

IN HAND



The Newsletter of the RSI and Overuse Injury Association of the ACT
Supported by ACT Health and the Southern Cross Club

Summer 2014-15

News & Events

AGM—Conflict Resolution at Work

Guest speaker from the Conflict Resolution Service

When: Thursday 27th Nov, 12.30pm
Where: Room 6, Level 1, Griffin Centre
Cost: Free, all welcome

The Canberra Combined Charities Christmas Card Shop

Hosted by 13 different local charities.

When: 3rd Nov to 18th Dec, 10am to 3.30pm
Where: City Uniting Church, Pilgrim House, 69 Northbourne
Avenue, Civic (Canberra).
Cost: Cards from 50c

Helping people with RSI:

- Telephone information service
- Referrals
- Guest speakers
- Events and social gatherings
- Treatment options
- Ergonomic devices
- Voice-operated computing
- Workers' compensation
- Tips and tools for daily life



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AGM—CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT WORK

Please come to our Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday, 27th of November at 12.30pm in Room 6 at the Griffin Centre.

Our guest speaker from the Conflict Resolution Service will cover:

- How the CRS can help you,
- Tips and strategies for better communication,
- Maintaining productive workplace relationships within a compensation context.

SPECIAL DRAGON SOFTWARE OFFER FOR RSI ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ONLY

Viva Voce's Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice-Operated Software trainers have been kind enough to offer a **limited** number of special packages for our members. This offer includes:

- software,
- two hours in-home training (including installation if needed),
- a microphone.



There are four packages to choose from:

| Home | Premium | Premium (Student/Teacher) | Professional |
|--------|----------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 262.50 | \$302.50 | \$262.50* | \$457.50 |

*Must have current student ID (full or part time).

Already have software and just in need of training?

You can purchase an initial two-hours of in-home training for just \$60, (or \$20 per hour when you visit Viva Voce's Belconnen office with your laptop). Additional training is at a cost of \$55 per hour (or \$36 per hour in their office).

Do you need to update your existing software?

Upgrade from Dragon Premium version 11 or 12 to Dragon Premium 13 for just \$125, OR upgrade to Dragon Professional 13 for \$260. You can also update from Dragon Professional 11 or 12 to Dragon Professional 13 for \$200.

If you're interested, please contact us for further details and a complete pricelist.

E: admin@rsi.org.au P: (02) 6262 5011

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Association. Whilst all care has been taken in the preparation of the newsletter, we do not accept responsibility for its accuracy and advise you to seek medical, legal or other advice before acting on any of the information within.

BITS & PIECES

CANBERRA COMBINED CHARITIES CHRISTMAS CARD SHOP

This year, the Canberra Combined Charities Christmas Card Shop will be open from Monday 3rd November to Thursday 18th December. Come along and say hello to the friendly volunteers from 13 different charities who will be selling Christmas Cards from 50c as well as small gift items. All profits go to participating charities.

The shop is located in the foyer of City Uniting Church, Pilgrim House, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Civic (Canberra) and is open 10am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday.

ENAR DEVICES EFFECTIVELY RELIEVE MUSCULOSKELETAL PAIN

Recent research from RMIT has shown that ENAR (Electro Neuro Adaptive Regulator) devices are a safe and effective self-help treatment for chronic musculoskeletal pain. The ENAR device is a small hand-held device approved by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration that can be used by patients or practitioners to provide micro electrical stimulation (similar to electro-acupuncture). Participants reported that symptoms were alleviated for hours, months, and even years. Researchers report that this non-pharmaceutical and self-administered therapy provided participants with a sense of empowerment which potentially translates into less time off work, less medication — and best of all — less pain! However, it's pretty expensive at \$890.



Pain Australia, New RMIT Study Shows ENAR Therapy Reduces Pain. Issue 48, October, 2014.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS POTENTIAL CHANGES TO COMCARE

According to Unions NSW, the Federal Government is currently considering a number of changes to Comcare that will adversely affect workers. These include introducing a Medicare style 'gap' system, changes to work capacity tests and a shift to lower payments and benefits for injured workers.

