

**A**  
**PAIN**

**IN THE**



**BACK**

**AND HOW TO GET RID OF IT**

## **Table of Contents**

Your Back – A Simple Structure with Complex Workings .....	4
What Is Causing Your Back Pain? .....	6
Diagnosing Back Pain – Why We Need a Professional .....	8
Massage Therapy for Your Back .....	10
Posture and Back Pain – Lessons Learned at Finishing School .....	12
Acupuncture and Back Pain .....	14
Stretching Exercises May Reduce Back Pain .....	16
Exercise Your Way to a Healthy Back .....	18
Bad-Back Exercises: Can They Help Back Pain? .....	21
Lower Back Exercises to Relieve Back Pain .....	23
Lower Back Pain Causes: The Information You Need .....	25
Upper Back Pain Causes and Solutions .....	27
Arthritis in Spine Explained .....	29
What Is a Bulging Disc? .....	31
Herniated Disc Treatment .....	33
Spinal Stenosis Treatment: Is It Effective? .....	35
Spondylolisthesis Symptoms to Watch Out For .....	37
Spondylolisthesis Treatment: What to Expect .....	39
Is Physical Therapy an Option for Your Back Pain? .....	41
Over-the-Counter Medications – What Works for Back Pain? .....	43
Our Recommended Back Pain Relief Product .....	44

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## **Your Back – A Simple Structure with Complex Workings**

The back is more complicated than you think. We take it for granted. We lay down on it, bend it, and use it for leverage. Then when it stops working, we find out real quick how much trouble we are in without a healthy back. Maybe it has something to do with what the back is supposed to do, and more importantly, what the back is not supposed to do.

### **Structure of the back**

Let's start with the basics. If you remove the skin, the muscle, the fat, and the ligaments, you can see just where we begin with the back. We'll omit the technical terms and use layman's terms that we all can understand to begin discovering what forms the back.

Your back is made up of *vertebrae*, small rounded bones that stack on top of one another. These bones, also referred to as the spinal column collectively, have openings in the middle. That opening is to accommodate your *spinal cord*. The spinal cord is the long tube that runs from the base of your brain all the way to your tail-bone. All of your nerves arise from the spinal cord and branch out to various places within the body.

There are 5 sections to your spinal column:

- Cervical – 7 movable vertebrae in the neck area
- Thoracic – 12 movable vertebrae in the chest area
- Lumbar – 5 movable vertebrae in the lower back area
- Sacral – 5 fused vertebrae at the level of your pelvis which connect with your pelvis
- Coccyx – 4 fused vertebrae that make up your tail-bone

Your spine has a natural curve to it that allows you to move fluidly instead of stiffly. Another reason we have ease of movement is the spongy discs that reside in between each vertebra. These discs have a soft middle that protects the spinal cord and a tougher outer layer that supports the weight of the vertebra above and below it.

There are spaces between the vertebrae, created by their unique shape, that allow nerves to pass through. These nerves travel to organs, muscle, ligaments, tendons, skin and the like. At lightning speed, impulses are passed from organs to nerves to the brain, and back to nerves and back to the organ. That is why there is no delay from the time you put your finger on a hot stove to the time that you scream and pull your hand away.

That's the structure of the back, simply illustrated. However, when you're experiencing back pain, you wouldn't think so. There is a complexity to the machinations of the back that cause many of us to suffer from aches and pains that seem like a mystery. When you understand that the back is your support system for your entire body, you can better understand the importance of good back care.

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## What Is Causing Your Back Pain?

Just about everyone can agree; when your back hurts, your world seems to come to a screeching halt. It affects everything that you do from that point on. You can put a broken arm in a sling. You can't put your back in a sling and continue with your day.

### **Back Strain = Back Pain**

Let's begin with the simplest form of back pain. That would be back strain. This occurs when you strain the muscles that support the spine in the back.

What does it feel like? Think of a "charley horse" in your leg. The muscle knots up because it was stretched the wrong way or over extended. The pain is immediate and continues until you can work out the kinks.

With back strain, you have essentially done the same thing. That muscle is out of sorts and needs to relax and heal. Let's consider what could be the cause of your back strain:

- Sudden jerky movements
- Improper lifting posture
- Poor sitting posture (slouching or hunching over)
- Injury
- Obesity
- Stress
- Shoes that are wearing unevenly
- Dehydration (your back needs water too)

When the muscles of the back are constantly strained, strengthening them may be the key to helping with back strain and inevitable pain.

### **Herniated Disc = Back Injury**

However, back pain can also be the result of a structural problem. This occurs when an injury to the back involves the vertebrae, nerves, and discs. This injury may be a trauma to the back, known as "an acute" injury, or an injury over time, known as "a chronic" injury. One of the most common injuries involves the discs.

The discs are located between the vertebrae of the back. They serve to cushion the nerves and the bones. When a disc is herniated, the inner

spongy matter squeezes out through the outer layer. This puts pressure on the root of the nerve that arises from that spot on the spinal cord. Usually, herniated discs are found in the lumbar region of the spinal column which corresponds to the lower back.

Herniated discs can be the result of an acute injury, a chronic injury such as a repeated motion that wears down the disc over time, or as a result of what is known as *degenerative disc disease*.

The worn disc spills its spongy material out and the disc "herniates." The material can begin to rub against nerves causing further pain.

Typically with this type of injury, what you will notice is pain in the hips and down the legs, commonly known as *sciatica*. Those nerves are pinched and can cause a loss of feeling in the legs from time to time. Your leg could have the sensation of "giving out" which is disconcerting as you are actually unable to move your leg for a time.

Anytime you experience unexplained pain in your back or down your legs, especially repeatedly or over a period of time, you should consult a health professional. The only way to know if your back pain is more than the occasional pain from overuse is to have the proper tests. Taking a few pain killers to alleviate minor back pain that occurs once in a while may be alright; say, when you rake the yard. But, serious back pain requires serious attention from a doctor. Take care of your back and it will take care of you!

