

# ms.

Multiple Sclerosis  
Otago



## How do you recognise, relate and respond to a relapse?

On the 26th June 2013 we were privileged to have Sharon Stevenson-Hall and Rachel McLay-Barnes come to our Society in Baker Street to present to our members. Since taking over the role of Field Officer earlier in the year I have met with many of our members. One theme that I come across many times was the confusion around what is a relapse. Many members would have an episode and not be sure whether it was MS related or not. For many members this was a confusing time as they weren't sure whether to go to their GP, contact the MS nurses at the public hospital or to wait until the symptoms went away. Having both MS nurses come to our premises made it possible to inform our members and provided a place to discuss and share common concerns. Sharon and Rachel talked about the following:

### What is a relapse?

- Exacerbation, event, attack, or "Flare up"
- Not associated with a high temperature or any illness / infection
- A new symptom or deterioration in an existing symptom lasting more than 48hrs
- Caused by inflammation on the myelin sheath
- After a relapse the inflammation subsides and repair commences
- When this occurs the symptoms reduce in severity and may disappear, this can take up to 3 months

### What should you do?

- Important that you visit your GP to eliminate any other underlying cause and the event is documented
- Encourage GP to inform your Neurologist of event- it is not necessary that you are seen by your Neurologist



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## Using corticosteroids to manage a relapse

- Not every event necessarily needs treatment with steroids, consult your GP
- Reduces inflammation, decreases swelling around the neuron
- Suppresses the autoimmune response
- Standard treatment is to administer Methylprednisolone IV daily over 3 – 5 days or to take the form 500mg daily for 3 days followed by 5 days of prednisone

Your treatment will depend on the severity of the relapse some suggestions have been noted below for your general wellbeing of:

### What you can do

- Rest – build rest periods into your daily activities
- Diet – maintaining a good well balanced diet is important, avoid missing meals
- Sleep – discuss with your GP issues that interfere with good sleep
- Stress – be active about reducing things that stress you
- Stop Smoking!

## Conclusion

- It is important to look after yourself
- It is important you see your GP if your symptom persists it is not necessary to be seen by a Neurologist
- Steroids only reduce duration and severity if used early in event
- Not all relapses require steroid use

It was a pleasure to have both Sharon and Rachel at our Society talking to our people and their loved ones who live with MS on a daily basis. They were able dispel any myths or misunderstanding about relapses. Both Sharon and Rachel are happy to talk to people that have concerns and encourage GP's to contact them if they have questions or are unsure of something.

Both nurses can be contacted on the following Sharon Stevenson-Hall & Rachel McLay-Barnes, Neuroscience outpatient Clinic, Dunedin Hospital. (03) 470 9286 ext 9286.

A huge thanks to both Sharon and Rachel for sharing their time and expertise with the MS Otago Society and its members.

Courage doesn't always roar.  
Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day,  
saying, "I will try again tomorrow."  
*- Mary Anne Radmacher*

## Room Hire Available

The Day Room which is located at 8 Baker Street, Caversham, DUNEDIN is available to hire for your next board meeting, training session, group meetings, or function.

This versatile inviting room can be set up in a variety of individual needs; seating is currently available for a maximum of 50 people.

Our venue is completely wheelchair friendly including the ablution area which also has a disabled friendly shower unit.

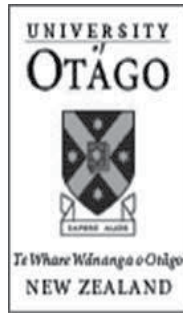
Our heat pumps provide a warm and inviting atmosphere on cold days, and on hot days our

sliding windows provide some much needed cooler airflow.

Our premises are located in a quiet suburban neighbourhood, near main bus routes, street parking, and also off street parking is available.

Bookings are available during some weekdays, most weekends and evenings. Should you wish to view our venue please contact Tania on (03) 4555 894 ext 2 to arrange a time to visit.

The hiring fee contributes towards the continued work of the Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society in the community.



## Reliability and validity of clinic-based outcome measures for the assessment of balance in cerebellar ataxia

**We are seeking volunteers to help us test measures of balance:**

Men and women (aged 18-65) with **multiple sclerosis**  
Able to walk a short distance with or without an assistive device (such as a walking stick)

**We will ask you to undergo a short screening procedure to confirm your eligibility. Following this your balance, disease stage and level of functional independence will be assessed with six tests. The balance tests will be videotaped.**

**All participants will be offered a \$20 gift voucher in order to assist with reimbursement of any costs incurred whilst participating in this study.**

If you would like to participate in this study please contact:

Dr. Marina Moss

Room 212a, second floor

School of Physiotherapy, University of Otago

Ph: (03) 479 4979 ; Email: [marina.moss@otago.ac.nz](mailto:marina.moss@otago.ac.nz)

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**DISCLAIMER:** The information in this newsletter is for the purpose of informing people about multiple sclerosis, events and interesting reading. The contents of this newsletter neither indicate nor reflect the views of the Otago MS Society. You should not rely on any information produced in this newsletter in place of a visit, consultation or advice of a doctor or other qualified health provider.

# Understanding change, loss and grief

## Understanding Loss

Loss is defined as a “separation from, a detachment from something or someone of value.” The magnitude of the loss and its meaning and value to the individual affects the intensity of a person’s response. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to predict how any one person will respond to a particular loss. But it always causes some change in perception of one’s self or lifestyle and some type of adaptation or adjustment is required.

Following a loss of great significance (e.g. death of spouse or child, divorce, loss of farm), a person normally moves from a period of acute emotional pain and sadness to a more comfortable emotional state. This movement through a series of adaptive stages is known as the grief process. It may take from several weeks to several years to adequately complete the process. No one can keep a person from suffering; but you do not have to suffer for the wrong reasons. We must choose what to remember of the past, cherish the joys of the present, and plan a future to which we can look forward.

## Ten Helpful Guidelines

These guidelines are presented in the hope that they will help grieving individuals in their journey from helplessness to hopefulness.