For the full article, see <http://www.injuredworkerssupport.org.au/the-national-attach-on-workers-compensation-protections/>

YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE!

We really need people with RSI to join our committee. The Association's committee meets once a month to help plan the Association's activities and direction. Input from people with RSI helps to keep us on the right track in meeting the needs of our members.

The committee is a really friendly and welcoming group of people who'd love to have you join! You need to be able to commit to a meeting once a month (for about an hour) for a year. There are no formal meetings held in December and January.

If you're interested, phone Ann on (02) 6262 5011 or email us at admin@rsi.org.au

RESEARCH IN BRIEF

STRESS AND RECOVERY IN WORKERS COMPENSATION

In this study, 1010 Australians hospitalised for a work or transport injury were followed up for six years to find out what was stressful about the compensation process and whether stress affected recovery.

One-third of the group reported high levels of stress in understanding what they needed to do for their claim. Other sources of stress were claim delays (30%), number of medical assessments (26.1%), and, the amount of compensation received (26%).

Claimants who reported high levels of stress had significantly higher levels of disability after six years. They also had more anxiety and depression and a lower quality of life. In the light of these findings, what do these researchers suggest? 'Redesigning compensation processes to reduce their stressfulness' – we agree! 'Intervening early to boost resilience among those at risk of stressful claim experiences' – we'd rather change the system!

Grant, G. M., O'Donnell, M. L., Spittal, M. J., Creamer, M., & Studdert, D. M. (2014). Relationship between stressfulness of claiming for injury compensation and long-term recovery: A prospective cohort study. *Journal of the American Medical Association Psychiatry, 71*(4), 446-453.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES WORK BEST

The dental profession has a high rate of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) – 90% of dentists surveyed in a recent study reported having an MSD lasting an average of five years!

Researchers wanted to find out what kind of therapies a sample of 1497 dentists used for their MSDs and how useful they were. Seven per cent used complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) and 38% used conventional therapies.

Interestingly, 'dentists who used CAM therapies had significantly higher odds of satisfaction with their career', reported greater overall health and were able to work more efficiently. In addition, they were also less likely to quit work!

The most common CAM therapies used were massage (used by 80%), yoga (88%), meditation (53%) and acupuncture (51%).

Gupta, D., Bhaskar, D. J., Gupta, R. K., Jain, A., Yadav, P., Dalai, D. R., Singh, R., Singh, N., Chaushary, V., Singh, A., Yadav, A., & Karim, B. (2014). Is complementary and alternative medicine effective in job satisfaction among dentists with musculoskeletal disorders? A cross-sectional study. *Medycyna Prac, 65*(3), 317-323.

PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES OF WORD-RELATED PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT

In this study, forty-seven optometrists completed thirty minute interviews regarding job ergonomics and physical discomfort. Results show that overall discomfort was rated as mild to severe, with seventeen per cent of participants attributing discomfort entirely to work. (Other factors contributing to discomfort included sport and driving). Their MSDs negatively impacted home and leisure activities. Thirty two per cent of participants ceased work due to discomfort, and sixty-six per cent had treatment. Further, fifteen per cent of participants had multiple treatments per week. Although only twenty-seven percent viewed discomfort as just a personal problem, most participants (fifty-seven per cent) sought treatment in their own time, and only four participants received funding through workers' compensation or income protection insurance.

Long, J., Burgess-Limerick, R., & Stapleton, F. (2014). Personal consequences of work-related physical discomfort: an exploratory study. *Clinical and Experimental Optometry, 97*(1), 30-35.

