

Fine tune your body

With the Bath Half Marathon's not far off Cam Winstanley explains how osteopathy is one way to keep you tuned up and injury free...

Your favourite running shoes – £115. A new breathable running top – £55. Getting to the starting line without hurting yourself in training – priceless. There are some things that money can't buy and unfortunately for everyone running this year's Bath Half Marathon, staying injury free is one of them.

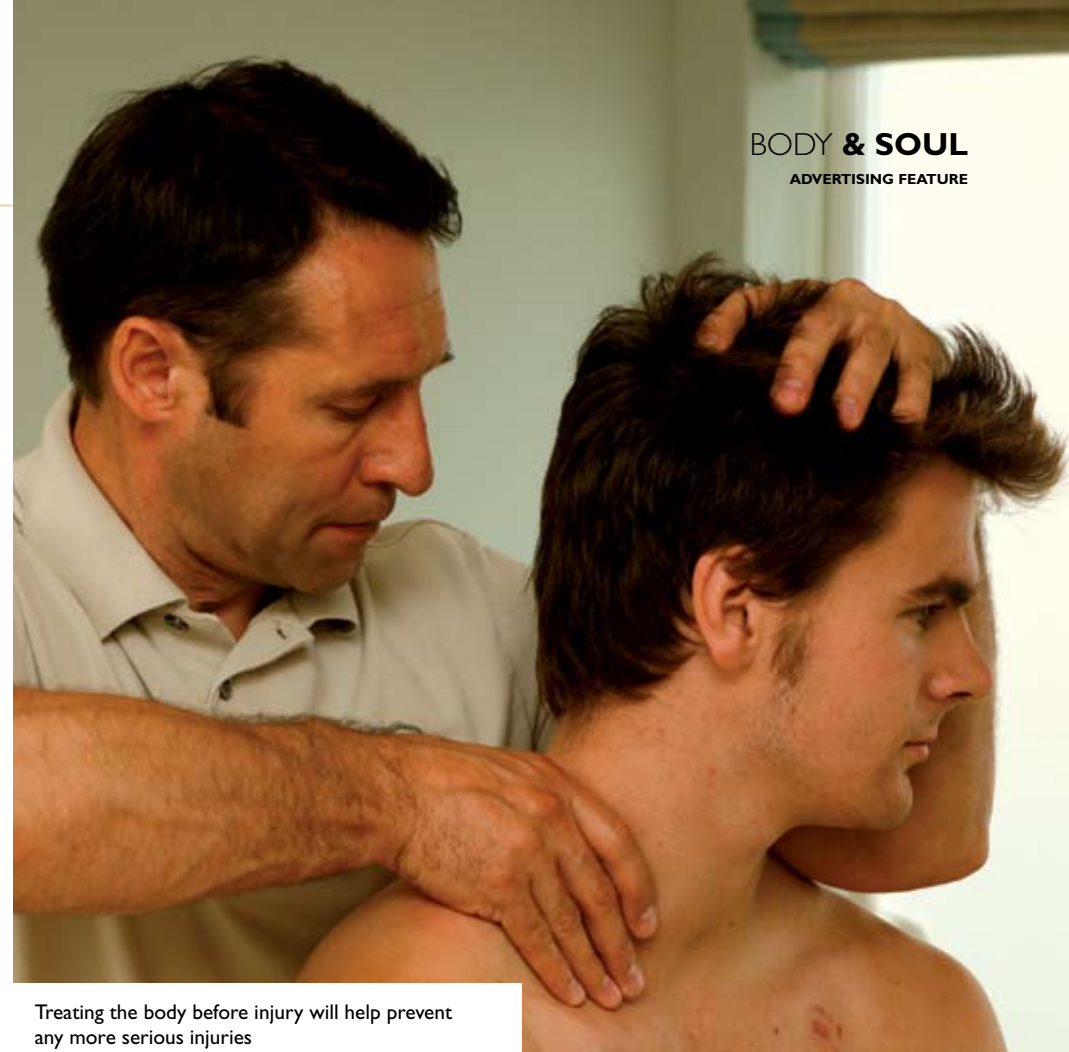
Work and the kids and this summer's rainy season have all probably interrupted everyone's meticulously-planned training schedule and with just weeks to go, it's all too easy to try and play catch up. But, too many miles with too little rest is a recipe for disaster. Push yourself too hard and it's all too easy to end up in the doctor's waiting room. All those late night miles notched up in training will be wasted if you're not fit and ready on the day.

Local osteopath Dave Inman is all too familiar with fun-runners pushing themselves too hard. With a previous sport-packed career in the British Army and his work with the English Karate Team, Dave has experienced injury as well as treated them. The interruption to athletes' training schedules through injury is what prompted his clinic in Bath to offer sporting prehabilitation as well as rehabilitation. Pre what you may be thinking? Well, as Dave puts it, it's treating your body like a car instead of a car wreck.

"Even though your car might seem okay, it's still wise to take it in for its yearly service," Dave explains. "This way, any problems are sorted out before they become catastrophic and because it's tuned regularly, it runs better. Prehabilitation is the same thing but for your body. Rather than waiting for an injury and then rehabilitating it, osteopathic sessions can tune the body so that it's less likely to break in the first place."

Osteopathy is a complementary therapy that treats the body as a connected whole, using

"It's about treating your body like a car instead of a car wreck"



Treating the body before injury will help prevent any more serious injuries

touch and visual cues to identify problem areas. Most people think it's all neck clicking and back crunching and while that can certainly be part of the treatment, it's not the whole story. Before an osteopath even thinks of getting hands on, every patient talks about their health, injuries and activities.

"Every person's body is a scrapbook of their life," says Dave. "What sports you've done, injuries you've sustained and even your occupation have a lasting effect on your body. If you think of how many hours a month an office worker will be sat at a desk or a plasterer will be looking up at a ceiling, you'll see that it's bound to have some effect on the body."

"Since everyone's different, osteopathy is all about treating the person rather than the problem," he adds. "A runner might be surprised to have his upper back worked on rather than his legs but if there's stiffness there, he'll be doing more work to fill his lungs and consequently, will get fatigued quicker. Similarly, if you're not moving one shoulder as freely as the other then you'll have a slightly uneven running gait. This mechanical imperfection might not seem like much but over the distance of a half marathon, that's a lot of force being applied unevenly."

This prevention rather than cure approach is something that professional athletes have used for years. After all, if they're hurt, they



Dave with daughter Danielle, GB squad member at the recent Triathlon World Championships

can't do their job. But with prehabilitation now available to all part-time athletes too, the benefits can be more widely appreciated. Giving your body a tune up and service might not make you win this year's Bath Half Marathon but it certainly increases your chances of getting over the finish line in one piece. □



Oldfield Osteopathic Clinic
4 Livingstone Road
Oldfield Park BA2 3PQ

tel: 01225 333166

email: info@oldfieldosteopaths.com