- 1. Accept your emotions.** Any significant loss, such as death of a loved one, hurts. It is difficult to say goodbye—to realise that in your lifetime you will never see or touch your loved one again. Why pretend that you are not experiencing turmoil by “keeping a stiff upper lip”? Your emotions are a natural response to the death of a loved one.
- 2. Express your feelings.** Deal with your conflicting feelings openly. A feeling that is denied expression is not destroyed; it remains with you and often erupts at inappropriate times. It does hurt to use words like dead and widow; but you must confront reality and put your feelings into words. Cry if you want to. It is a natural expression of grief for both men and women. Crying is the emptying out of the emotions so healing can occur.
- 3. Don’t expect miracles overnight.** Allow sufficient time for the grieving period to run its course. Don’t compare yourself with others in similar positions. Their smiles might not reveal the depth of their sorrow. Be yourself. Don’t pretend grief beyond the time you need to grieve. Nor do you need pretend recovery before you are recovered.
- 4. If you have children, bring them into the grieving process.** Death is a crisis that should be shared by all members of the family. Children too often are forgotten by grieving adults. Silence and secrecy deprive them of an important opportunity to share grief. When in your heartache you overlook your children’s feelings, you heighten their sense of isolation.
- 5. Don’t escape into loneliness.** If you isolate yourself, stay alone too much, your home will become a protective shell that keeps you from facing the challenges of life. At the same time, look at your priorities so you don’t overload your circuits. Stick with what is important and necessary now and don’t worry too much about what is down the road.
- 6. Keep in touch with your friends.** Let the right people know that you need their support and feedback. They cannot bring you comfort unless you talk with them and share your feelings. They cannot bring you comfort unless you allow them to enter your sorrow. Holidays, birthdays and anniversaries are especially difficult times to be alone. Plan ahead to spend these days with caring and understanding friends.
- 7. Join a support group.** At some point you may be disappointed in the reactions of your friends or acquaintances or close friends. Perhaps you don’t hear from them as often as in the past. They may seem awkward or uneasy in your presence or even avoid your company. That’s why self-help groups have been successful in providing necessary emotional intervention through the crisis of great loss. People in these groups understand your fears and frustrations; they have been there before themselves.

8. **Counselling may be very beneficial.** Sorrow leaves its imprint on the healthiest of personalities. You may need more than the warmth of a close friend or understanding of a fellow sufferer. A professional counsellor who is not emotionally attached to you may be more effective to assist you in dealing with your intense feelings or maintaining a clear perspective.
9. **Be nice to yourself.** By treating yourself well, you could become your own best friend. While you need caring and supportive people, you also need moments of solitude to find yourself. A little withdrawal and reflection will allow you to become more relaxed and energized. By taking care of yourself, you will recognise your strengths as well as your weaknesses. You will become more confident that you can manage the challenging days ahead. After all, if you're not nice to yourself, who will be?
10. **Turn pain into growth.** Death ends a life, not a relationship. Through grief, you can become a more understanding, compassionate and sympathetic person. Resolve to live as your beloved would want to live, love as they would want you to love, and serve others as they would have wanted you to serve. The Chinese word-picture symbol for crisis is the same as the symbol for opportunity. This is your new challenge.

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*Understanding Grief and Loss.* (2013). Retrieved June 21, 2013, from National Caregivers Library: <http://www.caregiverslibrary.org/caregivers-resources/grp-end-of-life-issues/hsgroup-grief-and-loss/understanding-grief-and-loss-article.aspx>

## SNOW DAY POLICY

Given the recent weather in the deep South we thought it best to clarify what we do if there is a group scheduled. If it's snowing, or the roads are icy and unsafe the group will be automatically cancelled. We recommend that you stay at home and keep warm.

You may wish to check on the television channels 1 and 3, as they often have weather updates, or your preferred radio station, we will try and get a message mentioned on air.



### ***Lest We Forget***

*It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Chris Baker. He was a member of our Society, our thoughts are with his family and friends during this time.*



# The Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society

are pleased to be able to host a morning session on .....

## Choking

by Carol Smith from M&O Pacific

How do people choke

Signs and symptoms

How to prevent choking

Treatment for choking

Carol will be presenting at:

Where: Our Society 8 Baker Street, Caversham

When: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Time: 10.30 am

Please note that there is a \$ 10.00 per person cover charge to attend this session

All welcome just please RSVP to the Field Officer Jo Smith on (03) 455 5894  
ext 4 or email [jo@msotago.org.nz](mailto:jo@msotago.org.nz) as spaces are limited.

## A LASTING LEGACY

We all have a different way we want to leave our mark on the world. As little as 1% of your estate will make a lasting difference to the Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society, which will enable us to continue supporting, providing services and education to people with Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological illnesses.

A gift in your Will is one way to leave a lasting legacy that continues long after you are gone.

### HOW DO I MAKE A BEQUEST?

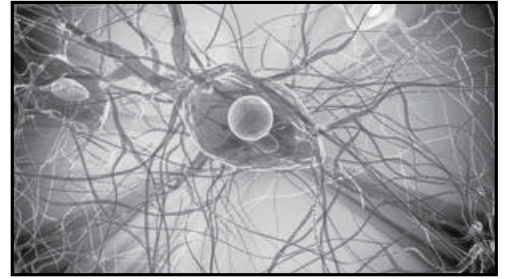
A bequest is made through your Will. If you already have a Will, all you need to do is add a codicil (supplement), which amends part of the Will. You are able to place conditions on any bequest, but since your bequest is likely to be received far into the future, it is more beneficial if its terms are as general as possible. We recommend that you seek legal advice from your Solicitor when adding a bequest to your will.

### SAMPLE BEQUEST

I give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of my estate to the Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society (Inc) to be applied for its general purposes. A receipt taken by my trustees as being given on behalf of the beneficiary will be a complete discharge to my trustees for this legacy.



# Multiple Sclerosis: MS Treatment 'Breakthrough'



For the first time, researchers have reprogrammed the immune systems of MS patients to stop cells attacking the protective layer around nerves in the spinal cord.

The destruction of the insulating sheath - called myelin - prevents normal transmission of nerve signals, triggering symptoms of the disease such as limb paralysis.

The clinical trial showed that patients' immune systems learned to recognise myelin as harmless. Further studies are expected to start shortly to confirm whether that in turn prevents relapses of the disease.

