The Wild Quarterly

What it takes to feel more you

THIS ISSUE

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What you can carry

Nobody is cutting anything from the calendar. So the question becomes what you can carry.



wild CHIROPRACTIC | Feel more *you.*



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From the Doc



Prepared by
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Prepared for
You

The sun is coming up earlier now. I train at 5am three mornings a week and for about six weeks of the year those sessions are genuinely pleasant. Light on the way out, warm enough to skip a layer, the whole thing feels almost civilised.

I don't miss them. That isn't the part that slips.

What slips is the sleep. Every group I belong to wants one or two more things from me before Christmas. School has carols and a dads night. Work has workshops and a party. Family wants a lunch, the mates I've been meaning to see since March suddenly want a catch up, and every one of them has picked the same six weeks to ask. Weekends fill first, so it creeps into Tuesday and Wednesday nights. The alarm doesn't move. The bedtime does.

So I'm still there at 5am. Just tired, under-recovered, and doing the same session I was doing in September when I'd had eight hours and hadn't been at a wind-up the night before.
That's the bit worth paying attention to, because it took me a while to work out. Showing up isn't the same as recovering.

The training didn't change, my capacity to absorb it did, and asking a tired body to lift heavier is a young man's plan.

So I take the weight down in December. Not because I've gone soft, because I've got three kids, a clinic to run, and I'd rather not be the bloke telling Kyna he can't help around the house because he hurt his back lifting the Christmas tree.

I don't miss the sessions. I miss the sleep. And the sleep is the one that matters.

The kids feel the same squeeze. Term four is long and by the back half of it they are properly cooked. Later nights, more sugar, routine gone completely, and I suspect plenty of you have met the 5pm version of your child that only shows up in December.

Here's what I see in the clinic at this time of year, and I see it every year. The weather turns and people move. Back to the gym after eight months off. Out in the garden. Spring clean. Half of Shenton Park decides to move house. And a fair few come unstuck doing it, not because the job was unreasonable, but because the body hadn't been asked to do anything like it since Easter. Then drinks, late nights and no recovery get stacked on top.

There's a quieter version of this too, and it's the one I notice most. Around this time of year the adjustments don't hold as long. Tension comes up faster. Busy world, busy mind, busy body, and under sustained stress the old protective pattern surfaces to do its job. Tight through the mid back, neck tension, the mild headache that sits behind the eyes by Thursday, sleep that never quite gets deep. The body reads the load and braces. The trouble is that bracing is the very thing standing in the way of the recovery it's chasing.
I'm not going to tell you to cut something. You won't, and neither will I.

This issue is about the other side of it. What your body is carrying through these three months, where the load hides, and what changes the amount you can handle without a single thing coming off the calendar. The good news is the adjustments are small. An extra half hour of sleep on the nights you can get it, two minutes of preparation before you lift something awkward, one honest look at what you're actually asking of yourself in a week. None of that costs you an event. It just gives you more room to move underneath the same schedule.

Article - 1

The work doesn't get bigger. The gaps disappear.

Twelve weeks of work compressed into eight. The load isn't the hours. It's what got taken out between them.

Cricket season is back. A Test Match is five days of work, and the schedule has drinks breaks, lunch, tea and a stumps time written into the laws of the game. Nobody argues about it. Most people are heading into December running the opposite model.

Everything has to land before the twentieth. Shutdown is coming, clients want their work finished, invoices need chasing, and the deadlines that would have sat comfortably across February get pulled forward into a fortnight. The number of hours climbs. That part people notice.

What they don't notice is what came out. The walk to a meeting is now a video call. Lunch away from the desk turns into eating at it. The 5:30 session gets sacrificed to a work function. Every natural interruption in the day quietly gets absorbed by the day.

That matters more than the hours do. A spine holds a static position reasonably well for short stretches. What it struggles with is sustained load with no variation. In prolonged postures the small muscles of the spine fatigue first. You start hanging on your ligaments, and the big lateral muscles take over the job of holding you up. That's what people are describing when they tell me it feels like iron ropes running down their back.

By mid December most people are not doing more work than they did in June. They're doing similar work with every recovery gap stripped out of it, and the body is keeping a running total.

> ***What changes it***
> *The break doesn't need to be long. It needs to be frequent. Two or three minutes of movement every hour interrupts sustained load far more effectively than one long session at the end of a day that never had a gap in it.*

Article - 2: Dr Andrew Mutzig

Recovery has nobody

Everything else on the calendar has someone holding you to it. That's exactly why recovery is the first thing to go.



