



Anjulie van den Berg is a chartered Physiotherapist at PhysioMotion, which operate four London clinics as well as providing physiotherapy at home. In her first article in this magazine, Anjulie discusses hypermobility.

ARE YOU HYPERMOBILE? WHAT IS HYPERMOBILITY?



A physiotherapist can help you with a more specific strength and control-based program that directly addresses your issues.

Having hypermobile joints is not very uncommon, you may have been told this by a health professional in the past and maybe as a child you performed well at ballet or gymnastics.

Being hypermobile means that you have more movement range through a joint, or joints, than the norm for your gender, age and ethnicity. It can come in various degrees, where the more extreme forms (i.e. Ehlers Danlos Syndrome) unfortunately can come with many more difficulties. GP's use the Beighton scale to assess whether someone is hypermobile, scoring high on this scale means you have higher joint laxity (more movement range). You can be hypermobile in one or multiple joints but this does not necessarily have to be a problem.

WHAT CAUSES HYPERMOBILITY AND WHAT ARE COMMON SYMPTOMS?

Hypermobility is often genetic, and more common in women. It relates to your body's fibrous protein genes, such as the ones that make collagen, elastin and fibrillin. As these cells are also present in other parts of the body, people who are hypermobile may also present with smoother hair and skin or digestive issues.

When there is more movement range in a joint, it means you also need more muscular strength and control to protect this joint during movements and to maintain posture. If this is not optimal, your muscles may spasm up to protect this joint. Hence a hypermobile person may actually present with more muscle and joint stiffness that eventually leads to pain and inflammation. Otherwise it can also cause dislocations or subluxations of a joint (fully or partially 'popping out').

Common symptoms include (NHS.uk):

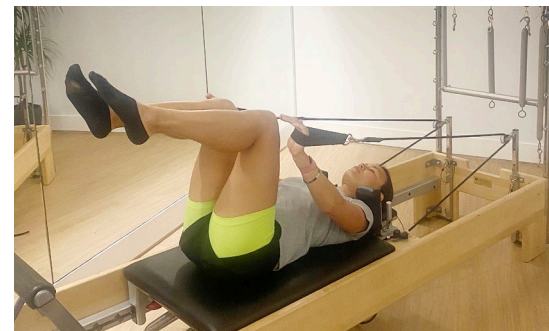
- Often tired, even after rest
- Joint pain and stiffness
- Recurring sprains and/or strains
- Joint dislocations
- Poor balance or co-ordination
- Thin, stretchy skin
- Bladder or bowel problems

You may want to consult with your GP if suffering from any of the above, they will often suggest Physiotherapy.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT ISSUES FROM DEVELOPING?

- **Staying active.** Keeping the muscles around your joints strong will help prevent overload injuries from happening. However, it is not just strength that is important – strength comes with stability, or how the muscles work together to control movements through a joint.
- **A physiotherapist can help you with a strength and control-based program that can also be tailored towards your specific needs.**
- **Activities such as Pilates and yoga (not the stretching part!) can be helpful as they are made up of control-based movements.**

- **Other important factors to note are maintaining a well-balanced diet and avoiding foods that may be problematic to you (you may need to consult a nutritionist for this), good sleep hygiene, stress management and sufficient rest following exercise.**



Reformer Pilates is a great and fun way to improve muscular strength and stability!

Hypermobility is not a disease, it just needs the right form of attention. When not managed right it can make you more vulnerable to various muscular and joint issues, however, otherwise it can also be used to your advantage in sport. Greater elasticity means greater ability for power production.

PhysioMotion Ltd
www.physiomotionlimited.co.uk
020 3422 6655