THERAPIES TO THINK TWICE ABOUT

PART ONE

TRACTION

Traction is a procedure where the patient is fastened at the head and feet, and gentle stretching pressure is applied to the head by a machine. If you think of the mediaeval rack, you have the right idea – roughly, at least! The idea is to stretch out the cervical spine, and thus "help decrease compressive forces in the neck, which can help take pressure off of the discs that reside between the vertebrae (spinal bones) in the neck. It can also open up the spaces where nerves exit the spinal canal, which can help relieve pressure off of a compressed nerve. Traction can also help stretch the muscles and joint structures around the neck." That's a quote from a local physiotherapy practice.



But does it work for people with cervicobrachial pain? The answer is a pretty unequivocal "no". "There was level A evidence that traction did not improve function or disability either in the short or long term" says a recent systematic review. But it's worse than that – quite a few of our members who have had traction found that it worsened pain, sometimes dramatically.

Salt, E., Wright, C., Kelly, S., & Dean, A. (2011). A systematic literature review on the effectiveness of non-invasive therapy for cervicobrachial pain. *Journal of Manual Therapy*, 16(1), 53-65.

PLATELET-RICH PLASMA (PRP)

The idea behind this therapy sounds appealing: the patient's own blood is centrifuged and active, platelet-rich fractions are extracted and injected into the injured tissue. Since these fractions contain platelets which have the ability to produce several growth factors, in theory this therapy should enhance tissue healing. They've become extremely popular in the field of sports injury – but is there any evidence that they work?

A Cochrane systematic review was carried out to determine if there was any evidence to support this treatment. Trials covered a number of clinical conditions including rotator cuff tears, shoulder impingement syndrome, elbow epicondylitis and a range of tendinopathies. They concluded that "there is currently insufficient evidence to support the use of PRP for treating musculoskeletal soft tissue injuries".

Another systematic review looked at the medical literature on the efficacy of platelet rich plasma injections for tendinopathy at the elbow and found "strong evidence that PRP injections are not efficacious in chronic lateral epicondylar tendonopathy".

Possible side-effects include a small risk of infection or injury to nerves or blood vessels. Scar tissue formation and calcification at the injection site are also possible.

Probably the best approach to take to this therapy is to wait until more good-quality studies are carried out to determine if it works or not.

De Vos, R. J., Windt, J., & Weir, A. (2014). Strong evidence against platelet rich plasma injections for chronic lateral epicondylar tipped tendinopathy: a systematic review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 48(12), 952-956.

NON-STEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS (NSAIDs)

Researchers are changing their minds on the role of inflammation in overuse injuries. Before the 90s, inflammation was thought to be a central part of the injury; then to have no part at all. Now, it's acknowledged that an overuse injury is inflammatory, at least in the very early stages. NSAIDs work by lowering the production of prostaglandins, a chemical which promotes inflammation, pain and fever.

Unfortunately, prostaglandins also protect the stomach against its own acid. To lessen this very undesirable side effect, you can either take NSAIDs with food or apply them as an ointment on the skin of the affected part of the body (as topical NSAIDs). Researchers looked at 25 trials of topical NSAIDs compared to placebo or an oral NSAID. They found that topical NSAIDs were as effective in treating mild to moderate chronic musculoskeletal pain as oral NSAIDs, with a much lower risk of harm to the gastrointestinal tract. Ibuprofen is somewhat more gentle on the stomach and it also happens to be the NSAID recommended by researchers.

According to the National Prescribing Service (NPS) non-steroidal anti-inflammatories "should be used at the lowest dose that improves your symptoms and only be used for a short time. These medicines may not be suitable for people with stomach troubles, heart problems, kidney impairment, high blood pressure or asthma."

National Prescribing Service. (2011). *Chronic Pain : What Can I do?* Australia: National Prescribing Service Limited.

Mason, L., Moore, R. A., Edwards, J. E., Derry, S., & McQuay, H. J. (2004). Topical NSAIDs for chronic musculoskeletal pain: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*, 5(28), 174-175.

Derry, S., Moore, R. A., & Rabbie, R. (2012) Topical NSAIDs for chronic musculoskeletal pain in adults. *Cochrane Database Systematic Reviews*, 9, CD007400.

See out next issue for more therapies to think twice about!

