

## Where's the evidence?

### What is ultrasound?

Ultrasound therapy uses high-energy sound waves (those above the range we hear) to help ease painful joints and muscles. There is much debate amongst therapists to whether ultrasound works for injury recovery. Particularly for the intensity and length of doses, our training in Britain is very different to those in America. Through research and my own experiences I would say yes it does have its uses but **not** as an isolated treatment. It is best used in the very early stages of an acute injury when little else can be done until swelling and pain subside. It can help to speed up this stage and aid recovery with the help of ice, compression and active movements. It can be used in chronic injuries. The sound waves penetrate the muscles to cause deep tissue/muscle warming. This promotes tissue relaxation and therefore is useful in treating muscle tightness and spasms. The warming effect of the sound waves also causes vessel vasodilatation and increases circulation to the area that assists in healing. It is useful to use along side massage, stretching and mobilisations.

### Claim 10% discount

Register your club or business and receive 10% discount for members or employees

Not just sports – lately I have been helping people with rheumatoid arthritis and M.E. with some great results in pain relief. If you know anyone with these I fully recommend massage as a treatment.

### Time for a stretch

Stretching is an important part of anybody's daily routine. It should be done after every training exercise and/or when you are in one position for a length of time. Stretching helps muscles to recover from exercise sessions and prepare you for your next session. It is also an injury preventative method as it helps to restore muscle length and therefore balance and posture. Stretching exercises should be specific to what you do, stretching the hamstrings is most important for cyclists as they are always in the shortened position. Office workers need to concentrate on stretching the chest muscles as most will adopt a rounded shoulder posture, causing the chest muscles to shorten. Stretches should be held for at least 20 seconds, this is to get past the body's own natural reflex response. A stretch should only be just felt and never painful, at this stage you have gone too far and could be causing damage. Stretching should always be done when the muscles are warm. If you are not sure how to stretch you should always ask a professional. Even those who have done stretching for years can be doing it wrong - keep up to date.

### CRAMPING UP?

**Cramp is an involuntary muscle contraction that can be very painful. It can last from a few seconds to 15 minutes.**

#### Causes

**Performing the same actions over and over again.**

#### **Dehydration**

**Low salt levels – particularly for endurance events when salt is lost through sweat**

**Low potassium levels – found in bananas**

#### Treatment

**Replace fluids and electrolytes**

**Mild stretch**

**Direct compression**

**Approximation**

**Reciprocal inhibition**

**Ice**

**After it can be very sore for a few days massage can help to decrease the effects**

### Massage for all

Massage should be part of everyone's regime to prevent injury and maintain balance.

No matter what you do, soft tissue tightness will occur naturally. Your posture can show what occupation you have. An example is computer users will have a forward head position and rounded shoulders.

Stress can lower the immune system, massage can help to improve the function of the immune system for better general health and resistance to colds and other illnesses. Massage can also help improve sleep.

In future newsletters I will be going into the benefits of pre-event, post-event, and maintenance massages as well as the type of techniques used.

