there is a pool open near-by
- o For those who are a bit fitter a run or a session at the gym is just the thing.

Have a great Christmas and New Year

Winter – some thoughts from China. Acupuncturist Becky Pickering discusses Chinese philosophy in relation to Winter

The ancient Chinese believed that human beings should live in harmony with their environment. During winter this means slowing down during the colder months, nourishing yourself, keeping warm and well rested.

According to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine winter is associated with the element of water and influences the health of the kidneys, bladder, adrenal glands, bones and teeth. In traditional Chinese medicine the kidneys are the primary source of energy and vitality. They store all of the reserve energy in the body so that it can be used in time of stress and change, or to heal, prevent illness and age gracefully. During the winter months it is important to nurture and nourish our kidney energy. It is the time when this energy can be most easily depleted. During the coldness of winter it is critical to maintain healthy kidneys through proper diet, good hydration and gentle exercise such as yoga and tai qi which will help keep your core warm and well nourished.

There are many foods that are beneficial for us to eat during the winter season. These foods are the ones that naturally grow in this season such as squashes, potatoes, root vegetables and winter greens. In winter our bodies need warm food like soups made with hearty vegetables and rich stocks. During the winter months our bodies are going through a lot of rejuvenation, therefore it is important to feed our bodies with good food as fuel. A popular nourishing food is soup, it is warm, easy to digest and suitable for all ages. It can be very economical and practical. I like to use chicken stock from boiling bony chicken parts as a base for my soups.

Tips for staying healthy in winter

1. Wrap up warm to guard against the dampness and cold
2. Wash hands regularly to protect yourself from infection
3. Get plenty of sleep
4. Reduce stress and find ways to relax.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, stress, frustration and unresolved anger can weaken the immune system; yoga, meditation and tai qi can be beneficial to prevent this.

To conclude, dress appropriately, get a little more sleep, stay active, eat well and enjoy the winter.



Pilates & Yoga at Holly House clinic

Ava Monroe will provide Pilates and Yoga classes at Holly house clinic from the beginning of January 2015.

- Ava will be available on Friday mornings
- She will be offering one-to-one sessions £45 for a 1 hour session
- She will also be offering group sessions (groups of 3) £15 each for a 1 hour session.
- A 10% discount is available for first appointments during the month of January 2015.
- Enquiries to Ava Monroe 07908 711480

Next Issue

The next Newsletter will be February 2015 and the theme will be back pain
