



HARRY HAMPSON
OSTEOPATHY

Working From Home Pain Relief Guidebook

How to...

- Ease your pain
- Improve your working environment
- Thrive during lockdown

The Times, they are a-Changin'

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus we've all been self-isolating in our houses, keeping two metres distance from everyone, and staring aggressively at anyone who coughs.

As part of this lockdown we're finding ourselves working from home – which is great right? No commute, all your home comforts, and you don't have to hear Steve chew his pickled onions (it's called Misophonia – I looked it up).

However bad habits start to creep in and we find ourselves lying on the sofa wrapped in a blanket working between naps.



*Is this
you?*

But Some Things Stay the Same

We're sat comfortable on the sofa, laptop on our lap, then a niggle appears. It turns into an ache. It's now an annoying pain in the neck that won't budge.

At work we have our ergonomically designed super comfy chair, adjustable monitor, standing desk, and all the other niceties that help. Now with physical distancing, we can no longer get a deep massage to ease the tension.

The lockdown is new – but the problems that come from working at home aren't and there is plenty that you can do to help get rid of your aches.



*Want to
get more
comfortable?*

So who am I?

*Hi, I'm
Harry*



I'm Harry Hampson, a registered osteopath based in Glasgow. I've helped thousands of people get out of pain using manual techniques such as massage and joint manipulation, stretches, exercises and lifestyle advice **specific to you**.

I look at the person as a whole, understanding the biomechanical, psychological and sociological influences on pain, then adapting the treatment process based on the individual.

Osteopathy is a protected title - all osteopaths must train for four years and achieve a master's degree to call themselves an osteopath.

In 2017, NHS England granted osteopaths "Allied Health Professional" status, meaning we are now being integrated into the NHS to help as many people as possible.

Using this Guidebook

*What will
this guidebook
give you?*



Expect to learn...

- Why your pain has started
- What to do about the most common aches and pains
- How to achieve the best posture
- How to improve your work setup
- How to thrive while working from home

Why has your Pain Started Now?

Stress



Do you hold your stress in your shoulders? Ever felt butterflies in your tummy when you're nervous? These are examples of how your mental or emotional experiences can affect your body.

These are uncertain times and that can often bring new stresses (anyone trying to work, be a school teacher, cook for the family **AND** have Zoom meetings even hour?!). The body reacts to all types of stress in the same way and this can show up in neck/back pain or headaches.

Activity Levels



Pain also comes along when we quickly change our level or type of activity that we do. Since the lockdown, my commute has also changed from cycling to the train station, catching the train, then walking to the clinic. To now rolling out of bed and walking to the dining table (washing and getting dressed optional) to call patients.

We're either changing the way we move or just not moving as much. But movement is good for the body. It keeps the muscles warm and strong, lubricates your joints, and improves your mood.

Why has your Pain Started Now?

Stiffness in the Morning



Have you ever felt stiff when your first wake up in the morning then gradually warm up after about half an hour? That's because things have become “stagnant”.

Two things are going on here:

1

Any inflammation from previous injuries gathers leaving you feeling sore and stiff.

2

There are receptors in all muscles and joints continually communicating with the brain. They give information about your level of activity, position, and other factors. If the brain hears the same signals repeatedly, it decides to motivate you to move again (otherwise known as feeling sore - or fidegty bum).

I view some aches and pains as your body's built-in 'Fitbit monitor' that beeps every hour telling you “do 249 steps to win the hour!”

Whilst this is simplified, it's a nice example to help understand why this happens. Feeling uncomfortable is your body's way of telling you that you need to change something.

What you can do to help Yourself

First of all - do not panic!

Try not to worry. Although sore, pain is usually not anything serious and there is plenty you can do to help relieve it. I've been treating people that work from home for years and have found it's typically three areas are most commonly affected:



Neck/Shoulder



Mid/Upper Back



Lower Back

The next few pages include exercises I've found to be effective at helping the majority of cases.

Neck and Shoulder Pain

Neck Rolls



Drop your chin towards your chest and gently rollover towards your left shoulder. Hold for a second before moving towards the right shoulder. Repeat up to ten times each side.

[Watch Video!](#) 

Shoulder Shrugs



Gently shrug your shoulders up towards your ears, the roll them backwards and down, then finally forwards. Repeat ten times then reverse the direction.

[Watch Video!](#) 

Nerves/Pins and Needles

Hands



This is an effective technique that can improve pins and needles in the hand. Be careful, however, as this is a strong technique. If your symptoms worsen, **reduce the range of motion or stop**.

