

## BACK CLASSES

### TRAINING FOR THE PROBLEM BACK

#### About Back Ache

Back ache is very common and affects most people at sometime in their lives. In fact, nearly everyone suffers with a sore back at least once a year.

Much research has been undertaken to find out what causes back ache and what makes our backs healthy, but we still don't know all the facts. Certain things like heavy lifting, especially while twisting, can cause or worsen back problems, as can an accident where the back is subjected to a heavy jolt.

Vibrations, which occur in moving vehicles and on boats can also cause pain. People who spend most of their working day sitting, or who are physically inactive, risk back problems. We know also that stress and dissatisfaction at work or in our private lives can cause back pain.

**Exercise** helps the back cope better even if it does not always offer a complete cure. Flexible joints and muscles are much better than stiff, tight ones.

**Exercise** has also been shown to increase overall wellbeing and resistance to infections. Circulation, important for every single tissue in the body, increases with walking and exercise. Smoking is bad for the circulation and so it is not good for the back either.

As we age our backs age too. This also alters the shape of the vertebrae. The discs between them become thinner and so less efficient at shock absorption. It happens to nearly everybody and is called spondylosis.

If these changes are small they will seldom cause any problems, and it is important to point out that even significant changes need not cause any problems either.

An older back will become stiffer and shorter. Muscles and tendons change, so that there is less muscle tissue and more tendons. The more we exercise, the better our bodies will function even when we are old. A well-trained 70-year old can, in fact, have a back that is better and more functional than that of a much younger person who does not exercise.

Training later in life will bring very worthwhile results. It is never too late to start looking after your body, but if you have other health problems, you should seek medical advice before setting out. This of course, also applies to younger persons who are unsure as to whether or not this type of exercise would be suitable. Bringing this leaflet to show your doctor is a good idea!



**When your back is sore**....Scientific evidence shows that sore backs should be kept moving; exercise prevents sore backs, speeds up healing and makes us less sensitive to pain. Sitting still or lying in bed for more than a couple of days will only aggravate the problem.

Instead, resolve to overcome your fear of moving and start by taking short walks. Also look in your **Friskis&Svettis** Membership Information Booklet "KEEPING YOUR BACK IN GOOD SHAPE" The exercises shown are very useful. You will feel some of your muscles stiff and tight, but remember this is not dangerous. However if it hurts, avoid that movement.

Once you have backache, you can get into a vicious circle. Your muscles weaken and the back becomes more vulnerable. You need to build up strength in your legs and trunk and learn to use all the flexibility your back is meant to have. Most people bend *forward* far too much - sitting at desks, computers, in front of TV, driving cars. In fact, we "sit our backs to death!!" We need to counteract all this forward bending by stretching out the joints, muscles and ligaments in our backs. (see pictures in Membership Info. Booklet)

A **Friskis&Svettis** Back Class is not a physiotherapy session but an exercise class for people with back problems. All the exercises in the program are considerate to the back. There is no jumping and the pace is slower than in other programs. We aim to build strength, stability and suppleness of our "core muscles", i.e. tummy and back as well as improve fitness of the heart and circulation. Learning to relax and "let go" of tension and stress is also part of the program.

**Friskis&Svettis Back Classes**, incorporating all functional moves, will also help participants to be more body conscious, making healthy movement patterns "automatic". The aim of the class is to help participants to carry out everyday activities with stability and control, *without pain!!*

Our back programmes have been developed from special classes that have run in Sweden since 1978. The majority of participants report improvements to their backs within the first three months of taking part.

Coming to an **F&S** class is simple. You need no previous training or preparation.

- Wear loose comfortable clothing
- Wear *good quality indoor training shoes*.
- Bring an exercise mat to keep you comfortable during floor exercises and relaxation.

Attending a back class once a week, preferably more, will make your back stronger, more flexible and stable. As well as improving your general fitness and stamina, it will also put you in a more positive frame of mind!

**F&S** has been offering Back Classes in Aberdeen since January 2001.



## **FIT BACK CLASSES**

### **WHERE AND WHEN?**

- Inchgarth Community Centre, Garthdee, Aberdeen  
Mondays at 6pm
- Sunnybank Community Centre, Sunnybank Road, Aberdeen  
Thursdays at 9.45 am (crèche available)

**For further details please visit our website:-**

**[www.fsaberdeen.co.uk](http://www.fsaberdeen.co.uk)**

or telephone: Jackie Leiper, Tel 712705 or  
Aileen Adam, Tel 867204



Text by:  
Gunilla Smith,  
Founder & Hon. President



## **BACK CLASSES**

**Fitness for You and Your  
Problem Back**