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## Diagnosing Back Pain – Why We Need a Professional

All you know right now is that your back hurts. When you sit, stand, roll over or try to stretch, it just hurts. You may think you can ignore the pain in hopes it will go away. This is fine if back pain is a rare occurrence in your life, brought on only after attending to a back-breaking chore. But, once back pain becomes a routine part of your day, you need a medical professional to get a proper diagnosis and treatment.

You know, a little knowledge can be dangerous. Many of us are “armchair physicians” when it comes to healing our own wounds. When your back first begins to hurt, you may put heat on to relax the muscles or ice packs on to reduce the inflammation and dull the pain. This is not necessarily a bad thing UNTIL you realize that your back pain hasn't lessened. Worse yet, you misdiagnosed the cause of your back pain and you're icing a knotted muscle and heating an inflamed joint.

### What will your doctor do to diagnose your back pain?

One of the main reasons to consult a physician about your back pain is because it can be caused by things other than the run-of-the-mill suspects like injury, strain, exercise, or excess weight. As an example, your kidneys lie against your back outside of the abdominal cavity. Kidney stones and kidney infections can cause pain in the back. Assuming your lingering back pain can be stretched out or cured with ice packs could be dangerous.

Rather than make assumptions, your doctor will begin by asking you a series of questions meant to zero in on a few clues about the origin of your back pain:

- How long have you had your pain?
- What does it feel like? Is it sharp or dull?
- When does the pain occur? Sitting? Standing? Lying down?
- How have you managed the pain so far?

Now, the detective work begins. Your doctor will perform various tests, based on your answers, to diagnose the cause of your back pain. This series of tests is the best way to come up with a helpful treatment.

**Visual** – The doctor will have you stand and look at your back. He can evaluate your posture, feel for any bulges in the back or areas that are sensitive to pain. This can be done during your initial visit.

**X-rays** – This is the only way to see your bones. The doctor can check the bones of the vertebrae and the surrounding supporting tissue. If there are



any misalignments or fractures, you will have a better idea of what you will be dealing with in the way of treatments.

**MRI** – This is the magnetic tube which allows the doctor and technicians to see the soft tissue. If there is a herniated disc or a degenerative disc problem, the doctor will know.

**Myelograms** – This involves the nerves. When a disc is herniated, nerves can become pinched. By injecting dye into the spinal cord, doctors can see if and where nerve damage is occurring.

Self-diagnosing back pain is a risky business. A backache now and again when you've been out mowing the lawn or painting the house is understandable. However, intense or long-term back pain is nothing to play around with. It could be a sign that something is wrong with either the structure of your back or your general health. A visit with your doctor will either reassure you that rest and exercise will help your back or you'll find proper treatment to resolve a health issue. Seeing your doctor is the only way to put your mind at ease and get on with your day – without that old pain in the back!

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## Massage Therapy for Your Back

Pampering yourself at a spa is considered more and more these days a necessity. For those who have issues with back pain, a good massage may be just what the doctor ordered. Massage is an alternative therapy that can bring relief for many who suffer from a pain in the back.

There are different types of massage therapy but the basic tenet is the same. Through massage, pressure is applied to the body in various ways (knuckles, palms, chops, fingers) and through different media (oils, stones, cups, balls). The goal is manipulation of the soft tissues of the back to promote better health and pain relief.

The ancient practice of massage therapy goes back thousands of years. In India and the Orient, the idea is to release the energy that is trapped in parts of the body through some sort of injury or stress so the body is free to heal itself. This energy is referred to as "Chi".

### Benefits of Massage Therapy

When you are suffering with chronic pain, massage therapy can be an alternative to surgery. Doctors usually consider surgery a last resort, but many fortunate people avoid surgery all together with the use of massage therapy. Here are some of the benefits of massage therapy:

- Reduce stress
- Increase flexibility
- Reduce blood pressure
- Alleviate many types of back pain
- Increase range of motion
- Reduce cramps and spasms
- Improved blood circulation in muscles
- Choosing your Massage Therapy Type

There are many different types of massage therapy. Choosing the right one will take a bit of experimenting, but any reputable massage professional will walk you through the proper method for your particular back pain.

**Swedish massage** – Involves long strokes with the hands. Ideal for increasing blood flow to the muscles, increasing circulation, reducing toxins in the muscles and increasing flexibility.

**Hot Stone massage** – This therapy uses heat to relax the muscles and balance the energy centers of the body. Stones are used on the back and thighs and massage is carried out with them using light pressure.

**Deep tissue massage** – Be warned. This type of massage may leave you sore after the first time. However, it may be no worse than what you are already experiencing. Massage is conducted against the muscle grain to get deep into the tissues. Make sure you talk to your massage professional about your pain tolerance before beginning and make it clear that you have the ultimate say in whether or not the massage feels alright.

**Thai massage** – This massage is designed to lengthen and strengthen the body. It improves range of motion, flexibility and improves posture. Poor posture is one of the causes of back pain.

Massage therapy can be of great benefit to your entire body, especially your back. Choose a licensed massage professional who is well-versed in the type of massage that you choose to alleviate your back pain. Have a good conversation before you begin about what you can expect from the massage, then lay back and enjoy!

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## Posture and Back Pain – Lessons Learned at Finishing School

We've all watched those old TV shows or movies where girls are sent to finishing school to get "refined." They walk around with books on their head while a woman with a tight chignon and even tighter pursed lips follows behind with a conductor's wand. Those books perched on the head were meant to improve the debutant's posture.

Because poor posture could be causing your back pain, are these old "posture perfect" methods worth a second look? Perhaps.

The spine has a natural curve in it, designed to help us move and bend and flex. Muscles support the spine, allowing us to do all that moving and bending and flexing with ease.

It is interesting that most of us don't know what proper posture really is. When we stand in line, we will lean to one side or back against the wall. At work, we are hunched over the computer or have the telephone pinched between our neck and shoulder. And, let's not get started with how we sleep. Proper posture or "alignment" is largely forgotten or was never known by many people.

Let's go back to finishing school shall we? If you are having pain in your back on a consistent basis, take stock of how you stand, sit, lay and bend throughout the day. These movements could be contributing to the pain in your back, neck, shoulders, hips, and legs.