Northwestern University in Chicago, which took part in the research, hailed the study as a "big breakthrough".

Researchers, working with scientists in Switzerland and Germany, took billions of white blood cells from nine patients and processed them to carry tiny fragments of myelin.

The cells were then re-injected, training the immune system to tolerate myelin.

Lead researcher Professor Stephen Miller said results showed the treatment stopped the body turning against itself - without the side effects of some other treatments that suppress the entire immune system, leaving patients vulnerable to infections and cancer.

"Our approach leaves the function of the normal immune system intact. That's the holy grail," he said.

Results published in the journal *Science* show that reactivity to myelin fell by between 50% and 75%.

Swiss authorities have already approved the next stage of clinical trials to confirm whether the treatment prevents progression of the disease. Experiments on mice show that it does.

"In the phase two trial we want to treat patients as early as possible in the disease before they have paralysis due to myelin damage," said Prof Miller.

"Once the myelin is destroyed, it's hard to repair."

Dr Susan Kohlhass, head of biomedical research at the MS Society - UK, said treatments that prevent progression of the disease are "urgently needed".

"Being able to specifically stop the immune system attacking myelin but still keeping it fully functional poses an exciting potential therapy for people with MS," she said.

"More research is now needed and we eagerly await the results of any future larger clinical trials of this therapy."

*Article written by Thomas Moore, Health Correspondent 5 June 2013.*

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Health and Disability Commissioner  
*Te Toihau Hauora, Hauātanga*

Everyone using a health or disability service has the protection of a Code of Rights. An independent Commissioner promotes and protects these rights under a New Zealand Law called the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994.

Your rights when receiving a health or disability service:

1. To be treated with respect.
2. To be treated fairly without pressure or discrimination.
3. The right to dignity and independence.
4. To receive a quality service and to be treated with care and skill.
5. To be given information that you can understand in a way that helps you communicate with the person providing the service.
6. To be given the information you need to know about your health or disability; the service being provided and the names and roles of the staff; as well as information about any tests and procedures you need and any test results. In New Zealand, people are encouraged to ask questions and to ask for more information to help them understand what is going on.
7. To make your own decision about your care, and to change your mind.
8. To have a support person with you at most times.
9. To have all these rights apply if you are asked to take part in a research study or teaching session for training staff.
10. The right to complain and have your complaint taken seriously.

## A letter from a member

Hi, last year my husband and I went on an overseas holiday, and because I was battling in the heat, we bought a Pride GoGo mobility scooter, with 4 wheels. I have to say it's been "the best thing since sliced bread". It has given me back my ability to "walk" around places with ease, and a day out at a country show for example is no longer an endurance test. I can now keep up with everyone, instead of lagging behind, and can look around instead of constantly watching for tiny objects that are lurking to trip me up.

The scooter weighs about 50kg, and can be quickly disassembled into 5 parts for ease of fitting into a vehicle; however my husband just stood it on its back wheels at night in our campervan. The gel cell battery means that airlines don't have a problem with carrying it in their cargo hold, and I was usually able to ride it right up to the plane. Mine came with 3 different colours for the guards, so when I get sick of riding a maroon scooter, it can be changed to blue in a jiffy. If only our cars could be altered so quickly!

I was unsure how we would get it on and off buses and trains, but they nearly all have hidden ramps. Finally, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend one of these scooters to anyone.

For more information about this scooter please contact Tony McCarthy from Mobility Scooters Otago 211 King Edward Street, South Dunedin (opposite the Westpac Bank), telephone (03) 455 2875 or 0800 566 800.

Visit them at [www.mobilityscooters.co.nz](http://www.mobilityscooters.co.nz)

*Article kindly written by, Carole Gibson – member of the Central Otago Group.*





# 20 Health Benefits of Turmeric



The active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin. Turmeric has been used for over 2500 years in India, where it was most likely first used as a dye.

The medicinal properties of this spice have been slowly revealing themselves over the centuries. Long known for its anti-inflammatory properties, recent research has revealed that turmeric is a natural wonder, proving beneficial in the treatment of many different health conditions from cancer to Alzheimer's disease.

1. It is a natural antiseptic and antibacterial agent, useful in disinfecting cuts and burns.
2. When combined with cauliflower, it has shown to prevent prostate cancer and stop the growth of existing prostate cancer.
3. Prevented breast cancer from spreading to the lungs in mice.
4. May prevent melanoma and cause existing melanoma cells to commit suicide.
5. Reduces the risk of childhood leukemia.
6. Is a natural liver detoxifier.
7. May prevent and slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease by removing amyloid plaque buildup in the brain.
8. May prevent metastases from occurring in many different forms of cancer.
9. It is a potent natural anti-inflammatory that works as well as many anti-inflammatory drugs but without the side effects.
10. Has shown promise in slowing the progression of multiple sclerosis in mice.
11. Is a natural painkiller and cox-2 inhibitor.
12. May aid in fat metabolism and help in weight management.
13. Has long been used in Chinese medicine as a treatment for depression.
14. Because of its anti-inflammatory properties, it is a natural treatment for arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.
15. Boosts the effects of chemo drug paclitaxel and reduces its side effects.
16. Promising studies are underway on the effects of turmeric on pancreatic cancer.
17. Studies are ongoing in the positive effects of turmeric on multiple myeloma.
18. Has been shown to stop the growth of new blood vessels in tumors.
19. Speeds up wound healing and assists in remodeling of damaged skin.
20. May help in the treatment of psoriasis and other inflammatory skin conditions.

Turmeric can be taken in powder or pill form. It is available in pill form in most health food stores, usually in 250-500mg capsules.

Once you start using turmeric on a regular basis, it's fun to find new ways to use it in recipes. My favorite way to use it is to add a pinch of it to egg salad. It adds a nice flavor and gives the egg salad a rich yellow hue.

Contraindications: Turmeric should not be used by people with gallstones or bile obstruction. Though turmeric is often used by pregnant women, it is important to consult with a doctor before doing so as turmeric can be a uterine stimulant.

*Article sourced by [www.healthdiaries.com](http://www.healthdiaries.com)*

# MS sufferer makes race track return

By HELENA DE REUS - Otago Daily Times, Saturday June 8, 2013

A Milton man has made a successful return to the racetrack - while battling MS.

