

Health

Simple solutions to solving back pain problems

BACK pain has traditionally been the bugbear of manual and office workers and older people.

According to the British Chiropractic Association, 52 per cent of the country suffered from back pain in 2008 – a five per cent rise on 2007.

But increasingly the potentially debilitating condition is affecting children.

Hours of inactivity, sitting in front of the television and computer games, carrying heavy bags and even wearing the wrong shoes, are contributing to youngsters starting early and carrying their worsening back pain into adulthood, said one Colchester chiropractor.

It has already been recognised back pain costs UK businesses millions of pounds each year through sickness absence, but with a little care, attention and activity, back pain can be controlled and even eliminated.

Dr Robert Bateman, a chiropractor based at the Zen Clinic in London Road, Stanway, said the most common is lower back pain, followed by neck and shoulder pain. The problem often builds up over time and happens suddenly when a person is doing a simple task.

"A dairy farmer came to see me once who had been handling cows for 25 years. One day he leaned across the desk to pick up a bit of paper and his back went," said Dr Bateman.

"People don't do enough exercise, don't sit properly because they don't know how. There are easy exercises to do and as the saying goes, if you don't use it, you lose it. If the muscles are not being used, the posture fails," he added.

Having a good posture, carrying bags in the correct way and sitting properly at a desk, all make a difference in people's wellbeing – and this includes children.

To get the message across Dr Bateman has started a consultancy as well as running the practice, and is visiting schools and businesses to assess people at their desks and in their classrooms, and offering potential solutions and preventions to their back pain.

At St Mary's School in Lexden Road, Colchester, he talked to 43 pupils, aged 11 and 12, through a three-minute simple exercise routine.

"The exercises are based on posture care and are designed to help with chil-

By VANESSA MOON
vanessa.moon@nqe.com

dren's spinal health," said the doctor. "I chose these pupils because when they get to secondary school, there is a big difference in the amount of kit and books they have to carry. If we teach them now, they are better equipped for their five years at senior school to prevent back problems."

Children are especially vulnerable to back pain, he says, because their bones are still soft and developing.

Before demonstrating simple exercises, he first asked the children to fill out a questionnaire, after which he is able to design a three-minute programme and make recommendations regarding school bags, footwear and exercise.

Parents can also help, he said, by checking their children are not carrying unnecessary items to school.

People don't do enough exercise, don't sit properly because they don't know how. There are easy exercises to do

He said they should be encouraged to use rucksacks and carry them properly, wearing supportive footwear.

They should exercise and not watch television or sit in front of a computer for long periods.

Hilary Vipond, headteacher at St Mary's School, said the session proved so successful, that she hopes the same can be done for other pupils, to prepare them before they start secondary school.

She said: "Children from the lower school will go from being dropped off by their parents to getting the bus or walking to school, carrying bags over long distances.

"Learning about personal wellbeing and understanding how to get your body healthy is important.

"It's about thinking about the future because bad habits are learned when you are young and they can have repercussions later in life.

"The pupils' form tutors said they benefited from the talk too."

online at gazette-news.co.uk/health



■ Dr Robert Bateman – showing pupils at St Mary's School how to exercise

Picture: NIGEL BROWN PTE2



Tilting star

Spread your arms and legs into a star. Breathe in as you slowly stretch one arm over your head and slide your other arm down your leg. Slowly tilt your star to the other side. Repeat both sides twice.

Twisting star

Raise your arms in a hands up position. Bring one elbow across your body while you raise the opposite knee towards it. Do the same on the other side. Repeat 15 times.

Hummingbird

Put your arms out to the sides with your hands up together. Make backwards circles with your hands and arms. Bend at waist from side to side while you keep going and count to ten.

Butterfly

Put your arms behind your head and gently pull your head backwards. Slowly and gently press your head backwards against your hands while you count to two. Relax and breathe. Repeat three times.

A GP's guide to his healthy exercise routine

BAD POSTURE BLAMED BY EXPERTS

DURING Chiropractic Awareness Week this week, the British Chiropractic Association is trying to encourage people to improve their posture and not slouch.

It said the country's back pain figures have reached an all time high

and our laziness could be to blame.

- It found:
- 56 per cent of people slouch when they sit for long periods
 - One third of the population sits down for 15 or more hours a day
 - 14 per cent of people think people

with bad posture are lazy and one in five think it shows a lack of confidence

- Using computers leads to bad posture for 43 per cent
- 41 per cent blame heavy bags
- 74 per cent want to improve their posture

HEARING PROBLEMS?

Our award-winning team of independent hearing aid audiologists at The Hearing Care Centre are ready to help you today.

We won't let you miss a thing!



With over 40 years' local experience, we are the most trusted private hearing aid consultants in North Essex and we know which solutions work.

- FREE hearing tests without obligation
- A wide range of digital hearing aids matched to your needs and budget
- Moneyback trial period
- Outstanding aftercare service programme



Call us on **01206 760839**

the hearing care centre
THE AUDIOLGICAL SOLUTION
3B Headgate, Colchester, CO1 1NU
Also at: Clacton, West Mersea, Wivenhoe and Tolgate
www.skeelshearing.co.uk



MON	Jazzercise Lite*	6.30 - 7.20pm	Broom Grove Junior School Broome Grove, Wivenhoe CO7 9QB
	Jazzercise	7.30 - 8.30pm	
TUES	Jazzercise Lite*	6.30 - 7.20pm	Highwood's County Primary School, Tynedale Square, Colchester CO4 9SN
	Jazzercise	7.30 - 8.30pm	
WED	Jazzercise	8.00 - 9.00pm	St James Church Centre, Richard Avenue, Brightlingsea CO7 0AB
THURS	Jazzercise	7.30 - 8.30pm	Friars Grove Junior School Upland Drive, St Johns, Colchester CO4 0PZ

Call or text Debbie for details about classes in Colchester, Wivenhoe and Brightlingsea
07968 203645, or via email: debbieasmith@btinternet.com

www.jazzercise.com