Here's what happens when the body is out of alignment. The muscles are stretched and contorted to accommodate an unnatural position; unnatural to your body, that is. It is that stretching and contortion that causes the first signs of back pain. Over time, your muscles start to knot up, or even spasm, under the strain. Long term muscle stretching and contortions can result in long term muscle disfigurement, meaning long term pain.

Here are a few ways to improve your posture and alleviate that back pain before it becomes a more serious problem.

- **Get new shoes** – Many of us wear our shoes unevenly and don't even know it. If we were to try and stand level on a board we would be listing to one side or the other. Our bodies are out of alignment. Choose shoes that have built in arches and a shock-absorbing sole.
- **Revamp your workspace** – Systems of office furniture have been developed to deal with posture and alignment. These systems are often referred to as *ergonomic designs*. There are chairs, computer keyboards, phone attachments, and more, that are designed to keep your posture aligned perfectly. Invest in these systems for a healthy

back – and increased efficiency, as it's hard to be productive when you're in pain.

- **Change your mattress** – Do you wake up with back pain? It could be a lumpy, uneven, or worn out mattress at fault. Some of the new “adjustable” mattresses allow you to tailor it to your needs and body type. There are others that are made with memory foam to conform to your body shape. Don't forget the pillow. There are pillows that are specially designed to cradle the head in such a way that the spine is kept perfectly aligned throughout the night.
- **Take a lesson from finishing school** – Simply being aware of how you are walking, standing, and sitting will be a start in correcting your posture. As you sit at your desk, set a timer to remind yourself every three to five minutes to sit up straight. Many of us round our shoulders over the keyboard. This timer going off will, over time, make us more aware of our proper posture. When standing, pull in your abdomen. This not only makes you look better, but the abdomen helps support the back, reducing back pain almost immediately and training the abdomen to give the back a little assist. And, yes, pretend you have a book on top of your head when you're walking. Chin up, level steps, uplifted chest, and straight back will carry the invisible book beautifully.

With lessons learned from finishing school and a few tricks and tools to help you improve your posture, you could start to notice that back pain lessen, even disappear. Evaluate your body alignment and use these “perfect posture” recommendations to resolve your back pain issues and enjoy better all around health.

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## **Acupuncture and Back Pain:**

### **What to Expect from This Ancient Pain Relief**

If you are experiencing back pain, you probably have tried many ways to alleviate the pain and discomfort. You may also be frustrated because nothing has helped. If that's the case, it may be time to take another avenue – an ancient one.

What do you know about acupuncture? In the past, the process of acupuncture was not discussed and was clouded in mystery. The look of acupuncture was scary.

Is acupuncture mystical, magical or medicinal? Acupuncture is none of these things. In fact, the process is tried-and-true, having been used for thousands of years in ancient medicine. Acupuncture helps with many ailments, from smoking cessation to headaches to back pain.

#### **The short explanation**

Acupuncture involves using needles that are no thicker than a hair. These needles are used to unblock the energy pathways of the body. Acupuncture tools are now regulated by the FDA and all needles are sterilized and used one time only.

The body is composed of energy that runs throughout along lines called meridians. Acupuncturists use meridian maps to help them know where to place the needles for treatment. When we are ill, suffering from back pain, an energy pathway is blocked. This blocks the blood flow and causes stagnation in the tissues leading to toxin buildup.

The needles are placed at these meridians to restore the flow of energy. They also facilitate toxins to flow out of the body via the lymphatic system. Once the energy or chi is restored, the back pain will resolve itself. The muscles of the back will unknot and the spasms will calm down.

#### **The first appointment**

Do your homework first. Choose a reputable acupuncturist who has been licensed. Tell him or her about your back pain history and any medications that you are using, as well as any allergies. Your practitioner will inform you of any risks, no matter how slight. There is a chance of bleeding, soreness or pain at the insertion site.

You will be given a gown or towels to cover you modestly while the acupuncturist works. You will more than likely be lying down on a

comfortable table. Let the practitioner know if you feel any discomfort or pain. Most people don't feel anything as the needles are applied.

Some people feel energized right away. However, it may take a few sessions for you to feel the full effects. For people with intense pain, heat might be applied to the area in question for a more intense treatment.

Acupuncture is considered an alternative treatment for back pain which is gaining in popularity very rapidly. When you are frustrated with the results of other treatments, this ancient method may be the answer for relieving your back pain for once and for all.

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## Stretching Exercises May Reduce Back Pain

We've all been there. You go to lift something and feel a pain halfway between the starting point and the destination. Or you were running around hitting a tennis ball, shooting buckets, tossing around a football, or anything you might not do very often? You go out for the pass and your back goes out, too.

We have many muscles that make up our body, and some of those muscles support the spinal column in your back. Having strong muscles in your back as well as your abdomen will work wonders to help ward off back pain. But, having flexible muscles in your back is just as important as having strong muscles.

When muscles are cold or underused it is hard to get them as flexible as they need to be to work well without pain. If you've been sedentary and decide to participate in an activity that requires some form of exertion, you are asking your back to perform a task that it is not prepared for. The result? Back pain.

### Stretch your muscles to get them ready for action

Stretching is important for your muscles. It works as a wakeup call. Stretching your muscles says "Get ready. We are about to move." Muscles that are stretched routinely are more flexible, not only for the immediate strenuous activity, but throughout the day, weeks, months, and beyond.

If your job is physically demanding, stretching each day is a good idea. You'll notice even after the first time you stretch, you will feel more flexible and energized. That small amount of movement gets the blood moving and sends more oxygen into the muscle tissue.

How do you go about stretching? Are all stretches good for the back? There is a technique to each stretch and you want to stretch the muscle in the right way. Incorrect stretching could cause you frustration and further pain to your back.

Here are a few stretches to get you started. Use a mat to cushion your back and wear comfortable clothing.