Andrew Williamson (50) has multiple sclerosis (MS), a disease that attacks the central nervous system, causing varying degrees of disability, depending on which part of the nervous system has been affected.

Mr Williamson suffers from "remitting and relapsing progressive MS". Twice, while still living in Christchurch, he had attacks in which he lost the use of his right leg and arm and was admitted to hospital for a week both times. Each attack leaves Mr Williamson with further impairment.

Mr Williamson is into cars - stock car racing, hot rods and car shows, both as a spectator and participant.

A self-confessed "Ford nut", he restored a 100E 1954 Anglia but had to sell it as his MS meant he could not drive it - it was a manual and did not have power steering. "I didn't drive at all for three years ... I was in a wheelchair and then a para-chair [motorised chair] ... and to be back on the race track as well is great."

His brother Tony is also into racing, and got him a job driving a pace car. For the past two years, he has been racing at Beachlands Speedway, near Dunedin. "Once I'm in the car it's an even playing field."

He had a successful 2012-13 season, winning the production saloon club championship and the people's choice award. "It was a big surprise - it put a big lump in my throat."

With a team of six sponsors behind him, Mr Williamson does a lot of the work on the car himself. He is styling his Mitsubishi 3-litre V6 after "Lightning McQueen" - a character in the animated Pixar film Cars. "I'm out there making

the most of it, doing what I can."

When Mr Williamson was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 11 years ago, he did not even know what it was. The diagnosis changed his life. He was living in Christchurch at the time, where he was a self-employed plasterer. Mr Williamson said MS affected his whole system, as well as his diet, concentration and energy levels.

Eventually, he had to give up work because his job performance suffered as a result of the illness, putting his own safety at risk. The key was being in the "right head space" and not giving up, he said. He spent three or four years in a wheelchair and then a para-chair.

"I'm not a couch potato. The biggest thing for me is that it comes from your head. Don't give up."

Mr Williamson moved to Milton almost four years ago and is enjoying the slower lifestyle offered by the town. "There's no stress, no traffic lights. It's pretty good here."

Mr Williamson hopes his story will help others to understand MS and also inspire other MS sufferers to live life to the full.

"Don't get me wrong - I still have bad days, but I just carry on. Get up, get out there and do it."



# The Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society

are pleased to be able to host an evening of.....

**nutrition & advice to achieve a healthy lifestyle  
by Dietician Silke Hellwig**

**Silke is the director and principal dietician @ Nutrition & Life Ltd  
and is based at the Mornington Health Centre. Silke practices  
from a best evidence base and medical research**

**Silke will be presenting at:**

**Where: Our Society 8 Baker Street, Caversham**

**When: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

**Time: 7.00 pm**

**a gold coin donation is appreciated**

**All welcome just please RSVP to the Field Officer Jo Smith on (03) 455 5894  
ext 4 or email [jo@msotago.org.nz](mailto:jo@msotago.org.nz) as spaces are limited.**

## **ms.** NEW 2013 | 2014 Multiple Sclerosis Otago ENTERTAINMENT™ BOOK



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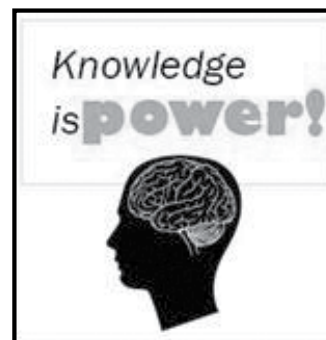
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We have books available at the Society, every book sold our Society receives a donation

# Knowledge is Power Series for Newly Diagnosed



This is a free at-home educational series for people newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, their families and support network.

Knowledge is Power was first developed in the USA. It has been written by highly regarded professionals who know about MS and the effect it can have on your life and the lives of those around you.

The programme has been reviewed and adapted by MS Australia and used there. MSNZ has reviewed this programme and it is now available here.

Being newly diagnosed with a condition like MS can be difficult and stressful time for all those affected. You, your family, friends and colleagues may know very little about the disease, or may know enough to be overwhelmed and frightened by this new development in your life. There is a lot of information to take in.

Knowledge is Power makes it easy for you to learn about MS and how it can affect your life and the lives of those around you.

We have divided the information into 10 easy-to-read modules. Over time we have found that most newly diagnosed clients share a common feeling of being totally overwhelmed and dealing with one of the greatest challenges that MS presents-the unpredictability and uncertainty of what might happen in the future. We believe that passing on a couple of modules at any one time allows you to read and learn at your own pace, and it's possible that not all of the modules will be relevant to your situation.

Currently the series is available through our National Society, and here in Otago. The modules can be posted directly to you, or a home visit can be arranged with

Jo to discuss the modules available in more detail. We are hoping that in the very near future these modules will also be available via email.

The modules that are currently produced are:

- What Multiple Sclerosis is
- Dealing with your diagnosis
- Disclosing your diagnosis
- Managing your MS
- Disease modifying drugs for MS
- Working with your doctor
- The impact of MS on your family
- Maximising your employment options
- Building and maintaining intimate relationships
- Parenting issues for people with MS

If you wish to receive any of these modules, or should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact our Field Officer Jo Smith on (03) 4555 894 ext 4 or via email [jo@msotago.org.nz](mailto:jo@msotago.org.nz)

## Do you have a loved one who has Multiple Sclerosis and would like..

- to share your experiences with others
- to be supported by people who understand
- to develop and share your strategies
- to build on your knowledge base

Then join our 'Family Ties' group

Interested???? then contact your Field  
Officer Jo Smith on 455 5894 ext 4 or email  
[jo@msotago.org.nz](mailto:jo@msotago.org.nz)

# FUNDRAISING ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR OUR SOCIETY

## 2013 DIARY PENS (with a pull out calendar)

A number of our members have purchased these for gifts already, and some have them available to pass onto others. Please note that these pens are inexpensive at only \$ 2.00 per pen.

We have had professionally made display boxes to hold our pens, and you may know of a business that would be happy to support our Society by having one of these on their premises, if you do then please contact Tania on (03) 4555 894 ext 2.



