

Why I resolve to practice what I preach – confessions of an injured Duck – May 2017



I am a big advocate for regular treatments to help maintain healthy wellbeing and I encourage my clients to consider having massage or other therapies as a matter of course rather than waiting for an injury. In promoting sports massage in particular, the message is that if you take care of your body and condition it for what you are expecting it to do then the chance of injury is greatly reduced. In sports training this can be obvious – you know you have worked your legs with that run and those squats, so it makes sense to have them massaged to help stretch the muscles and boost circulation. But what about the impact of spending 8 hours at a desk? Or, as in my case, the impact of carrying, bouncing, lifting, breastfeeding and snuggling a growing baby...

Well, it turns out the impact can be fierce! I have developed an injury called De Quervains – inflammation of the tendon sheath of the tendons connecting my thumb to my wrist, which manifests as intense pain on pretty much all movement of my right wrist and thumb (I'm right-handed). It is a condition that tends to affect new mums whose ligaments are still lax and who are using their bodies in new, relentless ways – breastfeeding, rocking, bouncing, cuddling protectively, carrying in a sling, bending and lifting, wrestling squirmy crawlers to get nappies changed...all of this while more tired than you've ever been and with less sleep to build the strength and resilience to cope with the new demands on your body.

So, I wish what I had chosen to do was to have treatments every couple of weeks to help myself counter some of this impact. The other benefit, as well as the immediate physical boost, is the help to "tune-in" to your body that a treatment gives. Have you ever had a massage where you've said to your therapist "I didn't even realise I was tense there" when they worked on a specific point on your body? Well that process is helping you to get a feel for your body and to get more of a sense of how it is absorbing strain. Often the parts that we are aware of hurting are the final cogs in the chain, yet it's the earlier cogs that have led us to this point of pain.

I knew I had some niggles – my lower back was permanently aching, my shoulders were stiff and I had some pains in my elbow after particularly restless nights. But I somehow – despite this being my

vocation and livelihood – subconsciously decided that regular treatment was an extravagance with my reduction in working hours and tight schedule with family and work.

So I didn't do as I would advise anyone to do and listen to those niggles. And the upshot is that now I have had to stop massaging – and any self-employed person will attest that cutting off your main income stream is a tough call to make. So all that 'saving' from the 'extravagance' of having regular treatment is now upended by my loss of income. Added to which I now need more treatment to help it heal! (I will write another blog soon about my treatment, which has been great - acupuncture is really helping the inflammation, osteopathy is helping me get everything back in order with some massage providing relief too)

Lesson learned! And I will stick to my advice to clients to look after yourself and maintain wellbeing when you have it. Injuries are painful, frustrating, time consuming and costly – please do practice what I preach!!!