I've played hockey for over forty years, which is a long time to spend learning that recovery isn't what happens after training. It's part of it.
At a decent level of sport you don't just plan the hard sessions. You plan what sits around them. When the load goes up, when it comes down, when the body gets a chance to catch up. Recovery sits inside the plan. It isn't the reward for finishing it.

Normal life doesn't work that way.

Nobody has put recovery in the calendar for us. The school concert has a teacher. The work function has a boss. The kids' activities have a timetable. Work has deadlines. Christmas has a thousand commitments.

Recovery has nobody. So it's the first thing to go.

I see it on the bench. The more someone has been carrying, the stiffer the spine and the muscles around it. Not from one session, from the accumulation. And it's often not one particular thing that caused it. Sometimes the person simply hasn't had the opportunity to recover from everything they've been asking their body to carry.
That's where sport has something useful to teach. An athlete doesn't wait until they're wrecked to decide they need recovery. It gets planned, because another load is coming.

For a parent or a desk worker heading into the busiest part of the year, the load doesn't look like training. Work, commuting, sitting, driving, parenting, broken sleep, being switched on all day. Your body doesn't care what the source is. It still has to carry it.

> ***WORTH KNOWING***
> If you know December is going to get heavier, don't wait until you feel it. Put recovery in the calendar before the calendar fills up.

Article - 3

Ten weeks is a long time when you're seven

Term four finishes on 17 December this year. One week out from Christmas, with nothing left in the tank.

Most parents can tell you the day it turns. Somewhere in the back half of term four the small stuff stops being small. Homework becomes a negotiation. Getting out the door takes twice as long. And there's a version of your child that appears around five in the afternoon that you don't see in March.
It's easy to read that as behaviour. Often it's load.

Ten weeks of school lands in the busiest weeks of the family year. Concerts, assemblies, end of year parties, summer sport starting up, later nights, more sugar, and the routine that held it all together quietly falls apart. Kids don't have the language to tell you they're carrying too much. They tell you in other ways.

What we look at is the structural side of that picture. These kids rarely present with pain. Almost never, in fact, which is why a lot of parents don't think to have them looked at. What we see instead is a body that hasn't switched off. Restricted rotation through the neck, thoracic stiffness, the bracing pattern that turns up in anyone under sustained demand, and sleep that isn't doing its job. Same picture we see in their parents, in a smaller frame with less capacity to absorb it.
Then school finishes on the seventeenth and the holidays begin, which for most families is not a slowing down. It's the loudest week of the year.
None of that is a reason to panic in December. It's a reason to know what you're looking at.

> ***WORTH KNOWING***
> Routine does more for a stretched child than any single intervention. The bedtime that holds through December is worth more than the one that gets rebuilt in February.

If you'd like your child assessed for a spinal screen, before the year finishes, just mention it at your next visit.

One thing. This week

Two minutes before, not the stretch afterwards.

You're going to lift something awkward between now and Christmas. The tree out of the roof space. A boot packed badly for the drive south. An esky that somebody else filled. A box of decorations nobody has touched since last December.
Almost nobody warms up for that, because it doesn't feel like exercise. It feels like a job that takes thirty seconds and then you'll get on with the day.

Here's the problem. Your body hasn't been asked to do anything like it since Easter. The load is unfamiliar, the position is usually awkward, and you're generally in a hurry with someone waiting on you. That combination shows up in the clinic every January.
Two minutes changes it. Before you lift, move the area you're about to load. Roll the shoulders back, take the hips and lower back through some range, a few squats without any weight, and turn your body side to side a handful of times. You're telling the nervous system what's coming.

Then look at the lift itself. Can you get closer to it. Can you split it into two trips. Can you get someone to take the other end. Most December injuries aren't a strength problem, they're an awkwardness problem.

Do it for the tree this year. That's the whole assignment.

A pattern we see every December

He got to Christmas Day and fell in a heap

Luke is forty-one. Two kids, a job that gets loud in the last quarter, and a body he's never had much reason to think about.
He'd tell you October was fine. Busy, but fine. November got tighter. The gym went first, then the Sunday walk, then the early nights. By the first week of December he was doing four evenings out a week and getting up at the same time regardless. He knew he was running down. He also knew there were only two weeks left, so he put his head down and got on with it.

He made it. That's the part worth noticing. Everything he'd committed to, he did. The concerts, the work function, the two days of shopping, the drive to his in-laws with a boot that took three goes to close.