- **Flexing your back** – Lying flat with your back on the mat, pull your knees to your chest. At the same time, lift your head, aiming your chin for your chest. Hold for a few seconds and return to the beginning position. Consciously push your abdomen in toward the floor at the same time so there is no space between the small of your back and the floor.



- **Leg stretch** – Lying flat with your back on the mat and knees bent, feet on mat, reach and lace your hands behind one knee and pull it towards your chest. This stretch works one hip flexor at a time. The hip flexors support your lower back. Return to start and stretch the opposite leg.
- **Cross leg stretch** – Lie on your back with knees bent and feet on mat. Take one leg and cross it over the other just above that knee. Hold behind the bent knee of the lower leg and pull both legs towards your chest. Be careful with this stretch and move slowly. It stretches the hip flexor, the lower back and the muscles of the buttock that can contribute to back pain. Be sure to press your abdomen toward the floor to eliminate any space between the small of your back and the mat.

It doesn't take very long at all to complete these simple stretches. Make stretching a part of your regular meditation time each day. Relax your mind and strengthen your body at the same time. Then you'll be ready to jump up and tackle your day!

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## **Exercise Your Way to a Healthy Back**

The body is a machine. It was meant to move about. When it doesn't move, it gets weak. That weakness can lead to back pain.

As technology has propelled us forward as a society, we have taken a step backwards as a human machine. Video games, computers, and remote controls have all lead us and our children to a sedentary lifestyle. Obesity is becoming an epidemic.

This is what happens to your muscles when you don't move your body. Muscle tone begins to slacken. The muscle fibers aren't used anymore so they forget how to be flexible and stretchable. Injuries, like back pain, are common in people who have been sedentary. Lack of muscle tone and flexibility are primary reasons sedentary people are injured easily.

### **Exercise and you**

Exercise is a good thing. We may resist, postpone, and complain about having to do it, but these are the reasons we all need exercise whether we like it or not:

- Increases blood flow
- Strengthens muscles
- Increases muscle flexibility
- Releases endorphins (feel good substances and natural painkillers)
- Increases immunity
- Speeds up rehabilitation

Much of the pain reported by back pain sufferers occurs in the lower back. Back pain can be exacerbated as we put our back and muscles further out of alignment trying to find a comfortable position. You can see where this is a vicious cycle.

Just as important as good exercises to strengthen and stretch the back muscles are exercises to strengthen the abdominals. Why? The abdominal muscles, or "abs," do much more than look good in a bikini. They support the lower back, keeping our posture correct and in proper alignment. This abdominal support, or "girdle," protects the back from injury by supporting it.

Proper exercises for the back go hand-in-hand with proper exercises to strengthen other areas of the lower body. One of the most frequently

reported injuries are from improper lifting techniques. Squatting through your lifts, using your legs, abs, and buttocks reduces the chances of injury to your back while you lift an object. Exercises used to strengthen these areas of your body also help protect your back.

### **Exercises for total back health**

Aerobic exercises increase endurance, lowers blood pressure and heart rate. Aerobic exercise also helps in losing weight. Excess weight is a contributing factor in many back injuries.

Types of aerobic activity:

- Walking
- Bicycling
- Swimming or water aerobics

Along with aerobic exercises, anaerobic activity, also known as strength training, is needed to build up muscle tissue and help prevent injury by having toned, strong muscles. When the muscles that support the back are strong, the spine can move properly, in alignment, without sustaining damage.

### **Strength training exercises:**

- **Back extensions** – Lie flat on your stomach. With hands laced behind the head and the back and buttocks muscles engaged, lift up about an inch or two. Hold the stretch and slowly return to starting position. Relax your muscles, and repeat. Do not lift your upper torso so high that your lower back tenses or hurts. Small motions are perfect.
- **Back rows** – Builds the muscles of the lower back. This will be done in a slightly bent position, standing up and leaning body slightly forward and down with knees slightly bent. In this position, take dumbbells in each hand and, with elbows bent and at side, raise and lower the dumbbells slowly down and back up. Be sure to hold in your abdomen as you do this exercise.
- **Pelvic tilt** – Lay flat with knees bent and feet on the floor. Slowly raise the pelvis while squeezing the buttocks. Return to start position, relax, and repeat. Again, keep your abdominal muscles firm throughout the upward thrust, lower, relax at the start position, retense abdominals, squeeze and lift buttocks off the floor, hold, and return to start position.

Exercise builds stamina, sheds pounds, and tones and strengthens muscles. All these results can help to eliminate back pain caused by everyday wear or an injury. When the muscles are strong, they can better handle changes that would hurt a weaker back. Exercise your back and it won't let you down!

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## **Bad-Back Exercises: Can They Help Back Pain?**

Performing a few bad-back exercises can be a very important strategy for relieving back pain. However, it is important to know the right exercises to do. Depending on the cause of your back pain, you could make things worse by practicing the wrong exercises. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you consult with your doctor or a qualified physical therapist before you start.

Yoga type exercises that stretch the spine in different directions can be enormously helpful in building a stronger, more flexible back that is better able to cope with the stresses and strains of life. This can help to relieve many forms of back pain and may also prevent more serious problems such as herniated discs.

In fact, one of the best ways to help back pain is to attend a yoga or Pilates class once or twice a week, and perform a few of the exercises by yourself between classes. That way you will learn the best exercises under supervision, and the instructor can advise on what might be the best types of exercises for you.

This type of exercise is not like many workouts where you aim to feel the burn. You should feel a stretch in the targeted area, but not actual pain. Always stop if the exercise becomes uncomfortable. There is nothing to be gained by over-stretching.

The kind of exercises that are most effective for pain relief include forward and backward bends, side bends and spinal twists. In most cases you can perform different versions of these according to how flexible your back is. For example, you can do a spinal twist sitting on a chair, sitting on the floor or lying on your back (the supine spinal twist).

It is always important to balance your stretches. This means that if you curl or twist the spine in one direction, you should balance this with a stretch in the other direction. Most of us are more flexible on one side or the other so you will probably find that you can take a stretch further in one direction. That is fine. Go as far as you comfortably can on both sides, no more. Just try to give equal time to each side.