ACUPUNCTURE, CHINESE HERBS & MASSAGE

We specialise in the treatment of:

- RSI & overuse injury
- Neck & lumbar pain
- Shoulder pain
- Sports injury
- Frozen shoulder
- Tennis elbow
- Depression & anxiety
- Chronic pain



www.chinesetreatmentcentre.com.au

Suite 4 Professional Centre, 5 McKay Gardens, Turner ACT

Ph: 6162 0089

Mob: 0409 558 852

TIPS & TOOLS

CLICKLESS SOFTWARE

Clickless software programs are designed to do most of the hard mousing work for you. You simply position your cursor where you want to click, and the program clicks for you! You can left click, right click, double click, middle click, hold the click – just about any kind of click! The idea is to reduce the strain in your hands and wrists as you work. I've put together a list of programs that I've been trialling both in the office and at home.

Before we start, here's a big tip: **read the instruction manual first**. Although most of the time I like to jump right in, I recommend setting aside 10 minutes before using the program to learn how to use the more advanced functions. Although all of these programs are designed to perform the same basic functions, they all use very different methods and shortcuts which can be difficult to adjust to.

Another important thing to remember is that the programs are designed to click. If you hover your cursor anywhere with a live link, you will open it! It can take some getting used to, but just be mindful of where you put your cursor when you don't want to click.

What I'm looking for:

Does it over click? Can I control how much it clicks?

One of the most annoying things about bad clickless software is its tendency to continually click, and the inability to control it! The ideal clickless software program should have settings that you can easily customise to your work pace and style, so that you don't accidentally open 20 different web browsers within the first 10 seconds of turning it on.

Is it easy to change and customise clicking style?

Left clicking is the default for most clickless software programs, but it's useful to have a right click function as well. It should be easy to change between left, right, or even middle clicking.

How easy is it to highlight text?

I'm often cutting and pasting snippets of text from here or there when I'm researching something, so for me, the ideal clickless software program needs to be able to highlight text easily. This isn't always an easy thing to do if you have a program that continually clicks! So again, the clicking settings need to be adjustable, and text needs to be easily highlighted.

Can I turn it off when it is annoying?

Clickless software programs can take some getting used to if you've never used one before. I introduced clickless software in small doses, so being able to turn the program on and off with a shortcut was useful.

Here are my comments on the programs I tried:

COK FREE AUTO CLICKER

System requirements: Windows95/98/2000/XP/2007/2008

Space Used: 757KB

Best feature: Simplicity!

Cok Free Auto Clicker is a simple version of a clickless software program. Installation took less than a minute! The image below shows the only setup you'll have to go through with this program. You simply select whether you'd like to left or right click, and how much time you'd like between each click. This is a continual clicking program, meaning that once it starts, it doesn't stop (unless you've turned it off). The HotKey shortcut can be used to start and stop the clicking (in this case, my shortcut is Control + D).



The default time between clicks is 0.1 seconds, however I've found this to be quite a fast pace! When I'm working on something that requires more typing than clicking I leave the time between clicks at 0.5 seconds and turn it on and off as I require. I find this time to be just enough to move my cursor about between sentences or paragraphs. However, when I'm working online and swapping between webpages I increase the duration between clicks to 1, sometimes even 2, seconds. This is because continuous clicking on a webpage can open many, many links! As a guide, the less confident you are about being able to position your mouse fast enough, the longer you should leave between clicks.

Highlighting text is not an action you can perform with this program. Because the program is designed to continually click, there is no feature that allows you to hold the click, so that you can drag to highlight. Therefore, if you do a lot of work with typing up documents, this might not be the program for you. However, Cok Free Auto Clicker is an excellent program if you're new to clickless software. The simplicity of the program allows you to easily adjust the settings to find out what's comfortable before moving on to more advanced programs.

Cok Free Auto Clicker is a FREE program that you can download from the website below.