## MS OTAGO DESIGNER EARRINGS

Many of you have seen the lovely MS Otago earrings that some of us wear. As we had a number of very positive comments made about these earrings we asked Kismet Jewellery if they would have some more made especially for our Society. We thought it was an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of MS, raise the profile of our Society, and to generate some income.

To those of you who have purchased a pair of earrings thank you!, and we now only have 12 pairs available so we have reduced the cost of these earrings to \$ 15.00 a pair!!!!

These would make a lovely gift for someone. If you wish to purchase a pair please contact Tania on (03) 4555 894 ext 2.



## BULK TOILETPAPER STILL AVAILABLE

Thank you to all of those who have already purchased some toilet paper. Stock supplies of toilet paper are literally walking out the door! Be in quick and order yours now. They are \$20.00 per pack which include 45 rolls. If you wish to purchase a pack please contact Tania on (03) 4555 894 ext 2 to arrange a time to collect yours.

Please note that all the above fundraising is part of the Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society Fundraising Programme.



# Meditation for Beginners

## 20 Practical Tips for Quieting the Mind



Meditation is the art of focusing 100% of your attention in one area. The practice comes with a myriad of well-publicised health benefits including increased concentration, decreased anxiety, and a general feeling of happiness.

Although a great number of people try meditation at some point in their lives, a small percentage actually stick with it for the long-term. This is unfortunate, and a possible reason is that many beginners do not begin with a mind-set needed to make the practice sustainable.

The purpose of this article is to provide 20 practical recommendations to help beginners get past the initial hurdles and integrate meditation over the long term:

- 1) Make it a formal practice. You will only get to the next level in meditation by setting aside specific time (preferably two times a day) to be still.
- 2) Start with the breath. Breathing deep slows the heart rate, relaxes the muscles, focuses the mind and is an ideal way to begin practice.
- 3) Stretch first. Stretching loosens the muscles and tendons allowing you to sit (or lie) more comfortably. Additionally, stretching starts the process of “going inward” and brings added attention to the body.
- 4) Meditate with Purpose. Beginners must understand that meditation is an ACTIVE process. The art of focusing your attention to a single point is hard work, and you have to be purposefully engaged!
- 5) Notice frustration creep up on you. This is very common for beginners as we think “hey, what am I doing here” or “why can’t I just quiet my damn mind already”. When this happens, really focus in on your breath and let the frustrated feelings go.
- 6) Experiment. Although many of us think of effective meditation as a Yogi sitting cross-legged beneath a Bonzi tree, beginners should be more experimental and try different types of meditation. Try sitting, lying, eyes open, eyes closed, etc.
- 7) Feel your body parts. A great practice for beginning meditators is to take notice of the body when a meditative state starts to take hold. Once the mind quiets, put all your attention to the feet and then slowly move your way up the body (include your internal organs). This is very healthy and an indicator that you are on the right path.
- 8) Pick a specific room in your home to meditate. Make sure it is not the same room where you do work, exercise, or sleep. Place candles and other spiritual paraphernalia in the room to help you feel at ease.
- 9) Read a book (or two) on meditation. Preferably an instructional guide AND one that describes the benefits of deep meditative states. John Kabat-Zinn’s – “Wherever you go there you are” is terrific for beginners.
- 10) Commit for the long haul. Meditation is a life-long practice, and you will benefit most by NOT examining the results of your daily practice. Just do the best you can every day, and then let it go!
- 11) Listen to instructional tapes and CDs.
- 12) Generate moments of awareness during the day. Finding your breath and “being present” while not in formal practice is a wonderful way to evolve your meditation habits.
- 13) Make sure you will not be disturbed. One of the biggest mistakes beginners make is not insuring peaceful practice conditions. If you have it in the back of your mind that the phone might ring, your kids might wake, or your coffee pot might whistle than you will not be able to attain a state of deep relaxation.
- 14) Notice small adjustments. For beginning meditators, the slightest physical movements can transform a meditative practice from one of frustration to one of renewal. These adjustments may be barely noticeable to an observer, but they can mean everything for your practice.
- 15) Use a candle. Meditating with eyes closed can be challenging for a beginner. Lighting a candle and using it as your point of focus allows you to strengthen your attention with a visual cue. This can be very powerful.
- 16) Do NOT Stress. This may be the most important tip for beginners, and the hardest to implement. No matter what happens during your meditation practice, do not stress about it. This includes being nervous before meditating and angry afterwards. Meditation is what it is, and just do the best you can at the time.

- 17) Do it together. Meditating with a partner or loved one can have many wonderful benefits, and can improve your practice. However, it is necessary to make sure that you set agreed-upon ground rules before you begin!
- 18) Meditate early in the morning. Without a doubt, early morning is an ideal time to practice: it is quieter, your mind is not filled with the usual clutter, and there is less chance you will be disturbed. Make it a habit to get up half an hour earlier to meditate.
- 19) Be Grateful at the end. Once your practice is through, spend 2-3 minutes feeling appreciative of the opportunity to practice and your mind's ability to focus.
- 20) Notice when your interest in meditation begins to wane. Meditation is hard work, and you will inevitably come to a point where it seemingly does not fit into the picture anymore. THIS is when you need your practice the most and I recommend you go back to the book(s) or the CD's you listened to and become re-invigorated with the practice. Chances are that losing the ability to focus on meditation is parallel with your inability to focus in other areas of your life!

Meditation is an absolutely wonderful practice, but can be very difficult in the beginning. Use the tips described in this article to get your practice to the next level!

(Please note this is a guest post from Todd Goldfarb at the "we the change" blog).

## Reducing the burglar's opportunities

Knowing how a burglar thinks and operates is good background information to help put things in place to prevent you or someone you know becoming a burglary victim.

