On the warm front ....

As I write this newsletter, our house is getting a warm jacket, (called external insulation). Also, we recently had a wood burning stove fitted in the treatment room. Wonderful! I am trying to find words - warmth, calming, wood cracking fire, dancing flames - you get the idea. At the moment I am learning how to operate the stove, when to put it on in order to warm up the room to the right temperature, and how to keep it going during the day.

In November my new website went live, first with a temporary design, then, in a few weeks, with a permanent design. There will be a lot of good information on the website, and I will add more pages over the next few months. Let me know what you think.

This year I have designed a gift voucher for the festive season, just in case you are stuck for a “touching” present.

Wishing you a spring in your step,
Are you sitting comfortably?
Most of us spend some, if not too much, time on the computer. Here are some tips on how to minimize the damage. In this issue I will concentrate on the monitor and chair, in next May I will look at the mouse and keyboard, desk and lighting.
The following suggestions can help prevent the development of eye strain, neck pain and shoulder fatigue while using your computer:

- Make sure the surface of the viewing screen is clean.
- Adjust brightness and contrast to optimum comfort.
- Position the monitor directly in front of user to avoid excessive twisting of the neck.
- Position the monitor approx. 20-26 inches (arm’s length) from user.
- Tilt top of the monitor back 10 to 20 degrees.
- Position monitors at right angles from windows to reduce glare.
- Position monitors away from direct lighting which creates excessive glare or use a glare filter over the monitor to reduce glare.
- The top of the viewing screen should be at eye level when the user is sitting in an upright position (NOTE: Bifocal wearers may need to lower monitor a couple of inches).

Adjusting Your Chair
Contrary to popular belief, sitting, which most people believe is relaxing, is hard on the back. Sitting for long periods of time can cause increased pressure on the intervertebral discs— the springy, shock-absorbing part of the spine. Sitting is also hard on the feet and legs. Gravity tends to pool blood in the legs and feet and create a sluggish return to the heart.

The following recommendations can help increase comfort for computer users:

"Dynamic sitting", don't stay in one static position for extended periods of time. When performing daily tasks, alternate between sitting and standing.

Adjust height of backrest to support the natural inward curvature of the lower back.

It may be useful to use a rolled towel or lumbar pad to support the lower back.

The backrest angle is set so that your hip-torso angle is 90 degrees or greater.

Adjust height of chair so feet rest flat on floor (use footrest if necessary).

Sit upright in the chair with the lower back against the backrest and the shoulders touching the backrest.

Thighs should be parallel to the floor and knees at about the same level as the hips.

Back of knees should not come in direct contact with the edge of the seat, there should be 2-3 inches between the edge of the seat and the back of the knee.

Don't use armrests to slouch.

Adjust height and/or width of armrests so that you can rest your arms at your sides so that you can relax and drop your shoulders while typing. Where armrests are used, elbows and lower arms should rest lightly so as not to cause circulatory or nerve problems.
Easing a pain in the neck

If you suffer occasionally with neck pain, you are not alone. According to a survey among 10,000 Norwegian adults, about a third (34.4%) experienced neck pain in the previous year, and more than one in eight surveyed (13.8%) reported neck pain that lasted for longer than six months. (Spine, 1994 June 19(12)). A randomised controlled trial looked at massage for chronic neck pain versus a self-care book. Sixty-four sufferers received either up to ten weekly massages or a self-care book. Massage recipients reported significantly improved function during telephone interviews at 4, 10 and 26 weeks (Clin J Pain. 2009 Mar-Apr;25(3):233-8). In my practice I have good results with treating neck pain. Occasionally the pain is treated in just one session, mostly it needs four to eight sessions. Massage on the neck can involve a “healing crisis” the next day - clients have reported “being run over by a truck”. After that the pain is easing, sometimes even vanishing, over the next few days.

Pregnancy massage helps after birth

Pregnancy massage can help you, your baby and your partner both before and after the birth. Two new studies show that this is true for women who suffered under depression during their pregnancy, but I don’t see why this should not be true generally. The studies compared twice weekly pregnancy massage by their partner for at least 12 weeks prior to the birth to “standard treatment”. Self-reported leg pain, back pain, depression, anxiety and anger decreased more for the massaged pregnant women than for the control group women. The reduced depression, as well as reduced cortisol (stress hormone) levels were also apparent after the birth during the postnatal period. This also affected the baby positively: they were less likely to be born prematurely or be low birth weight. The babies had lower stress hormones and adapted to the new environment better. Finally, scores on a relationship questionnaire improved more for both the women and the partners in the massage group. These data suggest that not only mood states but also relationships improve mutually when depressed pregnant women are massaged by their partners. (Infant Behav Dev. 2009 Jul 29; J Bodyw Mov Ther. 2008 Apr;12 (2):146-50)

I don’t think you have to be depressed to get these marvellous benefits. What a good idea to get your partner trained. This is where I can help, I gladly train your partner. This is great for your support before, during and after the birth!

I have recently completed a specialised training for treating women post-natally. From my own experience I can honestly say that after the birth of my children it was so important to have treatment myself - time to put something back, to help my body to adjust, support me in my role as a mother, just to have some me-time.
Life is better after treatment
A Turkish study on women with arm lymphoedema has confirmed the benefits of effective MLD treatment. The study evaluated fear of activity (kinesiophobia), quality of life and the effectiveness of home exercise programmes. 62 women with lymphoedema after breast cancer treatment received lymphoedema treatment called complete decongestive therapy (CDT), which is manual lymphatic drainage (MLD), compression garments, skin care and specialist exercises. The women were taken to a 12-week therapy programme 3 days per week. A home programme, consisting of compression bandage exercises, skin care and walking was recommended. They measured the volume of the oedema before and after the 12 week treatment period. They found a strong correlation between the severity of the oedema and fear of movement and the quality of life. Not surprisingly, women with more severe lymphoedema had greater fear of movement and a lower quality of life. They also found that the treatment did make a difference, the arm was less swollen. The extra fluid in the arm decreased on average from 925 ml to 510 ml. The fear of activity decreased, and the quality of life improved after the 12 weeks of treatment (J Surg Oncol. 2008 Jun 1;97(7):572-7), It is reassuring that the standard lymphoedema treatment does indeed work, something confirmed in my practice. Regular walking is good for you, particularly if you have oedema. A client of mine was so relieved when I advised her to walk regularly, as walking gave her a lot of pleasure. The main point to remember, though, is to wear the compression when exercising. With MLD and exercise, reduction of limb volume and increased fitness will contribute to improved quality of life.

Recent feedback
“With Regina’s calming, yet witty influence on my occasionally manic temperament I find myself both physically and mentally realigned after each session, prepared once again for the challenges of new motherhood. For this I thank her greatly.” Polly, Carrington

“I remember my first words to Regina "Please don’t touch my knees". After facing the prospects of a double arthroscopy and eventual knee replacements, my regular sessions with Regina have now even resulted in me being able to kneel. Arms and legs in some unusual positions and her ability to always put her finger on the right spot are at times unbelievable. Muscles loosened, posture straightened, feeling relaxed, I walk out 6” taller. I can hardly ever wait for my next session. My Advice. Try it!” Julie Smith, Carlton

“Feeling de-stressed and revitalised, ready for the working day.”
Julie, on-site massage at Sangenic International

“Did me the world of good, helped with my aches and pains”. Steve, Sangenic