Abdominal exercises can also help in strengthening the back muscles, especially those of the lower back. The classic abdominal crunch or the bicycle crunch can help prevent back pain as well as giving you a firmer, stronger abdomen. The feel good benefits of having strong stomach and back muscles can be huge. It is worth considering adding a few ab exercises into your daily routine.

So the answer is that if you know the right exercises to do, you can certainly help to relieve your back pain this way. But it is important to consult an expert who can recommend the best bad-back exercises for your particular condition.

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## **Lower Back Exercises to Relieve Back Pain**

Lower back exercises can be a big help to sufferers of pain in the lumbar or lower back regions. Of course, you will need to know what is causing your pain and take advice from medical professionals on the types of exercises that you should do. The following are some of the most effective lower back exercises that might be suggested for some people.

### **Cobra - backward spinal curl**

Lie on the floor face down with toes pointing out and hands flat on the floor at around waist level. Push up from the hands, lifting the upper back and head, curling the spine backward, eyes looking up. Hips stay on the floor. Do not stretch more than is comfortable. Stay in position for a minute or two, then slowly lower down.

### **Hamstring stretch and forward spinal curl**

After stretching the spine one way, it is important to balance with a stretch in the other direction. This is the pose known as Janu Sirsasana in yoga.

Sit on the floor with the right leg stretched out in front of you. The left leg is bent with the knee going down toward the floor and the sole of the foot resting against the side of the right leg. Bend down over the right leg with head down and arms extending as far as possible along the leg. You may be able to take hold of the toes, foot or ankle.

Feel the stretch in the hamstring along the back of the leg and in the lower back, but again do not push yourself too far. Stay in position for a minute or two, then slowly straighten up, rest, and repeat with the other leg.

### **Side bends**

You can do these bends either standing, sitting, or seated on an exercise ball. Extend the arms above the head with hands clasped together. Keeping the body in the vertical plane (so you do not bend forward), slowly bend the whole upper body over to one side, then the other.

### **Spinal twist**

Take special care not to go too far with this example of our lower back exercises. Take advice before attempting it if you have had back or neck injuries in particular.

Sit on the side of a chair without arms or on an exercise ball with feet flat on the floor. Without moving the hips, twist the upper body around to the right.

Bring the left hand over against the far side of the right knee and the right hand behind you. Twist as far as you comfortably can to the right. Keep the head upright but turned to look over your right shoulder.

Hold for a count of 15 or 20, and slowly return to the front, leading with the head. Repeat the other side.

If you use a chair with a back, sit on the side of it so that the chair back does not get in your way when you twist around. E.g. the chair back is on your left when you are twisting to the right.

You can also do this exercise sitting on the floor. When twisting to the right, the left leg is bent and flat on the floor in front of you. The right leg is bent with the knee up in the air and the foot on the floor, hooked over the left knee. The left elbow comes to the outer side of the right knee and you twist around to the right. Do not move the hips, so the buttocks stay on the floor. Done this way, this is the pose known as Ardha Matsyendrasana in yoga.

Once again, let us stress that the lower back is a vital and sensitive area and medical advice is necessary if you have lower back pain. Check with your doctor before starting, to be sure that your chosen lower back exercises are suitable for your individual condition.

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## Lower Back Pain Causes: The Information You Need

Are you thinking that if you knew more about lower back pain causes then you might be able to get rid of the pain that you have and prevent it from making you suffer again? That may be true, so let's look at a list of possible lower back pain causes.

Pain in the lower back or lumbar region of the spine (also known as lumbago) is very common. In fact, it affects around 80% of people sooner or later in their lives and is believed to be the cause of more sickness absence from work than any other condition.

One of the most common lower back pain causes is a strain or sprain in the muscles of the back. This type of back pain is often called non-specific lower back pain and it usually goes away without requiring specific treatment except for pain medication which may be required. This type of pain will normally resolve within 4 weeks, and often in much less time than that.

If the strain has been caused by a sudden movement, lifting, or other obvious event, it often causes severe and immediate pain that may result in the person having very limited movement for a time. Rest is essential and anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed to handle the pain.

In some cases the cause may not be muscle strain but a herniated disc (also known as a ruptured, bulging or slipped disc). This occurs when one of the discs that act as cushions between the vertebrae (the bones of the spine) is pushed out of its usual position. This can compress the spinal cord and the nerves around it, causing pain which is often accompanied by a feeling like an electric shock going down the legs, or numbness in the legs.

Arthritis is another of the common lower back pain causes. Either osteoarthritis of the spine or rheumatoid arthritis can be a direct cause of lower back pain. People who suffer from arthritis in other joints such as the hips or knees may also have lower back pain because of irregular ways of walking to compensate for the joint problem.

There are some conditions that people may have had since childhood, which only develop into lower back pain causes in later life. These include a difference in the length of the legs, abnormalities of the feet, hips or pelvis, and spondylolisthesis (a slipped vertebra).

Besides this there are many other more unusual lower back pain causes. There may be an infection in the spine or a disease such as spinal stenosis or degenerative disc disease.

It is important to see your doctor about severe pain, any pain that continues for longer than you expect, or pain that is accompanied by other symptoms.

In particular, if you have difficulty going to the bathroom or numbness in the genital area, this could be a sign of a condition which requires immediate treatment as a medical emergency. It is always safer to see a doctor than to try to figure out your possible lower back pain causes by yourself.

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## Upper Back Pain Causes and Solutions

Anybody suffering from pain in this area is likely to want to know about upper back pain causes. Why do you have this pain and what might have brought it on? Of course, we cannot know about your individual case, and you should certainly consult with a doctor, especially if the pain is severe or if it does not resolve by itself in a few days.

In this article we will consider some possible upper back pain causes and what you might be able to do to solve the problem. First let's look at what exactly is meant by the upper back, because this can confuse some people.

### What Is The Upper Back?

The upper back is generally referred to medically as the area between the bottom of the neck and the bottom of the rib cage where the lumbar spine begins. Some people might call the lower part of this area the 'middle back', but anatomically it all makes up one area called the thoracic spine.

