

## you can do it



## Doctor delivers checklist for longevity

A talk on Alzheimer's and dementia at the Warkworth Town Hall last month provided some interesting statistics and advice on aging.

More than 100 people attended the lecture by Dr Gavin Pilkington, hosted by the Warkworth Alzheimer's Group.

Dr Pilkington said about 80 percent of us will age well. The remaining 20 percent will suffer various medical and psychological problems, which will be influenced by a range of factors including weight, lifestyle (smoking and alcohol consumption), our level of education, our economic situation, stress or a chronic medical condition.

The risk of dementia increases every five years, with one in three people aged over 85 years expected to suffer from it. By 2021, there is expected to be a 124 percent increase in the number of people aged 85 years and over.

"Centenarians are the fastest growing demographic group thanks to better nutrition and health care," Dr Pilkington said.

On the subject of how to live longer, stress in small doses is good because it kick-starts the body's natural repair kit. People over 65 years of age get the most benefit from exercise and a low caloric intake is the only proven method of increasing your life span.

"It's quite hard to do, but it's worth

aspiring to."

Happy relationships also add to our staying power. Dr Pilkington said a happy marriage was one of "life's blessings", particularly for men. People who look on the bright side of life last longer than pessimists, and if you feel sick go and see a doctor. He said five daily portions of fresh fruit and vegetables were much better for your health than downing expensive health supplements. A regular sleep routine was also an important ingredient for longevity.

"And if there is one message I would like to leave with you with today it's this: 'use your brain'. Exercise your brain with crosswords, jigsaws, Scrabble and things like that. Bridge is good for the immune system.

"There is also evidence suggesting that anyone in the 50 to 65 year age group should take up some kind of study which requires persistence and patience over a six to 18 month period, such as learning a musical instrument or a language. This type of study activates a section of the brain which closes down with Alzheimers and dementia."

Dr Pilkington closed his slide show presentation with the T. S. Eliot



Dr Gavin Pilkington



On the raffle table were Carol Andrews (left) and Elaine Venville.

quote: "Only those who risk going too far, can possibly find out how far they can go."

For anyone interested in learning more about the subject, he recommended the book *The Brain That Changes Itself*.

## Briefs

### Challenging workplaces

The annual Footbeat campaign will kick off on September 13. The eight-week promotion encourages workplaces and organisations to get teams of up to eight people together and participate in regular exercise. Teams set a goal of a distance they would like to reach by choosing a destination on the NZ map and work towards reaching or exceeding this distance. There are prizes for the best team name, photo and story. The challenge is aimed at reducing stress, getting staff fit and having fun. Info: Pritika Sharma phone 09 623 4600 ext 27752 or email [pritikas@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:pritikas@adhb.govt.nz).

### Deaf want to be heard

The National Foundation for the Deaf wants to give people who are hearing impaired and deaf the opportunity to be heard by their Members of Parliament. Foundation chief executive Louise Carroll says the hearing-impaired and deaf have taken a number of serious hits from government decisions over the past year. In a global first, the foundation has asked all MPs to set aside three hours on Saturday morning, September 18, to meet with and listen to people who want to discuss hearing-related issues.

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# Health

with Dr Bruce Sutherland

## The kindest cut

Vasectomy is a relatively straight forward method of family planning nowadays. For a variety of reasons, it seems that New Zealand men have taken to the procedure with New Zealand having one of the world's highest vasectomy rates. The reasons for this are probably in some way a credit to the New Zealand male character – sharing the burden of family responsibility, but also cost and access to hospital clinics has a bearing on vasectomy rates.

A vasectomy can be done under general anaesthetic but most are done under a local anaesthetic by a specialist or GP. The procedure takes about an hour and generally can be arranged so that it does not incur loss of work days.

No form of contraception is 100 percent and vasectomy can have a failure rate of 0.5% initially but longer term failure rates are less than 1:2000 – one of the lowest failure rates of any method of contraception. Like any surgical procedure there can be complications, but these are generally minor, including bleeding, swelling, infection and short-term pain.