Here are some practical and simple steps to reduce the risk of being burgled:

- Set up or join a Neighbourhood Support Group in your area and advertise the fact by displaying Neighbourhood Support signs and stickers.
- Make sure doors, windows and other entry and exit points from your house have good quality, effective catches and locks - deadlocks if possible.
- Always lock doors and windows at night, if you're out in the garden or going out or away. Don't leave a door key hidden outside - burglars know all the places to look.
- Keep garden sheds and garages secure and lock away tools and ladders.
- Have an alarm system professionally installed and consider having it monitored by a reputable security company.
- Install sensor lights on access paths or around main external doors.
- Ask unannounced visitors who they are and what they want. If you're not satisfied with their answer, don't open the door to them.
- Get to know your neighbours and develop plans to deal with problems or suspicious activity.
- If you're going away, neighbours can collect your mail or newspaper and make your place look occupied.
- Mark valuable property with serial numbers and keep a record of these numbers.
- Consider placing "Beware of Dog" signs on gates or fences.
- If you have an answer phone, don't record a message that suggests you're out or alone.

## Do you have Multiple Sclerosis and would like .....

- to be empowered
- to be supported
- to make new friendships
- share similar experiences with others
- and most of all have some *FUN??*

Then join our 'GYMS' (group for 'young at heart' people with MS)

Interested???? then contact your Field Officer Jo Smith on 455 5894 ext 4 or email [jo@msotago.org.nz](mailto:jo@msotago.org.nz)

# 10 ways to stay healthy this winter



Winter can be both physically and mentally exhausting, leaving you susceptible to all kinds of nasty illnesses such as colds and flu.

As the days get shorter and the weather gets colder, the trick isn't to hibernate all winter but to get proactive about your health and wellbeing by following these handy hints and tips about how to stay healthy.

## Flu vaccination

Fight the flu this winter by getting immunised against it. Influenza is a serious illness that spreads easily and can be fatal. The flu vaccination is free in New Zealand for pregnant women and people aged 65 and over.



## Stay fit

Stay healthy this winter through regular exercise. We know it can be difficult to get out of bed in the morning to go for a run in the cold, but your health will practically thank you for it. Plus you'll look great, too.



## Stress less

High stress leads to poor health, so you're going to want to find time to rest and unwind this winter season. Take some time out from your busy schedule to unwind; it'll revitalise your immune system and leave you feeling healthier in the long-term.



## Eat healthy

Part of keeping fit is maintaining a healthy diet, which is essential for keeping healthy during those long winter months. Eschew fast food and greasy takeaways in favour of cooking at home, or make healthy choices at restaurants and order a salad or a roast dinner with all the trimmings.



## Drink plenty of water

It's tempting to reach for a beer or wine when you're feeling a bit low, but you might end up paying for it in the long-run. Instead, keep your



body hydrated and healthy by drinking plenty of water.

## Take vitamins

Vitamins are essential to a healthy immune system which, in turn, is vital for keeping colds and flu at bay. Bolster your health with some extra vitamins and dietary supplements from your local pharmacy or health-food shop.



## Wash your hands

A large part of keeping healthy this winter is avoiding the germs and bugs that will make you sick in the first place. Because you're constantly coming into contact with all sorts of nasty germs, it's essential that you wash your hands regularly.



## Clean your house

Of course, many of the nasty germs you come into contact with will be in your own home. Mould and mildew can cause respiratory illnesses and other nasty sicknesses, so keep your home clean and healthy this winter.



## Take a holiday

Don't just take a holiday from work, take one from all the cold weather; travel to somewhere tropical for a week and escape from all the cold weather. It'll be great for your stress, as well as your overall well-being.



## Catch up on sleep

People who don't get enough sleep tend to eat more, exercise less and have weaker immune systems as a result. Your body needs to rest and recharge – so let it. Remember a healthy body is a body that's less likely to be struck down by a winter illness.





# Charity's Phones Hacked

written by Tim Miller @ The Star 16 May 2013



Community organisations are being advised to make sure their phone and computer systems are protected, after a small non-profit group based in Dunedin was targeted by hackers.

In April, the Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society's phone system was hacked into and about \$2000 of international phone calls were made. MS Otago manager Tania McGregor said the hack happened on a Sunday and she only became aware of it on the Monday morning. During the hack, international calls were made to the Pacific Island Nauru.

"I guess you would think something like this happening to a big corporate but not a small organisation like us at the bottom of the South Island." Mrs McGregor said they were lucky to have an IT provider who knew what was happening and was able to shut it down straight away.

"\$2000 is a lot of money for a small not-for-

profit but it could have been much worse if we didn't stop it when we did." MS Otago was now talking to Vodafone about how it could resolve the bill.

Onecall ITC consultant Shane Ross stopped the hack from continuing, and said this was the first time he had heard of a attack like this happening in Dunedin. "There had been a few rumours about similar type of attacks in Auckland but until now we had never heard about it happening down here." It seemed a computer system had been set up to find a weakness in phone systems and then exploit that, Mr Ross said. He said he was unsure of the reason behind the attack but he believed MS Otago's phone system was being used to hack into another phone system.

The simplest thing any company could do to avoid the same thing happening to them was put a pin and toll bar in place, he said.



# Help Wanted

We have our **Annual Street Appeal** confirmed for **Friday 6th September 2013**, and I have a number of sites confirmed around, Dunedin, Oamaru, Balclutha, Alexandra, Wanaka and Cromwell that need to have some wonderful willing volunteers look after the site for an hour or two or more if you like!

Please note that we are allocated only 1 day a year where no other organisation/s are able to collect. This enables us to raise the profile of Multiple Sclerosis, our Society, and some much needed funds all at the same time.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please let me know as soon as possible if you are willing to assist with the appeal.

I can be contacted either by phone (03) 455-5894 ext 2 or email [tania@msotago.org.nz](mailto:tania@msotago.org.nz).

I look forward to receiving your support!!!

# Staff News

Well it's hard to believe that we are half way through 2013, whilst the weather over the last couple of weeks has been challenging for all of us I'm sure, the shortest day has since passed, and the evenings remain extremely cold, we wake in the mornings perhaps to see that Jack Frost has greeted us, the days are amazing.

My focus over the coming months is organising our Annual Street Appeal, whilst I have written to numerous clubs and schools asking for their support and assistance with the various sites I have confirmed in Dunedin, Oamaru, Balclutha, Alexandra, Cromwell and Wanaka, I have yet to receive a response from the majority of them, there is still plenty of time, so the panic button hasn't been pushed just yet. I would like to extend the invite to all of you however, if you are able to spare a couple of hours on Friday 6th September, I have started to compile a list of willing volunteers that I hope to be able to have stationed at the various sites dotted around Dunedin and further afield.