Thoracic refers to the chest, so you can think of it as the part of the back that is roughly equivalent to the full extent of the chest at the front.

This part of the spine is very strong. It supports the whole weight of the upper body and gives vital support to the rib cage which protects the heart and lungs. Each of the ribs is joined to one of the thoracic vertebrae of the spine.

### What Causes Pain In The Upper Back?

The most common upper back pain causes are irritation or inflammation of the muscles or ligaments that surround the spine. This in turn may be caused by various factors:

- Poor posture, especially while seated or using a computer.
- Repetitive strain in people who are constantly moving their arms or upper back in a certain way, often due to their work (e.g. some construction workers or factory workers).
- Strain of the muscles due to weakness, especially in old age or in people who have been bedridden and unable to exercise.

Other upper back pain causes include problems with the joints in the spine or a compression fracture of the vertebra. The latter is a break in the bone which may be caused by an injury such as a car accident, fall or sports injury, or may be due to osteoporosis, especially in-post menopausal women.

In rare cases there could be a herniated disc or problems related to disease of the spine or the discs. However, these problems are more common in the lower back.

### **Upper Back Pain Treatment**

If a muscle is inflamed due to straining without any serious injury, it will often resolve within 3-7 days. In the meantime, anti-inflammatory medications such as NSAIDs may be prescribed. Massage of the area can be very helpful too.

However, in the case of repetitive strain, the pain may return when you repeat the same movements. So if your pain is associated with your work, you may need to investigate other options.

A chiropractor may be able to help by manipulating affected joints. This is more likely to be helpful where the pain has been caused by a specific injury or trauma.

You may also want to try other pain relieving measures such as acupuncture, ice or heat treatments.

If the problem is not solved in this way, it is important to consult with a doctor. You could have suffered an injury without realizing how serious it was, or you could have osteoporosis (brittle bones) or another disease. Upper back pain causes are not always obvious so it is important to have medical attention.

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## Arthritis in Spine Explained

There are many types of arthritis and most of them can cause arthritis in spine joints just as they can affect other joints of the body such as the hips, knees and shoulders. Usually it is the joints of the lower back that are affected, and in fact arthritis in its various forms is one of the most common causes of lower back pain.

Many people who have arthritis in spine joints already have another spinal disease or condition such as degenerative disc disease or spinal stenosis. These conditions place an extra burden on the joints of the spine which can lead to damage and the pain of arthritis.

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis, affecting many people as they grow older. About 1 in 10 people over 65 will be disabled due to osteoarthritis, although most of these cases refer to knees and hips which can often be restored to mobility through surgery.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis in the spine include stiffness and pain in the neck and/or lower back. A problem in the neck may be accompanied by weakness or numbness in the arms; arthritis in spine lower down can produce the same weakness or numbness in the legs.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an auto immune disease in which the joints become inflamed and painful. As with other auto immune diseases, the cause is not known but there may be a genetic factor. Women are three times more likely to be affected than men. Unlike other forms of arthritis it is more likely to affect the upper spine, especially the joints of the neck, along with feet and hands.

Ankylosing spondylitis is a type of arthritis that involves the spine. Again this is an auto immune disease but it affects the spine more than other joints. Unlike rheumatoid arthritis it affects men more often than women, and usually begins before the age of 40. There is back pain and stiffness, sometimes affecting the whole spine, along with general fatigue. In many cases there is also inflammation of the eyes. The pain may be relieved by movement, worse when resting. Treatment is based on physical therapy, careful exercise and pain relief.

If you suffer from arthritis in spine areas the first thing to do is to consider your sleeping arrangements. A new, firm mattress can make a lot of difference, as can switching to a special pillow if the problem is in the neck or upper back. Heat treatments may help.

Your doctor may also suggest exercises that you can do to strengthen the spine or maintain as much freedom of movement as possible. He or she can

prescribe pain medication that is suitable for you. So be sure to keep in contact with your doctor regarding your arthritis in spine and let him or her know when you notice any changes.

In some cases, surgery may be recommended. This is very much an individual matter that will be decided case by case. Spinal surgery is not undertaken lightly, but it can be helpful, especially where the arthritis in spine is accompanied by other problems that may respond to surgical procedures.

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## What Is a Bulging Disc?

A bulging disc, also known as a herniated or ruptured vertebral disc, is a common problem. It happens when one of the spinal discs is pushed out of its normal alignment, causing part of the disc to bulge out. This can cause a lot of pain.

The discs are soft cushions that separate each of the bony spinal vertebrae to give the spine flexibility and prevent the vertebral bones from being damaged by rubbing against each other. They also cushion the spinal nerves that surround the spinal cord.

These discs, like many of the structures of our body, tend to become more brittle and less flexible with age. In many people, the discs begin to deteriorate from around age 30. Just about everyone will have less flexible discs by the time they reach the age of 50 or 60. Less flexibility means that the discs are more easily damaged. So bulging disc pain is something that many people will suffer from as they grow older.

The reason that a bulging disc is so painful is that often times, when the disc is pushed out of alignment, the spinal nerves can be pinched. This is especially likely if the person already suffers from spinal stenosis, where the space around the spinal cord and nerves has gradually narrowed over the years. This kind of thing can be happening gradually without a person knowing, until pain begins at a certain point.

Herniation of the disc may happen suddenly, for example when a person lifts something heavy or has an accident or a fall. Then the pain is likely to come on suddenly and severely. In other cases it may happen gradually over time, as the spine is strained over and over. In those cases, the pain may be occasional, becoming more and more of a problem until the person seeks treatment.

Sufferers from a bulging disc will often experience pain like an electric shock that results from the compression of the spinal nerve. This shock type pain may be felt going down your arms (when the problem is in the vertebrae of the neck) or down your legs (when the problem disc is in the lower back region). You may also have tingling or numbness in your arms or legs, and general muscle weakness.

In rare cases a herniated or bulging disc can also cause problems with urinating or having bowel movements, often accompanied by numbness in the genital area. This is a medical emergency and you should get help right away.