There was some concern in the early days that vasectomy may be related to the development of prostate cancer in later life. At one point both vasectomy rates and prostate cancer rates seemed to be climbing. It now appears that prostate cancer increases are due to men living longer and larger studies have shown no link to vasectomy rates world wide.

If you are interested in discussing this further – make an appointment to see your GP. The internet has some useful information. If you are interested in how the procedure is done then go to 'you-tube' and watch vasectomies being performed by varying techniques. I have posted one of my vasectomies at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmv\\_yKjPPT8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmv_yKjPPT8) Don't watch if you are squeamish!

### Breastfeeding promotion

Breastfeeding mothers in the Warkworth and Wellsford area are invited to join The Big Latch On being held at the Womens Centre in Alnwick Street on Friday, August 6. The annual breastfeeding marathon is aimed at promoting breastfeeding and raising awareness of the acceptability of breastfeeding in public. A record 1306 women took part last year and organisers are hoping even more will participate this year. The event starts at 10.30am and morning tea will be provided. **Info: Phone 425 7261.**

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HEALTH & FITNESS FEATURE

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## Monitoring teen screen time

The NZ Chiropractors' Association is warning parents that excessive time in front of computer and television screens this winter could mean an increase in back pain, neck and shoulder pain and headaches for their children.

A new study published in the BMC Public Health Journal has found a link between the amounts of time adolescents spend using computers, watching television and playing computer games, and back pain and headaches. Association spokesperson Dr Hayden Thomas says screen time is fine in small quantities but longer periods sitting down, hunched over in the same position for hours on end can be seriously detrimental to a person's health.



"Not moving for extended periods causes the muscles in the neck, arms and back to stiffen up and become sore," he says.

"Plus, slouching increases the amount of compressive force through the spine. This increased force may, over a period of time, fatigue the spinal muscles and cause pain, or may lead to early degenerative changes."

Dr Thomas says it is all about moderation. Children should be encouraged to sit up with their shoulders back and their feet on the floor when they're at their PC or watching television. They should also have their chair pulled close enough to the computer screen so that they're not tempted to lean forward, putting stress on the lower

**Too much time in front of the computer could cause health problems for teenagers.**

back. Finally, advise that they take frequent breaks to walk around and stretch. This will stop muscles getting tight and strained.

"Of course, it is also preferable that teenagers try to get outside and do some exercise, even over the winter months," adds Dr. Thomas. "Regular exercise, whether it is by participating in a team sport or going for a quick walk, keeps body fat and high blood pressure down, and reduces the prevalence of depression and anxiety. It also helps prevent back pain by increasing muscle strength and endurance and improving flexibility and posture."

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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS FEATURE

## youcandoit

## Tai chi stretches over two decades

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the teaching of Taoist tai chi in New Zealand – and also 40 years since the ancient Chinese art of whole-body exercise was introduced to the western world.

To mark the occasion, a group of Warkworth and Wellsford practitioners is staging a demonstration at 11am, on Saturday August 14, at Matakana Country Park. They will join others throughout the country – and the rest of the world – to celebrate the milestone and the many positive health benefits tai chi brings to all ages.

Anne Stephens, of Wharehine, has been a member of the Warkworth group which meets weekly at the Matakana Primary School hall, for 18 months. She is enthusiastic about the improvement in her health since she started classes.

A former athletics coach and school teacher, Anne says that tai chi has helped her to sleep better, feel more energised and improved her posture. She also enjoys the meditative aspect of the sessions, and the challenge involved in learning the 108 moves that make up a 15-20 minute set of exercises.

"I'm a tall person and I've always wanted to look graceful," she says. "Tai Chi does this for me, along with improving balance, flexibility and suppleness. It's great for anyone of all ages who wants to keep fit through gentle exercise."

