

A CHAT WITH DR. KUSAL GOONEWARDENA

BY Vajini.H.Gunaratne



Dr. Kusal Goonewardena is not just a physiotherapist; he is a Sports Specialist who is at the top of his field. As the Head of Sports Medicine at the University of Melbourne, Dr. Goonewardena takes care of Olympians and Winter Olympians. Since he took over three years ago, the University's Sports Department has been ranked amongst the top 3 of the world.

As a Sports Therapist, Dr. Goonewardena's skill and experience is no secret. Despite being Melbourne based, he possesses a boundless love

FAMILIAR ISSUES?

Back then, it was spinal pain. In athletes however it's mostly knee or hamstring issues. A lot of people who suffer from chronic pain tend to give up. My advice would be to get a second opinion because at the end of the day health is very important and life is too short. Sometimes, athletes are told that the only way to solve a chronic hamstring issue is to go into surgery. However we have found out that 75 percent of the time, the issue is not even in the hamstring but in the spine or the discs and sometimes even the shoulders. Because of this you have to be very careful when you are diagnosing. You have to assess everything.

WHAT'S THE REASON BEHIND YOUR TRIP TO SRI LANKA?

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YOUR INSPIRATIONS?

I didn't want to be a doctor because it takes about 6-7 years of studying. But I was very passionate about sports and from very young days played everything, ranging from basketball to table tennis. Even now I follow cricket very closely. Then, it came to a point where you needed to study as

to help them. This programme urges one to exercise 3 mins daily. It is a 21 day programme that gets your joints working, I will release a book regarding this in May and I'm trying to find a distributor to bring it down to Sri Lanka.

TELL US ABOUT 'ELITE AKADEMY'?

Elite Akademy is my private clinic. The 'K' in the word "akademy" stands for Kusal. That's my way of adding my signature to it. We have a website that you can access through www.eliteakademy.com. On this site, I created an exercise program by the name of High Performance Blueprint, which helps people feel well and look better. There are 21 exercises that take around 15-20 mins to complete. In doing these, people can rectify bad posture, slouching etc which is so common. Knee issues as well as headaches can be cured if you follow this routine daily. The programme is completely free.

knowledgeable and educated with the theory. The practical side is where I can help them. I believe that it is a great experience for them to have an expert fly in from a place like Melbourne which is a hub of sports. Within the next 5 years if they can continue to develop individually, they will be world class.

YOUR ADVICE?

Something I get asked a lot is how much one should exercise per day. The answer for this would be taking 15000 steps which is equivalent to just over 2 hours. Walking for that much time conditions your joints really well. When your leg muscles are exercised, your cardiovascular system functions well, which is what you want in order to lead a healthy, happy life. Finding those 15000 steps is very important. To the regular therapist, my advice is - be proud that you are helping someone as they will always remember you.

PICS BY Waruna Wanniarachchi



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As a Sports Therapist, Dr. Goonewardena's skill and experience is no secret. Despite being Melbourne based, he possesses a boundless love for Sri Lanka and the nation is always at the back of his mind. He frequently visits the island to share his expertise and strongly believes that this is his way of giving back to the land he loves most.

I met up with him for a brief chat.

YOUR WORK?

As a sports specialist my main job is to help elite athletes perform at their highest level. Apart from this, I help other practitioners by educating them on how to get the best possible results from their patients. I am consulted by worldwide universities, travelling teams and athletes to share my expertise and conduct lectures on sports medicine. During the past 15 years, I have conducted over 50000 treatments in Sports Medicine alongside 3500 hours of clinical research. I believe that to be a good therapist, you need to get the best results in the shortest period of time.

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WHAT'S THE REASON BEHIND YOUR TRIP TO SRI LANKA?

Because I'm so connected to Sri Lanka and the sub continent, there is a need to spread awareness on sports medicine. Australia is seen as a frontrunner in sports and sports medicine. As a Melbourne based physiotherapist for the past 15 years, I want to enlighten the Sri Lankan population about good health practices. Also building awareness among sports medicine therapists and athletes is important. That's why I'm here. A couple of weeks ago, I lectured at Colombo University where more than 260 were in attendance. I flew down here with my own money to share with them what we do in Australia and those 7 hours were completely freely offered. This is because I see the passion and wanting to learn in their eyes. The feedback is great. I also provide a certificate and a course that people can follow. So when I come down here I apply that as well. This is my way of giving back to my country.

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BOOKS YOU'VE WRITTEN?

ON BACK PAIN...

I have written a book by the name of 'Back Pain' as 80 percent of the population suffers from this. It is available in Australia, UK, USA and Canada. It is a self help book which is very easy to read and understand.

HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING

We have found out that many people in this day and age don't exercise enough due to laziness. It is our duty as therapists

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YOUR THOUGHTS ON PHYSIOTHERAPY IN SRI LANKA?

It is in a very promising place. Sri Lankan physios are very

healthy, happy life. Finding those 15000 steps is very important. To the regular therapist, my advice is - be proud that you are helping someone as they will always remember you.

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