Sometimes surgery is needed, but in many cases a herniated disc will heal with rest. However, it is important to seek medical advice with any back problem. Your doctor can check that there is nothing more serious wrong with you, and prescribe pain relief medication if necessary for your bulging disc.

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## Herniated Disc Treatment

If you have a herniated disc treatment is going to be high on your list of priorities. A herniated disc in the spine, also known as a slipped or ruptured intervertebral disc, happens when one of the spinal discs is pushed out of its normal position.

In less severe cases, herniated disc treatment will be simple. The doctor will advise you to rest and avoid doing anything that might make your symptoms worse, like lifting or straining the back.

Often, rest and time will be enough to resolve the problem. In the case of a problem in the lower back region, you may be recommended to perform certain exercises to strengthen and stabilize the muscles that support the lower back. However, these exercises may or may not be recommended for you depending on your age, the severity of the problem and other factors. In some cases it is better to wait until the disc is back in place and then begin strengthening exercises to prevent more problems in the future.

Many doctors will prescribe pain relief for a herniated disc. This may take the form of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) which reduce the inflammation associated with a ruptured disc and relieve pressure on the nerves, therefore reducing pain.

Sometimes, steroidal anti-inflammatories such as Prednisone might be prescribed instead. These are often used in the case of a sudden or acute herniated disc.

Occasionally, when the pain is very severe, a person might be prescribed narcotic pain relievers which may be morphine-based. These are addictive so it is very important that they are only used for short term herniated disc treatment. They are also likely to make you sleepy. However, the pain relief that these treatments can offer may be worth the disadvantages in the short term.

A herniated disc may be accompanied by painful muscle spasms that may be worse than the pain in the spinal nerves. For this, your doctor can prescribe a muscle relaxant.

For immediate pain relief, you may be advised to use ice and heat pads. Ice can reduce irritation and swelling, while heat can relax the muscles. One or both used alternately can make a big difference to the pain that you experience.

If the ruptured disc does not begin to heal with rest and pain relieving treatment, or in a few cases where the situation is critical, then surgical herniated disc treatment known as discectomy may be recommended. The

surgery will remove the herniated disc fragments to free up space around the spinal nerve.

Surgical herniated disc treatment often resolves referred pain in limbs immediately, although recovery from the surgery itself will be slower and patients will have to resume their former activity levels gradually. However, in around 10% of cases the pain is not completely removed by the surgery, and some amount of back pain will continue.

If you have back pain or other health problems, do not rely on self-diagnosis or information found on the internet. Always consult with medical professionals and take their advice about herniated disc treatment.

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## Spinal Stenosis Treatment: Is It Effective?

You may need spinal stenosis treatment if you have back pain, muscle weakness or numbness associated with this condition of the spine.

Spinal stenosis happens when the spinal canal or space around the spinal cord and nerves becomes narrowed. This can lead to pressure on the very important nerves that are carried within the spinal cord. As well as the pain that arises from compression of the nerves, other signals that would normally be passed to the brain along the nerves are blocked. That is why we can experience numbness, weakness or lack of co-ordination, especially in the legs.

Spinal stenosis treatment can be very different depending on the cause of the condition. There can be many reasons why the spinal canal has become narrower. Frequently, it is caused by arthritis in the spine which may have several effects. Bone spurs may form, invading the spinal canal. Ligaments in the spine may become stiffened by calcification. The tissue around the vertebral joints may become thickened by inflammation, impinging on the area around the spinal cord, or the discs between the vertebrae may be degenerating.

There are also some other, rarer conditions that can cause spinal stenosis. A few people are born with it. Others may develop it due to tumors in the spine, Paget's disease which can cause swelling of bones and joints in older people, scoliosis or curvature of the spine, or other skeletal and articular diseases and conditions.

The most common form of spinal stenosis treatment is a regime of exercises to strengthen the muscles around the back and improve posture. Provided pain is not so severe as to prevent a person doing these exercises, they can be of great benefit. Stronger muscles will give better support to the spine and improving the posture keeps the spine straight, reducing compression of the spinal cord and nerves.

If you are overweight when diagnosed, then your doctor is likely to recommend that you lose weight. This is another important factor in reducing the pressure on the spine. Even losing 10 pounds can make a difference.

You may also be prescribed with pain relief medication as part of your spinal stenosis treatment. This is likely to include anti-inflammatories, either nonsteroidal (NSAIDs) or steroidal (e.g. Prednisone, Medrol). By reducing inflammation around the vertebrae and nerves, pain can be relieved.

Some patients will be given steroidal anti-inflammatory medication in the form of an injection of cortisone and Novocain directly to the area, known as an epidural injection. This avoids steroids flowing all around the body and can be effective in relieving pain for several weeks to months. However, this type of spinal stenosis treatment does not work for every case and may not necessarily be recommended by your doctor.

In many cases, the pain accompanying spinal stenosis is caused by a ruptured or herniated disc. In this situation your doctor may recommend surgery to remove the displaced fragments of disc. This surgery has around an 85% to 90% success rate in relieving symptoms.

While it is true that not all forms of treatment for spinal stenosis are effective in every case, your doctor will work with you to find something that is successful for you if at all possible. Have patience and persist with a treatment that may take a few weeks to work. If you follow all of your doctor's recommendations, then spinal stenosis treatment can be very effective.

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## **Spondylolisthesis Symptoms to Watch Out For**

Spondylolisthesis symptoms can be many and varied, but they usually affect the back and the legs. Before we look at spondylolisthesis symptoms in detail, let's be sure that we are clear about the difference between spondylolisthesis and the similar sounding spondylolysis.

Spondylolysis is a defect in the formation of the spinal column, most commonly affecting the 5th lumbar vertebra or L5. This defect appears in children from toddler to adolescent age. It may have a genetic component since it is found much more commonly in certain racial groups, in particular among the Eskimos. But it is also thought to be produced in children who are involved in certain sports that put stress on the back, such as weight lifting, football and gymnastics.

