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Welcome

Just to let you all know that I returned safely from Thailand, despite wishing they might keep the airport closed so that I may sneak a few more days in Paradise.

I was in Northern Thailand where it is their winter, so cool mornings and evenings with the day time temperature perfect around 20 - 25 degrees. Every morning we were up around 7am on the Tai Chi field for our morning exercise, a short break at 8.30 for fresh Papaya and passion fruits followed by morning meditation and a buffet style breakfast.

The course that I was studying on abdominal massage took up quite a few hours of the day, but there was time to fit in a little sunbathing, swimming, and cycling. Whilst I was there I attended a Buddhist ceremony on the Kings birthday where the Thai people gave offerings to 10,000 Monks.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all again in 2009. Let it be a healthy, happy one.

Susanne



Abdominal massage for health

The aims of the therapeutic course that I attended for abdominal massage are to maintain health and vitality and to optimize energy, through self-care. So bearing in mind the Christmas season is upon us, I thought I would give a few words on having a

healthy digestion and comfortable bellies this festive season.

This tissue and organ massage is a form of classical Thai and Chinese medicine and dates back many thousands of years. It focuses on releasing tensions in the abdominal area, releasing knots and tangles and detoxifying the organs. **Massaging the abdomen is something that anyone can do to help improve their health and digestion.**

Saliva, known to the ancients as the golden elixir, contains enzymes that help us digest food, so it is vitally important to chew food properly as this promotes pre-digestion, and gives the stomach time to send a message to the brain that it is full thus avoiding over indulging. Consciously gather the saliva in your mouth and swallow with your food.

Aim to drink a glass of water 30 minutes before meals but try to avoid too much liquid with your meal as this will dilute the gastric juices. Although a glass of red wine is known to aid digestion, and is encouraged!

Remember that your colon doesn't have teeth, food should be chewed so that it is liquid before it is swallowed. It can help to have a light walk after eating to facilitate movement in the digestive system. Alternatively massaging your abdominal area can help with healthy circulation.

Always circle in clockwise direction, that is towards your left side first, unless you have an upset tummy in which case circle in an anticlockwise direction. Since 80 % of our immunity is in our intestines it makes sense to look after this area. Remember that your posture too influences digestion, a slumped posture does not leave space for the digestive organs to do their work.

Think of the directions we give our bodies in Pilates; The idea of an elastic cord lengthening us upwards from the crown. Imagine a widening across the chest, and think about the space at the top of your head. These directions will help to lift you and leave more room in your abdomen.

And lastly, deep breathing massages the internal organs, improving circulation and removing toxins from your body. *Breathe deep into your belly.* As you breathe in feel your belly rise and as you breathe out your belly falls.



Pilates classes restart Monday 5th Jan

Thanks to Julie for covering the Wednesday classes whilst I was away, she said what a lovely group of students you were and how much she enjoyed teaching you!

I'm looking forward to getting back to classes in January and bringing some of my new ideas with me. Classes start back on Monday January 5th. Please let me know if you can't attend the next block of classes as some classes have a waiting list.

If you have not done Pilates before I hold a "Back to Basics" class on Wednesday evenings at 7.35 pm for beginners and refreshers. This will teach you the principles of Pilates.