The group meets on Monday evenings. Sessions start with a cup of green tea at 6.30pm and run



Members of Warkworth Taoist tai chi prepare to celebrate 20 years of Taoist Tai Chi in NZ.

for 90 minutes, under the instruction of Helen Howard. Info: Phone Helen Howard 425 9237 or [www.taoist.org.nz](http://www.taoist.org.nz)

The origins of Taoist tai chi go back to the 12th century when Taoist monks developed this form of exercise as a way of maintaining good health and as training for martial arts. It was brought to the western world in 1970, when Master Moy Lin-Shin introduced tai chi to Canada. As a young child he had been sent to a Taoist monastery to recuperate from illness where he was taught tai chi and other arts. Tai chi helped heal him, and he vowed to pass on its health-giving benefits dedicating the rest of his life to teaching the art worldwide, and founding the International Taoist Tai Chi Society. It is now practiced by 40,000 in 27 countries. In keeping with Moy's vision of service to others, all instructors and administrators are volunteers.

## WOF diet for seniors

Senior citizens have been told to give their eating habits a 'warrant of fitness' by expert dietician, Kaye Dennison.

"As we grow older, we are very good at reviewing our housing, hobbies and horsepower to suit our changing needs, but don't take the same interest in what we're eating," she told a recent New Zealand Nutrition Foundation seminar.

In her experience as a dietician working with older people, Ms Dennison says she regularly encounters people who have not reassessed their eating habits as they age, resulting in malnutrition.

She suggests the following checklist:

- If your belt, rings or watch seem a bit loose and you've lost weight unintentionally, talk to your doctor or practice nurse.
- Ask to be weighed whenever you visit the surgery or medical centre.
- If you start on new medication, ask your doctor if it is likely to affect your appetite, taste or smell. These are all factors which affect how you eat.

Ms Dennison says remaining fit and well later in life is dependent on good nutrition, meaning increased quality in an often restricted quantity. Older New Zealanders should be eating foods giving them more calcium, vitamins D and B12, folic acid and magnesium.

"An extra milky drink or a nourishing bowl of creamy meat and vegetable soup can make all the difference. Healthy guidelines for other age groups, such as low fat and low salt diets, can be over-restrictive in later life, compromising good nutrition."

Ms Dennison suggests that next time a senior citizen needs to take their car for a WOF, they give themselves a check-up too.



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HEALTH & FITNESS FEATURE

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Aikido classes teach people how to use entering and turning movements to defend themselves against attack.

## Martial arts for all ages

**Aikido, a form of self-defence that can be learned by men and women of almost any age, has a loyal following in Warkworth.**

The club started initially in Matakana in 2002, but now meets twice a week at the Methodist Church Hall in Warkworth.

Shodans Andy Metzler and Rod Green are both founding members, and they assist 4th Dan instructors Gail Eder and Dianne Haynes.

Dianne says Warkworth practises the aikikai style of aikido, which was developed in Britain based on nine techniques.

Aikido is performed by blending

with the motion of the attacker and redirecting the force of the attack rather than opposing it head-on.

“This means a person doesn’t necessarily have to be strong to deflect an attack,” Dianne says. “It’s a Japanese martial art that can be learned by people of any fitness level, size or shape.”

The Warkworth group meets on Tuesdays and Thursday, from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The first two lessons are free.

## Curves members give generously

Members of Curves Warkworth, who are normally focussed on shedding kilograms, reversed this aim recently to support the Warkworth FoodLink.

Collectively, the members donated a massive 942 kgs of food for the service during June. Curves owner Christine Rauner says the total far exceeded amounts donated in the previous four years since the annual promotion started.

“I set them a target of 1000kgs and

they went for it,” she says. “Most members contributed more than once – the generosity was amazing and often spontaneous – one 75-year-old bought two 10kg bags of potatoes after her circuit, just to see the total go over the 800kg mark.”

Link coordinator June Grose sent a letter thanking Curves for the “fantastic result”, which she said would help many local families through difficult times.