Jo has been regularly out and about visiting our clients, and our information evenings that are held at our Society are proving to be well supported by clients, members, family members, agency staff, and the public which is extremely positive and we look forward to introducing a variety of speakers to you all during the year. We hope our speakers will entice you to come along and listen to their presentation.

Over the last couple of months Jo and I have been approached by some of our members and clients for assistance in helping them with gardening, housework, moving house, and odd jobs, there may be some of you out there who may know of someone who would be happy to be placed on our "volunteer" list for such an occasion, if you do please contact us, or perhaps even your volunteer may want to touch base with us directly.

The Society has recently had its switchboard upgraded along with the installation of a new smoke and intruder alarm system, we have also recently acquired new chairs for our day room, and new display boards as a result of funding applications being approved, which is greatly appreciated.

On the home front, the girls are in full swing with their winter sport, and very much looking forward to the upcoming school holidays in July which are literally just around the corner. I haven't been

able to get outside into the garden due to the weather, but at least the weeds aren't growing!

I hope that you are all well, and are able to keep warm, this is the time of the year to hunker down and take the opportunity to read some books, watch the movies you never get time see, or just be able to recharge your batteries and wait for the first signs that Spring is on its way!



*Tania McGregor  
Manager*



**DRAGON**  
NATURALLY SPEAKING

Dragon NaturallySpeaking is the speech recognition software that lets you interact with your PC just by talking. It turns your voice into text three times faster than most people can type, and it never makes a spelling mistake!

Create emails, letters, spreadsheets and more, even surf the web, all by simply talking into the headset provided with the software.

It is the ideal solution for those who find typing time consuming, or for those who suffer from illnesses or disabilities that limit their ability to use a keyboard. It is also used by students and adults alike, who suffer from Dyslexia.

For further information on the specific editions available, please go to [www.nuance.com](http://www.nuance.com)

Just where has the time gone? I can't believe that I have now been in the role of Field Officer for 6 months. During this time I have been out and about travelling to Oamaru, Balclutha and Central Otago. I have managed to meet with many of our members for which it has been a great pleasure. During this time I have met so many inspirational people and have thoroughly enjoyed being out in the community.

The guest speaker evenings have proven to be a great success with approximately 20 people attending each educational opportunity. We have covered topics such as understanding change, loss and grief, how to recognise, respond and treat a relapse and also had the pleasure of a professional who talked about the Neurological Integration System. It has been wonderful to see so many members connecting with others and meeting new people. With this in mind I have been thinking more about how important it is for us as humans to be socially connected. We have known for a long time that individual wellbeing is often built on how engaged a person is with others. There is a saying that "if you belong to a group then you cut your risk of dying in the next year in half." Drastic I know but an interesting point that being part of a community and having that social connectedness is part of survival. Everyone is welcome to come to our guest speaker evenings just forward me your email address and I will add you to the mailing list.

We are now one month into winter and it has been quite a trying time for most of us in the Otago region. We know that the cold can increase MS symptoms and I urge you all to keep warm! This time of year increasing power bills can be a decider as to whether to put the heater on or not. Many people are unaware that the Dunedin City Council has a Consumer Electricity Fund which provides assistance for Dunedin Residents. The

With the Winter here we need to keep ourselves warm and healthy. We are now having soup most days as my Scottish grandmother would have said to "warm the cockles of our heart". We have some new members coming to the groups which is great to see and I would like to say a big welcome to them, it's nice to have you visit our Society. Keep yourselves warm and safe.



*Pam Macdonald  
Health Officer*

purpose of this fund is to assist people living within the DCC boundary with grants towards their electricity account. The fund is available for homeowners and people who rent. There are certain conditions that apply before a grant can be approved but is worth exploring further. If you are struggling please do not hesitate to contact me and I will be happy to send you the information of who to contact.



*Jo Smith  
Field Officer*

On a final note both my boys are now settled into primary school. My 7 year old Joshua has been having a few peer relationship issues and has been going to a 'growing Taller' program delivered by Family Works to assist him in being his own best friend. He has loved the experience and has embraced the learning. We are seeing a more confident and settled young boy. Oliver my 5 year old is enjoying being at school and has made many new friends.

As a family we are planning to go to the UK for Christmas this year. I am from Southampton and haven't been back for 7 years. It will be great to spend Christmas in the UK and for my boys to meet their extended family. Also nana has promised them a trip to Lego Land!

All the best for the coming winter months, just think the next newsletter will be the start of spring!

*Thank  
You*

Recently our Society has received two bequests, which on behalf of our Society I would like to sincerely thank the families of the late Alice Fitzgerald, and Winifred Oldham.

The bequests received enables us to continue providing our support, education, information and services to those with Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological illnesses.



# *Steady As You Go*

Falls Prevention Programme

## Simple leg strength and balance

Exercises for men and women 65+



### Classes from July 2013

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Allanton      | Mornington    |
| Brockville    | Mosgiel       |
| Caversham     | Musselburgh   |
| Fairfield     | NEV           |
| Green Island  | Outram        |
| Halfway Bush  | Roslyn        |
| Kaikorai      | Saint Clair   |
| Long Beach    | South Dunedin |
| Macandrew Bay | The Octagon   |
| Maori Hill    | Waverley      |
| Maryhill      | Waitati       |

Phone Margaret at Age Concern 477-1040

# Moro Marathon Preparation Evening held 12 June 2013

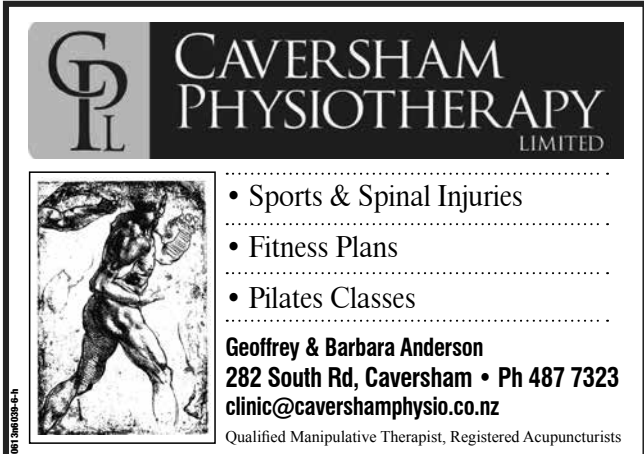
*This is a snippet from the Caversham Physiotherapy newsletter  
written by Barbara Anderson.*