<http://www.coksoft.com/index.htm>

AUTO CLICKER

System Requirements: Windows systems

Space Used: 1.8MB

Best Feature: Can open the program multiple times to use different shortcuts

Auto-Clicker was the first clickless software program that I installed. It was quick and easy to install, but incredibly frustrating to work with. Within the first ten minutes of starting the program, I had clicked over one thousand times and opened more than 20 internet browsers without knowing how to turn the program off! After finally closing the program I adjusted the basic settings. This program allows you to left, right, middle and hold click, adjust clicking speed (although this was quite hard to implement) as well as create a customisable on-and-off keyboard shortcut. However, be careful not to use a keyboard shortcut already associated with another program. Unfortunately, Microsoft Word has already claimed many keyboard shortcuts making it very difficult to come up with your own. (Warning: do not use a single letter as your shortcut. I had originally set my shortcut as 'S' for start/stop. This meant that the letter 's' was omitted from all of my documents for a few hours, until I worked out that I was in fact just turning my clickless on and off!).

One of my favourite things about this program is the ability to open it multiple times. Each opened program window allows you to create new settings with a new shortcut. For example, you may use one opening for fast clicking, one for slow clicking, one for right clicking etc. However, despite carefully reading the instructions and adjusting settings, this program did not allow me to switch between windows whilst working. Highlighting text was a complete nightmare. When I was finally able to highlight text in one word document to transfer to another, the cursor took on a mind of its own and my writing became a jumbled mess.



Unfortunately, this program took more effort than I think it is worth. If, however, you would like to try Auto-Clicker, you can download a free 20 day trial, or pay \$5 for the full version, by visiting the website below.

<http://www.murgee.com/auto-clicker/>



E-QUILL LIBERATOR (QUILL NIB)

System requirements: Windows95/98/2000/XP/2007/2008 (MAC version also available)

Space Used: 1.66MB

Best feature: Built in break reminders



Quill Nib is a much friendlier clickless software program than Auto-Clicker, and just as easy to install. Unlike Auto-Clicker, this is not a program that continually clicks. The settings are easy to adjust for the perfect clicking pattern. I've found a good balance to be 5 for pause time (measured in tenths of a second, this is how long the cursor waits between clicks) and 10 for pause zone (measured in pixels, this is the radius in which your cursor will click). The clicking function is easily turned off with a keyboard shortcut (Alt+O). Keyboard shortcuts can also be created to switch between left, right and centre clicking!

But my favourite feature is the adjustable break reminders built in to the program. I have mine set for a three minute break every 40 minutes, with my computer disabled for the duration of the break. If you're like me and need a little persuasion when it comes to breaks, disabling the computer for the break duration is a good idea! However, you can also turn this feature off and keep it purely as a break reminder. (Break software is a great way to

encourage stretching and breaks with regular computer use to prevent injury. Various break software programs and what to look for was a feature article in our previous newsletter. If you'd like a copy, please let us know!).

Highlighting text with QuillNib was much less stressful than using Auto-Clicker. The program has a function called 'DragNMove' that can be turned on and off. It allows you to set a specific time pause for highlighting. If you hold your cursor still for this set amount of time, your cursor will automatically hold the click, allowing you to drag and highlight text for as long as you've set your pause time to be (for me, that is 5 tenths of a second). From here, I use the keyboard shortcut (Control + C to copy/Control + X to cut, Control + V to paste) method of moving text.

Overall, I found QuillNib much easier to use than Auto-Clicker. If you'd like a 30 day free trial, or to download the full program for \$75 (US), the most reliable way to purchase it is through the website listed below (there is a separate link for MAC users).

<http://www.aerobicmouse.com/products/>

RSI GUARD

System Requirements: Compatible with all windows systems.

Space Used: 20MB

Best Feature: False-clicking avoidance feature.