Start with your wrist cocked backwards with your palm facing the ceiling/your face. Gently straighten the elbow until you feel tension down the arm. Bring your ear closer to your shoulder as you reverse the wrist position so its facing downwards.

Reverse the movement by cocking your wrist back as your ear moves towards the opposite shoulder.

Repeat up to five times.

[Watch Video!](#) 

Mid-Back Pain

Figure of Eight



Interlock your fingers and place them on the back of your neck. Bring your elbows together to make a “point”. Start by pointing your elbows down and forwards then slowly move aiming to draw an imaginary 8. Repeat five times then switch direction.

[Watch Video!](#) 

Pectoralis Stretch



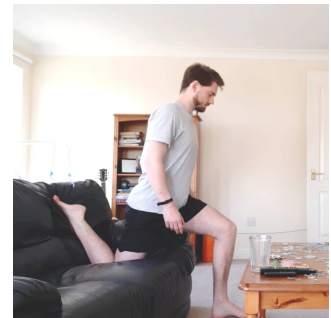
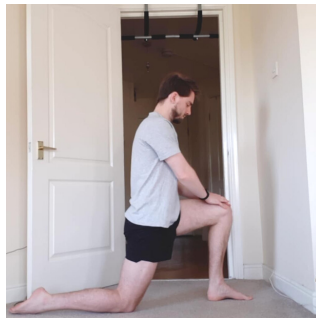
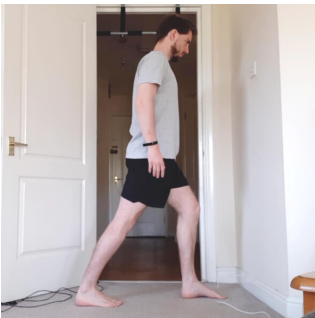
Stand in a door/window frame. Place your hand on the frame, take a step forward and rotate your body away. Alternatively, place the whole forearm on the door frame for a slightly different stretch.

[Watch Video 1!](#) 

[Watch Video 2!](#) 

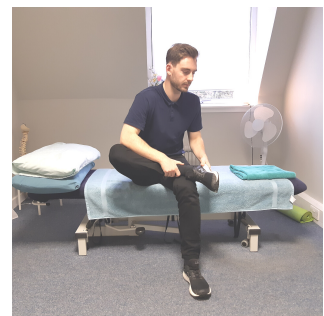
Lower Back Pain

Hip Flexor Stretch



Stand with one foot in front of the other, front leg slightly flexed. Gently lean forward, pushing your hips forward until you can feel a stretch at the front of the hip. If no stretch is felt, progress to the next stretch along. Hold each stretch for 60-120 seconds.

Piriformis Stretch



Seated, place the outside of your ankle onto the top of the opposite knee. Hold onto your ankle and knee. Gently pull the ankle towards you as you push the knee away. **Increase** the stretch: lean forward either towards the ankle, shin or knee. **Decrease** the stretch: move your planted foot away from your body. Hold or 60-120 seconds.

Workplace Setup



*Is this you
right now?*

*What's the
best setup for
you?*





Workplace Setup

Let's Find a Middle Point

It's important to be comfortable but working from the bed or the sofa tends to put us in funny positions and makes us sleepy. Not the best way to get some work done!

Here are some easy actionable steps you can take to improve your work-station and reduce the likelihood of pain:

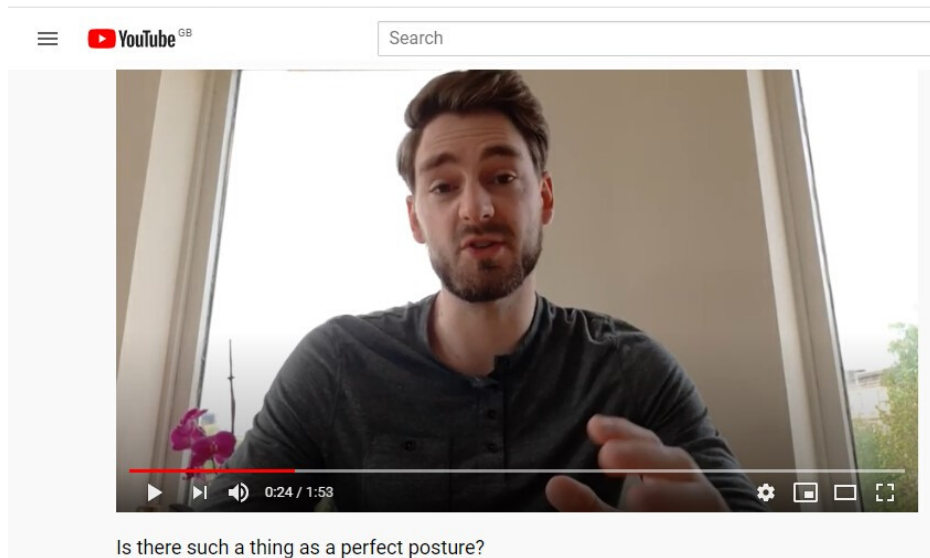
- **Avoid working on the sofa** – work at the kitchen table/desk.
- **Get the screen height right** – place your laptop on a pile of books towards eye level.
- **Use an external mouse and keyboard.** If you can't get these, ensure the laptop is close to you so you're not overreaching.
- Sit on a comfortable but firm chair – pop a cushion at the back to improve comfort.