We were lucky that our marathon preparation seminar was a balmy night. For those who found their way to the Sargood Centre (the old Art Gallery, now the Otago Institute of Sport and Adventure) it was another extremely informative evening, with Dr Jim Cotter from Phys Ed School talking on event preparation. Jim has been involved in many endurance events himself and so his latest research combined with personal experience was fascinating. Alongside Jim, Geoffrey (Caversham Physio) updated everyone on injury prevention, plus Dave Stinson from Caversham Harriers spoke on his training schedules for the various events on the day, and Megan Gibbons reviewed the latest nutritional guidelines, so there was a large and varied amount of information to help with training and for race day which is to be held on the 8th September 2013.

This year the gold coin entry went to the Multiple Sclerosis Otago Society with the amount raised from the gold coin entry being \$ 184.00 (so we are

thrilled about that!). We had another lovely pair of Mizuno shoes worth \$200 from The Fronrunner to give away on the night, so yet another happy participant! Last year's winner is still smiling.

On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Barbara and her team for their ongoing support, and donation to our Society from hosting the event noted above.



**CAVERSHAM  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
LIMITED**

- Sports & Spinal Injuries
- Fitness Plans
- Pilates Classes

**Geoffrey & Barbara Anderson**  
282 South Rd, Caversham • Ph 487 7323  
clinic@cavershamphysio.co.nz  
Qualified Manipulative Therapist, Registered Acupuncturists

## Presidents Report - Gavin Mead

I think we can safely say the long dry period has finished and winter has arrived. Pumpkin soup is probably coming up on Pam's menu if it hasn't arrived already.

Tania is currently working on the Annual Street Appeal which is Friday 6th September. We need collections on every available corner, plus. This is a big undertaking anybody you know that can help would be appreciated, please contact Tania.

Jo has settled in well and has had a variety of speakers present at our Information evenings.

At time of writing the shortest day has just passed, so onwards and upwards. Just keep warm in the meantime.



# Tai Chi

Falls Prevention Programme

for leg strength, balance and flexibility

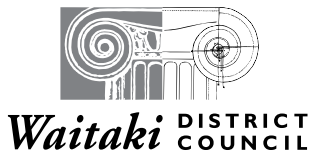


For men and women 65+  
From July 2013

Brighton Robertson Hall Tuesdays 10 am  
Broad Bay Methodist Church Mondays 1.30 pm  
Green Island Presbyterian Wednesdays 1 pm  
Maori Hill Community Centre Thursdays 2 pm  
Mornington St Mary's Anglican Fridays 10 am  
Mosgiel Senior Citizens' Club Wednesdays 11 am  
NEValley Baptist Thursdays 1 pm  
Port Chalmers Town Hall Fridays 10 am  
St Kilda Presbyterian Thursdays 1.30 pm  
The Octagon St Paul's Crypt Wednesdays 1 pm  
Waikouaiti Community Centre Mondays 9 am

Phone Margaret at Age Concern 477-1040

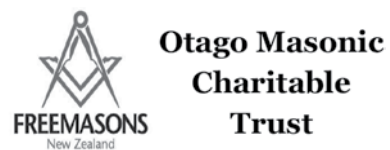
**The Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society  
gratefully acknowledges the generous support of**



**St Kilda  
Community Sports  
Society**



**The Marsh Family  
Trust**



**ANZ STAFF  
FOUNDATION**



## July 2013

| monday             | tuesday           | wednesday              | thursday   | friday                  | saturday | sunday |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------|--------|
| 1<br>Social Group  | 2<br>Games Group  | 3                      | 4  | 5<br>Balclutha<br>Group | 6        | 7      |
| 8                  | 9<br>Games Group  | 10<br>Mosgiel<br>Group | 11   | 12                      | 13       | 14     |
| 15<br>Social Group | 16<br>Games Group | 17                     | 18<br>Men's Group<br>Family Ties /<br>GYMS Group | 19                      | 20       | 21     |
| 22                 | 23<br>Games Group | 24<br>Choking Course   | 25   | 26                      | 27       | 28     |
| 29                 | 30<br>Games Group | 31<br>Oamaru           |  |                         |          |        |

## August 2013

| monday             | tuesday           | wednesday                                 | thursday                    | friday                      | saturday | sunday |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------|
|                    |                   |   | 1                           | 2                           | 3        | 4      |
| 5<br>Social Group  | 6<br>Games Group  | 7   | 8<br>Central Otago<br>Group | 9<br>Central Otago<br>Group | 10       | 11     |
| 12                 | 13<br>Games Group | 14<br>Mosgiel<br>Silke Hellwig<br>Evening | 15<br>Men's Group           | 16                          | 17       | 18     |
| 19<br>Social Group | 20<br>Games Group | 21  | 22<br>Oamaru                | 23                          | 24       | 25     |
| 26                 | 27<br>Games Group | 28<br>Gyms &<br>Family Ties               | 29                          | 30                          | 31       |        |

## September 2013

| monday             | tuesday           | wednesday                            | thursday                 | friday                       | saturday | sunday |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------|--------|
| 30                 |                   |                                      |                          |                              |          | 1      |
| 2<br>Social Group  | 3<br>Games Group  | 4                                    | 5                        | 6<br>Annual Street<br>Appeal | 7        | 8      |
| 9                  | 10<br>Games Group | 11<br>Mosgiel<br>Group               | 12<br>Balclutha<br>Group | 13                           | 14       | 15     |
| 16<br>Social Group | 17<br>Games Group | 18<br>Oamaru                         | 19<br>Men's Group        | 20                           | 21       | 22     |
| 23                 | 24<br>Games Group | 25<br>Gyms &<br>Family Ties<br>Group | 26                       | 27                           | 28       | 29     |