HINDMARSH
PHYSIOTHERAPY&
SPORTS INJURY CLINIC

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ARE YOUR GRAND KIDS GIVING YOU BACK PAIN?

GRANDPARENTS LOOKING AFTER YOUNG CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO PUSH, PULL, BEND & LIFT.

DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS THEIR WEIGHT CAN INCREASE FROM A 3KG NEWBORN TO AN ACTIVE 15KG TODDLER. SO IT'S NO WONDER THAT LOOKING AFTER YOUNG CHILDREN CAN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE YOUR RISK OF NECK & BACK INJURY.



Our Physiotherapists at Hindmarsh Physiotherapy are increasingly finding that many grandparents are being asked to help with childcare.

Don't wait for low-back pain to start impacting your life and your ability to take care of your grand kids, home and family. Take action, be proactive and you can prevent and beat low back pain caused by your your grandmotherly or grandfatherly duties.

Some tips to help you avoid injury are:

Especially take care with activities such as:

- Lifting babies, toddlers and prams.
- Carrying a child for more than a few meters at a time.
- Bending and twisting when lifting a child.

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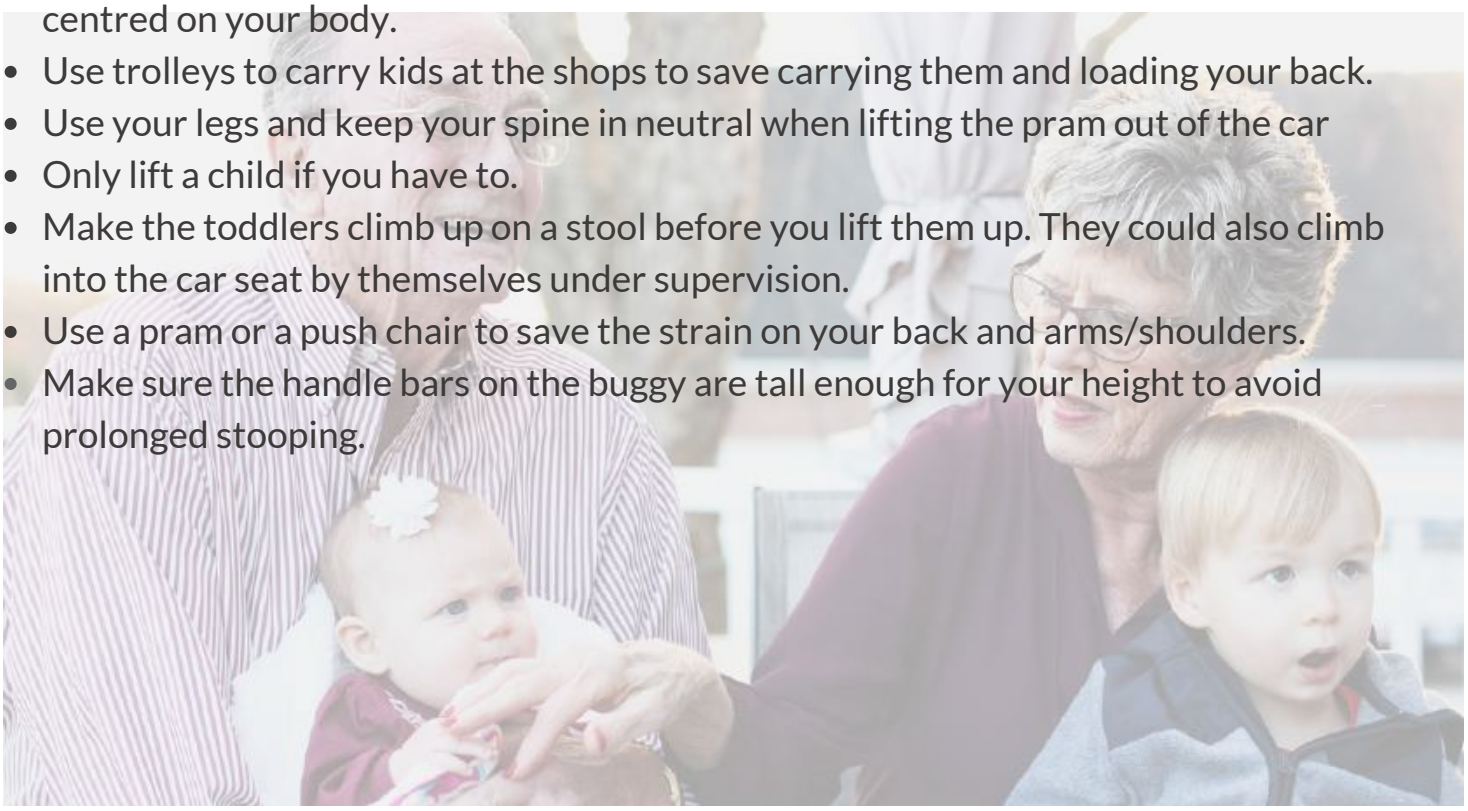
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OUR EXTENSIVE CHECKLIST TO HELP

LIFTING AND CARRYING ADVICE

To minimise this risk, it is not only important to watch how you're lifting, but also to put a bit of planning into your environment to make tasks easier.