RSI Guard is a program that I have previously reviewed as a break software program and even have installed on my home computer. The program doesn't take long to download but initial setup takes about 10 minutes as



you are guided through questions designed to tailor the program to your computer use. I find RSI Guard to be an excellent break software program, and its built in clickless software feature is just as impressive. After downloading the program, you'll need to turn on the clickless software feature by clicking on 'Settings' and 'Auto Click', which will take you to what is shown in the image one the previous page. Check the 'Enable AutoClick'.

I've set the trigger time at 11 (measured in tenths of a second; this is the time your cursor needs to be still before it clicks), and the trigger distance at 20 (measured in pixels, this is how far your mouse must move from its previous spot in order to click). When you're getting used to a new program I suggest starting out with a larger trigger time. This will reduce unnecessary clicks when you accidentally bump your cursor.

However, this program contains an excellent false-clicking avoidance feature. You can set a time (I've got mine set to 5 tenths of a second) after which your mouse will fail to click once you've begun typing. Similarly, it won't click after you've finished typing for this duration either. The only issue I have with the program is the time it takes to set up the customisable keyboard short-cuts and hot-keys which allow you to do things like switch between single and double clicking, left and right mousing, and various other features.

Overall, RSI Guard is an impressive program for the more advanced clickless software user. It takes a bit longer to adjust to compared to QuillNib or AutoClicker, but its combination of individually tailored break software and clickless software is a fantastic way to minimize mouse use. You can purchase RSI Guard via the website listed below:

<http://rsiguard.remedyinteractive.com/>

| Product | Price | Installation | Customization | Best Feature | In brief |
|-----------------------|--|---|---------------|--|---------------|
| Cok Free Auto Clicker | Free | Quick – Less than a minute! | Very easy | Very simple, a great starter program | Great freebie |
| Auto-Clicker | 20 day Free Trial OR \$5 Full License | Quick – Less than 5 Minutes | Not very easy | Can open multiple times for different settings | Don't bother! |
| Quill Nib | 30 Day Free Trial OR \$75 Full License | Quick – Less than 10 minutes | Easy | Built in break reminders | Easy to use |
| RSI Guard | 45 Day Free Trial OR \$65 Full License | Okay – Initial Setup takes 10 or so minutes | Easy | False-click avoidance feature | Good package |

Olivia Duczek

BOOK REVIEWS

Member Book Review: *Mindfulness for Health* by Vidyamala Burch and Danny Penman. Reviewed by Marie.



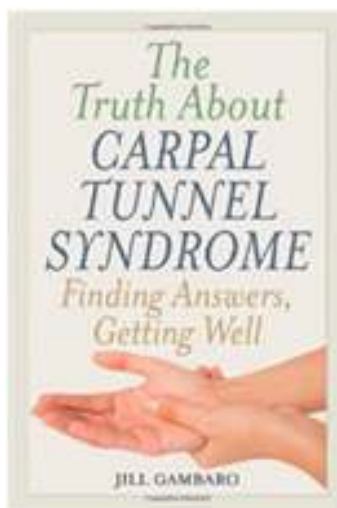
I was lent a copy of this book by a colleague who suffered from chronic back pain for over a decade. She had recently been to a pain management workshop run by the *Breathworks* group and had found it really useful. I have also told the clinical psychologist I have been seeing about it (as the book she suggested on pain management was out of print) and she agreed it was a great resource.

One of the most informative parts of this book for me was the greater understanding of pain it provided, including the different types of pain and practical approaches to dealing with them. I should note that the book is aimed at people dealing with a more severe, persistent and long term pain than I had to deal with, as by the time I read the book I was through the worst months. The book contains an eight-week mindfulness recovery guide and meditation course. I found the personal experiences of people following this program very informative, but I chose to go to a meditation group and practice on my own rather than follow the course myself. I have since purchased another of their books aimed at general stress management.

If you'd like to find out more about *Breathworks* and their publications, you can visit:

<http://www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/mindfulness-for-health-book-resources>

Member Book Review: *The Truth About Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Finding Answers, Getting Well* by Jill Gambaro. Reviewed by Ann.