Then he stopped, and by Boxing Day he had a sore throat and a back that had seized up, and he spent the first four days of his break on the couch feeling like he'd been hit by something.
Most people read that as bad luck. Bad timing. A bug going round.

It isn't. When demand runs ahead of recovery for weeks, the body holds it together by staying switched on. It braces, it tightens, it puts off the maintenance. That state is expensive but it's sustainable for a while, which is exactly why it's so easy to keep pushing. The bill doesn't arrive during the busy period. It arrives the moment the pressure comes off and the system finally gets a chance to drop.

Luke didn't collapse because Christmas was hard. He collapsed because it stopped.

We see a version of this every January. People arrive in the first fortnight of the year with something that's flared, or something that's been building since October, and almost all of them describe the same thing. It was fine. Then I stopped, and everything came at once.
The useful part isn't the collapse. It's the six weeks before it, where none of it felt bad enough to do anything about.

Illustrative composite. Not a real patient or clinical outcome.

What's on at Wild this Quarter

OCT • EVENING EVENT

POUR & DRAW

Wine, drawing, and an evening where nothing is asked of you. No hosting, no organising, no talent required. Come before the year gets loud, not after. Come alone or bring someone.

Free entry · Ask at reception to reserve your place

NOV • PARENT WORKSHOP

TIRED OR DEPLETED?

Two different problems, and most people are treating the wrong one. Tired responds to a good weekend. Depleted doesn't, which is why the Christmas break leaves so many people flatter in January than they were in December.

Free entry · Ask at reception to reserve your place

DEC • IN CLINIC

WHAT SUMMER IS FOR

Five reminders, appearing on the wall through December. No event to book, nothing to sign up for. Just a few things worth remembering once the year finally lets go of you.

Look for them at reception

The best compliment we get is a referral

If someone you know has been struggling or putting their health off, share with them our Gift of Health. It covers their first consult and exam, and the report and recommendations that follow at a special rate. Scan to send it on, or mention it at reception.

wildchiropractic.com.au/gift

FROM THE WILD KITCHEN

Salmon, potato and dill salad
by Kyna Hamilton



The kind of thing that turns up on our bench in December. It doesn't need the oven on for long, it feeds a table, and it's just as good cold the next day, which matters when nobody has decided what dinner is until half past five.

How it goes

Boil the potatoes until a knife goes through easily. Drain and let them cool, then halve or slice them.

While they're going, cook the salmon skin side down in a hot pan until the skin crisps up properly. Flip it, give it another minute or two, then set it aside to cool. Keep the skin.

Flake the salmon in big pieces. Toss it through the potatoes, beans, sliced cucumber, capers and most of the dill.

Whisk the yoghurt, lemon juice and a good glug of olive oil, season it, and fold it through gently.

Break the crispy skin over the top with the rest of the dill.

You'll need

6 to 8 small potatoes
2 salmon fillets, skin on
1 tin cannellini beans, drained
1 Lebanese cucumber
A handful of dill
2 tablespoons capers
1/2 cup natural yoghurt or kefir
Juice of half a lemon
Olive oil, salt, pepper

MORE FROM WILD

What Mothers Ask Us Most.

Why Your Back Still Hurts Months After Having a Baby

Pregnancy softens connective tissue across your whole body. The months afterwards are when it tightens again, and your body settles on whatever pattern it is in at the time. That window is the one nobody explains.

Wrist and Thumb Pain After Having a Baby

Thumb-side wrist pain is one of the most common complaints in the first year. The wrist is where it hurts. The elbow, shoulder and neck are usually where it started.

Why You're Exhausted But Can't Sleep

Tired and asleep are two different systems. Standard sleep advice assumes your night belongs to you, which is why none of it has worked, and why one good night never seems to be enough.

Three new articles on the questions that come up most in the first years of motherhood. Written by Dr Kyna Hamilton. Scan the QR to read the full articles.

Thank you!

Three months of full calendars and not enough recovery. That's the quarter you're heading into. Nothing in this issue asked you to do less, because you weren't going to, and neither were we. It asked where the load actually goes, and whether you've had a say in it.

Thanks for reading. If something in here landed, pass it on. Leave it on a kitchen bench, take it to work, hand it to the person who keeps saying they'll get looked at one of these days. That's how Wild grows, one family at a time.

"Demand goes up either way. Spend what you've got on purpose."

Dr Matt Hamilton · Wild Chiropractic

Feel more you.

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