

# Bodywork for Wellness

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## Winter 2015/2016 Newsletter

**Owners' Manual for the Body:** I recently had to bring my car in for some standard maintenance and when the chime went ding I knew it was time to take action. This ding has replaced sticker reminders and making notes on my calendar. I am happy to have an owners' manual for my car for when I need to check on something or look up how to address a problem. I thought it would be so nice if we had that for the body too. These manuals help us keep things running well, it helps us keep balance. So I decided it could be helpful to write my version of the "owners' manual" for the body and then to share the ideas with you.

From my experience with education, activities, exercise, and need for self-care due to these activities I have learned many things that help keep the body balance we need to feel well. Like cars we need fuel, for humans this means water and nutrition. While I am not a nutritionist, I do know that we need to eat protein, carbs, healthy fats, and water. Just like the car, if we don't have proper or enough fuel we can't perform the best. Meals and snacks that are balanced and well-spaced throughout the day will help us have the energy we need to take on all our activities and work. We also need to drink water to stay hydrated especially in the winter. We may not feel as thirsty but water helps our skin be healthy, it helps with digestion, and keeps our tissues more lubricated.

We need movement to be healthy! It has become common knowledge that we are becoming a very sedentary society. Historically, we had to hunt and gather for all our needs, modern technology brings many things right to our door today and while that is good if we can't get out, if we can get out its better for us to be moving. Sedentary lifestyles can lead to greater health risks. When one begins adding activities it can be helpful to start with low impact activities walking or swimming and it's better to start with 20 minutes once and then twice per day and progress from there building up to 30-45 minute exercise sessions.

Sometimes in the new year we are eager to jump into working out to achieve resolutions but that can be very intense on your physical system so better to begin gently to allow the body to adjust to the new activity level with no or minimal challenges and allow the change to be something you are likely to stick with for life instead of just for a few weeks.

Self-care and maintenance is a vital part of good functioning. If you didn't change your oil or check your alignment would you be surprised if your car had problems? Of course not! We are taught some much about caring for our vehicles but our BODIES ARE VEHICLES too and they are much harder to replace. Maintenance means seeing your doctor for a physical, taking any medicines that are prescribed, eating healthy, exercise, getting regular sleep and rest to balance between work and play. Taking vacation or staycations can help with balancing stress as well. Stretching and self-care is an important part of the treatment plan for when you come to treatment so that you have tools to take care of yourself on a day to day basis. Lastly when your car has an issue you take it in to get worked on. This is the same idea you can use for your body. When we do regular maintenance we keep away likely problems but if we have a problem or pain that isn't showing reasonable improvement in 5-7 days then we need to start a more indepth process of addressing it. Depending on the cause of the problem we may need to see the Doctor or if its familiar you can call to get in for some treatment.

Pain is the equivalent to the light coming on or hearing the ding in your car --it means something needs attention so use this signal to help care for yourself instead of ignoring it or pushing through it. Pain is the only message your body has to get your attention so try to think of it as a signal for help rather than something that is punishing you or holding you back. Addressing you body's pain or imbalance sooner than later helps you to prevent compensations that can cause other problems down the road. When we have pain we need to stop the irritating activity, rest, do self-care and self-treatment, use ice or heat depending on the timing of the injury and seek further care as needed.

Hopefully this brief "owners' manual" for the body will help you keep a healthy perspective on how to take good care of yourselves and your body for the coming year. If you need help to begin your self-care plan please call and we can incorporate this into your session. If you are having pain please address your body's needs sooner than later with treatment. Wishing you happy holidays and health in the coming year. \*\*\*The office will be closed 12/8-12/20/15, 12/25, 1/1/16.

If you have a comment or question, or to learn more about Bodywork for Wellness please call or email:

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