In the USA, by far the most commonly-diagnosed form of overuse injury is carpal tunnel syndrome. Almost half a million hands are operated on every year – an absolute bonanza for surgeons!

Jill Gambaro, of the Los Angeles RSI Support Group, has written a book about her experiences of CTS. She worked as a temporary typist in three law firms while establishing a career as a writer. Aspects of her story will be familiar to many of us. She worked through the pain until her body gave in. After diagnosis, she writes "I could do none of my everyday activities: open a jar, slice vegetables, lift a skillet ... wash my hair, bend over to pull on my pants ... every time I tried my muscles retracted in pain."

Some material in this book is only relevant to readers in the USA, where medical coverage is very limited and the compensation system even less helpful than ours! This moving personal story will inspire and encourage many readers with RSI to keep going through the pain, the legal battles and the stigma to regain some measure of health.

THE BENEFITS OF AEROBIC EXERCISE

The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommends a minimum of 30 minutes exercise a day, but what is this exercise actually doing for us? Aerobic exercise (also known as cardio exercise) is the easiest and most common form of exercise which is fortunately associated with some fantastic bodily benefits.

We've also known for a long time that exercise helps you live longer by improving cardiovascular health. Today we know that aerobic exercise successfully prevents and treats mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. This is because exercise can improve mood, concentration, alertness and overall optimism.

Exercise also helps you to:

- reduce mild to moderate depression and anxiety,
- improve your sleep cycle,
- deal with stress,
- improve levels of self esteem,
- boost immune system functioning,
- and perhaps most importantly, exercise release permits a release of neurotransmitters in the brain such as serotonin and endorphins (substances that reduce signals of pain)!

Aerobic exercise doesn't have to be hard, and it certainly shouldn't cause pain. Activities include walking, swimming, running, yoga, rowing, tai chi, dancing and many others. You don't even need to break a sweat to reap the benefits! In fact, a moderate intensity aerobic exercise still allows you to hold a conversation (although not recommended while swimming!).

When not to exercise?

When you're feeling any symptoms above the neck (runny nose and a headache) it's okay to exercise as long as there is no sign of a fever. However, systematic illnesses that affect the entire body (like a chest infection, or muscle and joint aches) call for more caution. Your best bet is to rest up and ease back into exercise with some light walking. Even seemingly immortal athletes take around two to three days to get back into their normal routine. Be sure to do what is comfortable!

When first introducing exercise into your normal routine it is important to remember to perform movements that are comfortable and don't cause you stress. You could even break your 30 minute workout into bursts of 10 minutes.

EXERCISE AND OVERUSE INJURIES

Exercise is an under-researched treatment, whether it's for depression or overuse injuries. When Professor Helen Christensen from the Australian National University decided to research it as a depression remedy, she found just 17 research papers on the topic, compared to thousands for pharmaceutical remedies! So we could find only a few studies on aerobic exercise for overuse injuries, but they did seem to show that exercise could be useful.

For example, researchers recruited 30 volunteers with carpal tunnel syndrome to participate in a 10-month program of supervised aerobic exercise. They were able to show beneficial changes in nerve

conduction and oxygen utilization as well as an improvement in symptoms.

Another study looked at the effect of aerobic exercise in women with chronic pain/fibromyalgia. Again, there was substantial improvement in symptoms including pain, anxiety and depression. Participants reported feeling good on more days than before and all of these improvements were maintained when measured again 6 months later.

Alas, both of these studies had no control group so they don't provide good-quality evidence. However, a number of studies have managed to replicate these results, so it's fair to say that aerobic exercise looks like a promising treatment. And as long as you take care to pace yourself, there's very little downside.

When we first sent out our treatment survey to members, walking came in as one of the three most helpful treatments. Other forms of aerobic exercise have also been useful to our members:

AQUAROBICS

Carol has had RSI for many years and took up aquarobics at Kingswim, Deakin 18 months ago. She finds the warm water at the pool very soothing and relaxing and the temperature at the facility is kept nice and warm. The atmosphere set by the instructors is not at all pushy in the daytime classes, which are mostly attended by older women. You can put in as much – or as little – effort as you're up to.