- **Regular breaks** – I'd recommend every 30 minutes to an hour!

Pro tip: Put the washing in. Not only does the washing get done, you can also use it as a timer to get up and moving. You could even try a couple of the exercises above.

- **Position your work space next to a window** - this will enable you to get your daily dose of sunshine and vitamin D.
- **Wear headphones** - you'll be able to hear more clearly in meetings as the headphones block out external noise.

Is Perfect Posture a Priority?



In this video you will learn...

- Why there's not one perfect posture
- Bad posture doesn't mean pain
- What you can do to get rid of pain from posture
- The best posture is the next posture

[Watch Video!](#) 

These are unusual times and we have to ensure that our mental, emotional and physical health is maintained. We also have a little bit more time to get on with those things we've been putting off for a while. Now is a great time to take advantage of this and prepare for life post-lockdown.

Continue for some tried and tested tips for ensuring you're feeling your best in lockdown...



10 Top Tips for WFH

01

Keep a Routine

Maintain a working schedule with a specific start and finish time. It's very tempting to work extra hours when you're at home – but refrain and keep a good work-life balance. When you finish work, you finish work.

02

Get Dressed

Getting dressed for the day gives you that psychological boost and a productive mindset. Also, it gets you out of the same (and starting to get a bit smelly) pyjamas that you've worn for the last 3 weeks. On Zoom, people can't smell you, but they can see you.

03

Eat Properly

As we're no longer commuting, this can free up to two extra hours a day. The perfect amount of time to try out a recipe and cook healthy meals. Ideal if you have a slow cooker – prepare in the morning and it's ready by dinner! You'll feel much better for it.

04

Take a Lunch Break

When working at home it can be tempting to “work through lunch”. Breaks are really important and give you a chance to relax, enjoy your food and refresh. You'll feel more energised and be more productive compared to if you had just worked through.

05

Have a Nap

Napping for 20 minutes after work or a mental task has been shown to increase memory, motivation and mental clarity. Any longer and you end up feeling more tired than before. So set a timer, grab your blanket and have a nap.



10 Top Tips for WFH in Lockdown

06 *Get Off Social Media*

You can use apps (such as Freedom and SelfControl) on your phone and computer that block certain websites and apps for a set period – getting rid of the temptation to tweet about cats.

07 *Do Your Daily Exercise*

Exercise is great for mental, emotional, and physical health. There's not one perfect form of exercise so pick your favourite! Goes without saying – stay at least 2m away from others and only head out alone or with members from your household.

08 *Chat to Loved Ones*

Keep in contact with friends, family and those who are closest to you. These are the people you can talk your frustrations through, make you laugh and reduce the feeling of isolation in this time.

09 *Start a New Hobby*

Make the most of the free courses that are available! There are also plenty of professionals who are offering their services without a fee – so it's an ideal time to get started on that New Year's Resolution from 2016.

10 *Relax and Give Yourself a Break*

As you've heard repeatedly – these are unprecedented times. Remember it's 100% okay to sit back, put your feet up and relax. We can feel overwhelmed at times and it's important to stop, take stock and gather ourselves. Don't feel you should always be doing something.

Time to get Started

If you have any questions, or would like to arrange a consultation, feel free to get in touch! I'm always happy to chat. You can also follow me on social media for helpful tips and exercises.

Every person that joins during the lockdown gets a free video/telephone consultation (diagnosis and self-treatment).



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Disclaimer: This document is purely educational and not designed to be diagnostic. If you have pre-existing conditions or pain, a full medical history and specific advice for your issue should be sought from a qualified healthcare professional.