- Always face your child/the object you are lifting.(Teach your toddler to face you & hold on rather then have them leaning away from you)
- Stand evenly on both legs and lift them close to you and centrally.
- Bend your knees or half kneel to keep your back straight
- Start with your child close to your body
- Keep abdominal muscles braced (Learn how to from your physio) Tighten your tummy muscles and pelvic floor when you lift babies and toddlers in and out of the cot or swing to support your lower back.
- Use both arms to lift and support your grandchild
- Avoid carrying your child on one hip for prolonged periods – instead try to keep them centred on your body.
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- Use trolleys to carry kids at the shops to save carrying them and loading your back.
- Use your legs and keep your spine in neutral when lifting the pram out of the car
- Only lift a child if you have to.
- Make the toddlers climb up on a stool before you lift them up. They could also climb into the car seat by themselves under supervision.
- Use a pram or a push chair to save the strain on your back and arms/shoulders.
- Make sure the handle bars on the buggy are tall enough for your height to avoid prolonged stooping.



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ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE FOR YOUR TODDLER

- Use pull out steps or risers for the toilet, sink & changing table to reduce the number of times you bend & lift to help them
- This will mean your grandchild can pick them up themselves & also help with tidying up!
- Assist them to climb in and out of the bath and high chair by holding onto their hands.
- Place a chair/stool beside the cot (with the side down) and get them to climb onto the chair/stool then into the cot.
- Help them in and out of the car by assisting from behind with a hand under their bottom (i.e: climb onto the floor, onto the seat, and then into the car seat).
- When changing nappies only use a table at waist height so that you do not bend over too much and for too long or sit on the bed next to them if no table available.

ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT CHANGES

- Change the surface, height, timing and process of things to minimise low back loading.
- Check the height of your change table
- Look at access to the cot
- Use a washing basket stand if helping with the chores
- Use stools to sit lower to the ground
- Be careful twisting back in the car to pass something to kids in the back. This extension with twisting while passing something can lead to back or shoulder and neck overload and injury.
- Kneel in front of your child while buckling them into their car seat – don't try and awkwardly strap them in from outside the car and risk low-back strain.

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GET DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL WHEN POSSIBLE

- Instead of picking the child up to cuddle, squat down or get onto your knees to do so.
- Sit on the couch and ask your grandchild to climb up for a cuddle.
- Try changing nappies on the bed, sitting or kneeling beside the bed, rather than lifting the child onto the change table

FEEDING

- Take care with feeding
- Sit with a rolled up towel/rolled cushion in the small of your back for lumbar support
- Build up pillows to support your child to reduce the amount you have to lean forward to reach them
- Try to keep shoulders relaxed & chin tucked in.

WHAT ELSE WILL HELP

WARMING UP

A vulnerable time for your low-back is when you are not warmed up and after prolonged sitting. A warm up helps get blood flowing and muscles warm and increases elasticity in tissues, therefore reducing the risk of over-stretching and straining low back structures.

How can you warm up?

- Go for a walk with the kids/pushing the pram first thing
- Do some stairs at home a few times before lifting to get your heart rate up and back warm.
- Stretch your hip and leg muscles out– make it a game with the kids – get them to do stretches too!
- Join in with your grandkids on dancing to a video- wiggles!

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MAINTAIN MOBILITY

- Most low-back injuries are a result of overload.
- Maintaining good hip, low back and thoracic spine range of motion and flexibility is essential in reducing the load placed on your low-back.

GET STRONG AND STAY STRONG

Core and hip strengthening really important for both preventing and helping low back pain. Engaging the right muscles is really important also and our physiotherapists can help in teaching you how to use your core and hip muscles properly to support your back.

Pilates is another effective way to build functional core strength for your grandparent roles.

Swimming and gym programs also provide great tools for core and hip strengthening.
Make time – don't wait until youre in pain to do something about it – plan how you can keep a healthy back. Choose functional exercises with whole body training

IF YOU DO HAVE PAIN

Keep active, bed rest is not the best way to get rid of back pain, neither is prolonged sitting or standing. Get personalised advice from one of our physiotherapists to help you manage the condition.

Caring for young children can be very physically demanding on your body. Joint and muscular pain is common as we age and conditions such as arthritis can be easily flared up by increased strain on the joints.

By keeping your body fit and strong, you are more likely to maintain your health, slow down the age- related changes and prevent injuries.

If you have presently got low back pain or have had low back pain in the past and would like to find out more about how to beat low back pain, make sure you contact our Physiotherapists.

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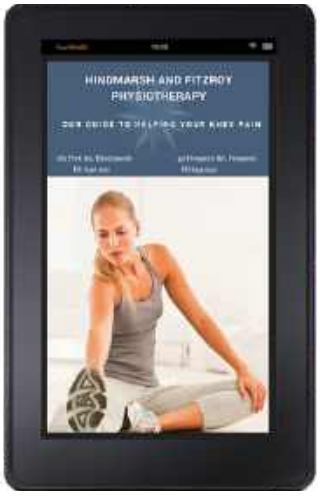
Our caring staff will continue to touch base to see if there is anything we can do to help. We are committed supporting you and your physiotherapy needs.
Please reach out to our team if we can help you in any way

As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment. You are welcome to download these informative E-books that you may find useful to get you on your way.

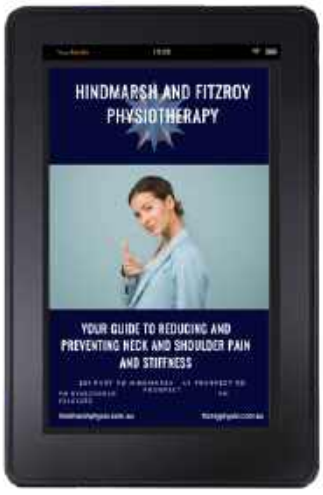
OTHER RESOURCES



MANAGING BACK PAIN



MANAGING KNEE PAIN



MANAGING NECK PAIN

To access our free E-book Resource just click the images above

You can call us on 83462000 at Hindmarsh and CONTACT US ONLINE HERE if you would like an appointment

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