Carol found aquarobics a great way to get back into moving again. By gradually regaining some fitness in the water, she was able to move on to joining a gym. She still goes to aqua because she finds it so pleasant.

Kingswim also has classes at McGregor, Majura Park and Calwell and offers a free trial class to all prospective new members. For more information call 1300 054 647.

ZUMBA

Another of our members, Lee decided to try Zumba a couple of years ago. You can do this at two different levels – moderate and harder – and, naturally, Lee went for moderate. It's based on a range of dance moves, including salsa, swing and line dancing. Lee says "this makes it quite mentally and physically stimulating. It's not too repetitive and you don't get bored".

"I found the music pretty irritating at times," adds Lee, "but some of it was really nice."

The atmosphere in the classes is encouraging and definitely not pushy. Mistakes don't matter and it's quite uncompetitive. "It's a great workout and I feel I've become a lot fitter," says Lee. "I have quite a bit of pain in my arms and neck, but I was able to cope. I'd encourage people with RSI to try it though the movements could be hard if your RSI was really bad."

Other forms of exercise that our members tell us they enjoy include modified tai chi, folk dancing, line dancing, swing and walking. If it's a group activity, give it a trial session to see whether you'll be able to go at your own pace, feel okay dropping out for a bit when you can't manage and the atmosphere is supportive for people with an injury.

Information Sheets Available:

A New Approach to Pain
Assistance through Medicare
Clickless Software
How to Win and Keep a Comcare Claim
Hydrotherapy
Injections for RSI
Managing Stress in Your Life
Managing Your Finances
Massage
Medical & Medico-Legal Appointments
You don't have to live with depression
Neck Pain
Pillows & RSI
Sewing & RSI
Members Story — Studying with RSI
Swimming with RSI
Treatments for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
Voice Overuse
Member's Story — Invalidity Retirement

Tips & Tools Sheets Available:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Driving | Getting on top of your emails |
| Sewing | Gadgets to help with medicines |
| In the Laundry | Writing and Pens |
| Handles | In the Garden |
| Book Holders | Your posture at the Computer |
| Cycling | Writing and Pens |
| Holidaying | In the kitchen |
| | Choosing a Keyboard |

To order an electronic copy of any of the above info sheets, please email us at admin@rsi.org.au

Booklets Available:

The RSI Association Self-Help Guide **\$25**
Really useful and practical information on treatments, medico-legal matters, maintaining emotional health and managing at home and at work.

Moving on with RSI **\$10**
Stories of people who have learnt to live with serious RSI, with many ideas on how to survive emotionally and successfully manage the condition.

Pregnancy & Parenting with RSI **\$10**
Information designed to help parents with an overuse injury to manage the specific challenges they face.

Booklets can be purchased online (www.rsi.org.au), requested by email, or ordered by mail using the form below.

Renewal for Membership & Order Form

Please make cheques or money orders payable to the RSI and Overuse Injury Association of the ACT, Inc.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I would like to receive my newsletter by email:

I enclose:

| Annual Membership: | I want to renew for | | Save money and renew for | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | 1 Year | | 2 years | |
| Low Income | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Standard Income | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> | \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organisation* | \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Booklets Available:

Cost:

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|--------------------------|
| Self-Help Guide | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Moving on with RSI | \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pregnancy & Parenting | \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Donation (tax-deductible): \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Save with our two year membership for just \$40.00

COMING SOON

THERAPIES TO THINK TWICE ABOUT—PART 2

STUDYING WITH RSI

INJUSTICE — HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?



Preventing overuse injury, reducing its impact

RSI & Overuse Injury Association of the ACT, Inc.

Room 2.08, Griffin Centre
20 Genge Street
Canberra City
ACT, 2601

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Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services or drop in to our office during our opening hours.

Opening Hours: Mondays and Thursdays,
10.30am to 2.30pm

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