## Warkworth Aikido



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8	6	9	1	5	2	4	3	7
5	9	8	3	2	7	1	4	6
4	7	1	9	8	6	2	5	3
2	3	6	4	1	5	7	9	8
9	8	2	5	7	1	3	6	4
7	1	4	6	3	9	5	8	2
6	5	3	2	4	8	9	7	1

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**HEALTH & FITNESS FEATURE****youcandoit****Foundations of Parenting  
(Part 2 of 4 - Nurturing little people)**

By Brian Shires, Homebuilders family support worker and SKIP coordinator

Imagine for a moment how you would feel if you lived in a country where there were no clear rules, and to make matters worse, on every corner there was a law enforcer. The enforcers know the rules well and sometimes make up new ones as they go along. The enforcers are not consistent in noticing and sometimes they let things go and other times are very strict. They often don't follow the rules themselves.

You may not have thought of it like this before, but this could easily be likened to a child's world where fair rules, consistency and good role modeling are not being managed well by the parents. Do your rules and the way you enforce them enable your children to grow and experience success, or do they set them up to fail and feel shame? It's every parent's intention to be a good parent, but we don't always get it right. If you feel there is a need to re-evaluate your parenting approach then here are some useful tips to consider:

- Praise and tell your child when they are doing well and demonstrate the behaviors you want to see in them, this will build their self esteem.
- If something goes wrong don't lecture or be punitive, but rather talk to them about what happened and always describe or demonstrate the appropriate behavior you expect so they know how to self correct.
- Try to understand your child's point of view as they may be struggling to understand what is required of them.
- Set up clear routines and structure as this helps children become organised and feel secure.
- Lastly ensure you maintain realistic expectations for age appropriate behaviour – remember children are little people with a lot less life experience.

**Dancing for health in Warkworth**

Weekly dance sessions in Warkworth are providing people with a disability an opportunity to exercise, have fun and socialise. The classes are run by

dance teacher Rosemary Lorimer.

Participants are learning a range of dance styles including ballroom, Latin American and jive.

"It's great fun and can improve health and wellbeing," Rosemary says. "Dance requires a range of skills from balance and coordination to concentration. The lessons are structured around the capabilities of the participants, taking into account any physical, cognitive, intellectual or age related disabilities. Carers can also be involved."

**Info: Rosemary on 422 7409.**

**Health meeting**

Rodney Health Link will hold its annual meeting on August 16, at the Orewa Community House, starting at 10am. The meeting will be addressed by Whangaparaoa GP Dr Peter Hall. The meeting will also hear an update on primary health care.

**Consumer health**

A Consumer Representative Training workshop will be held in Albany on Thursday, September 23, from 9.45am to 3pm. **Info: Margaret on 09 4211556 or 021 1069 290 or [rodneyhealthlink@orcon.net.nz](mailto:rodneyhealthlink@orcon.net.nz)**

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**SKIP Positive Parenting Term 3 at Snells Beach Church Hall**

Monday 16th August 9.30am to 12pm (6 weeks).

This course looks at: how we were parented and how this effects how we coach our children, parenting styles (the pros and cons of being too tough or too easy), early child development, temperament types, strategies for effective discipline, love warmth and effective communication, and much more. There are also lots of opportunities to share and learn as a group of dedicated parents enhancing the learning and joy of being a parent. Although this course focuses on ages 0-5 all parents and care givers will benefit from and enjoy this course.

**Parent support group Term 3 at Homebuilders, Warkworth**

Wednesday 1st September 9.30 to 12.00 (4 weeks)

If you have completed a SKIP programme and want to learn more about how to make every day a positive parent experience then this group is for you. These courses are more about unpicking and making sense of the difficult bits of parenting and bringing out the positives in you and your child to make parenting more enjoyable.

**Facilitator:** Brian Shires, Homebuilders Family Support Worker. On site child minding services available on request. Phone Angela 09 425 7048 for registration & enquiries.

**Basic Hairdressing for the Family**

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