Many children and young people with spondylolysis are symptom free and are not aware that they have the problem. Others may have some back pain as growing adolescents. However, at some point either during adolescence or later in life, the defect may lead to spondylolisthesis.

Spondylolisthesis is slippage of the vertebra. It may be caused by the slipping of a vertebra that was already affected by spondylolysis, or a vertebra that slips for other reasons. The most common other cause is degeneration of the spine associated with aging.

As a person grows older, the bones, joints and ligaments all become weaker and may degenerate. When this happens around the spine, the joints and ligaments can become unable to hold the spine together properly. The result is that parts of the spine (the vertebra) can slip out of position.

Spondylolisthesis symptoms can include poor posture and a strange way of walking with the knees bent. This happens because the slipped vertebra causes muscle spasms in the back. These spasms lead to a stiff back and tight hamstrings, making it difficult to stretch the legs and take normal length strides.

At the same time there is likely to be back pain, or perhaps referred pain down the legs. In some cases spondylolisthesis symptoms can be very similar to the symptoms of a herniated disc, including a feeling like an electric shock going down the leg, leg pain, numbness and weakness. These symptoms occur because spondylolisthesis can cause pinching of the spinal cord and nerves, which is also what happens with a herniated, ruptured or bulging disc.

So how do you know if you have spondylolisthesis, a herniated disc or some other back problem? The answer is to have an x-ray. A simple x-ray of the

spine will identify spondylolisthesis very easily because the radiographer can see the slipped vertebrae whether or not you have any spondylolisthesis symptoms.

No amount of information online or in books can replace having a doctor or radiographer check you out in person. So if you think you or your kids have any spondylolisthesis symptoms, please see a doctor right away.

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## **Spondylolisthesis Treatment: What to Expect**

There are many spondylolisthesis treatment options depending on the severity of the problem. Spondylolisthesis is simply having a slipped vertebra in the spine. In some cases, there may be very few symptoms at all, especially in a young person.

For example, the condition may be discovered by chance during a routine x-ray. In this situation, if the slip is small and there is little or no pain, probably no treatment will be necessary immediately. Doctors may advise that the patient should avoid certain sports and activities that put a lot of stress on the back, such as lifting heavy weights, gymnastics, football, and some gardening activities.

A person who has spondylolisthesis without other symptoms may be recommended to lose weight if they are carrying excess pounds. They may also be advised to undertake certain exercises to strengthen the abdominals and the muscles of the back. Keeping these areas strong can often help to hold the spine in place and prevent the slippage from worsening. However, it is important to do the right exercises for your individual case, so seek advice from your doctor or a physical therapist on this question.

In other cases surgery will be recommended. This is especially likely if pain is severe or if the slipped vertebra is found to be compressing the spinal nerve. If the nerve is pinched for too long it may become damaged, so it is important to have spondylolisthesis treatment by surgery in this situation. Be sure to ask your surgeon what he plans to do in your case, because the information here is not designed to apply to particular cases.

A common surgical spondylolisthesis treatment is spinal decompression. This will relieve the pressure on the nerves. Many patients also require fusion of the affected area of the spine. This involves bone grafting and the use of plates, rods, etc., to create a solid joint between the vertebra that had slipped and the vertebrae above and below it.

Is spondylolisthesis treatment likely to be successful? In most cases surgery will resolve most or all of the back pain, but it may take some time after surgery before you are recovered and the pain is gone. In some cases there may still be some pain. The surgery can also leave you with some limitation of flexibility of the spine.

This is because the structure of the spine, made up of many separate vertebrae with cushion-like discs between them, gives us a huge amount of flexibility in the back. This allows all kinds of movements that we usually take for granted. If you have symptomatic spondylolisthesis you probably

already have limited movement in some directions. This will not necessarily be completely reversed by the surgery.

Spinal surgery is a serious operation and recovery can take a while. Most people have to stay in hospital for several days, at least until they are able to walk and sit without assistance. How long this takes will depend on age, general health and the particular surgical procedure that was used.

Patients may have to wear a brace after their surgery. This holds the spine in place while the vertebrae fuse completely, a little like having a broken bone in plaster until the bone fuses back along the line of the break. If you need a brace, you will probably have to wear it for three to six months after the surgical spondylolisthesis treatment.

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## Is Physical Therapy an Option for Your Back Pain?

There are many causes of back pain. When it is due to injury from an accident, from improper lifting, or disc problems, you may need to supplement your medical care with physical therapy. The only way to know is to have your back pain monitored by a medical professional who can direct you to a qualified physical therapy specialist if and when needed.

Physical therapy is one of many methods used to return the back to good health. We can't always do it all ourselves when we hurt our back. No matter how many stretching and strengthening exercises we do, our back just won't heal. Specialized techniques may be needed to aid in your rehabilitation.

What constitutes the need for a physical therapist? Here are a few examples that may qualify you to receive further care involving physical therapy:

- Back pain from injury
- Chronic pain
- Rehabilitation after back surgery

Physical therapy may be a very valuable rehabilitation tool in your overall back health. Depending on your particular case, the physical therapist may prescribe active or passive care for your back pain.

Passive care involves avoiding certain movements, applying cold or heat, or something that someone is doing to you. The following are methods a back pain sufferer may use before, during, or after physical therapy to relieve the pain:

- **Stay still** – When given the order to stay in bed, rest, you would think that would be a welcome order to receive. However, most of us find it difficult to do this. The reason your doctor may order you to be on bed rest is so the inflammation in your back can calm down, lessening the pain and advancing the rehabilitation.
- **Use ice or heat** – Ice can numb the pain so you can get some rest, as well as reduce inflammation and swelling of the joints. Heat relaxes the muscles so they can be massaged and unknotted in order to relax and heal. The use of cold and heat can be tricky so use your doctor's advice when deciding which to apply, especially when you are in pain that is above the norm.
- **Nerve stimulation** – The nerves that supply the back can be supplied with electrical impulses to relieve pain. One process is called TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation). This works for people

suffering from spinal stenosis. It can also be used in conjunction with acupuncture.

- **Chiropractic care** – A chiropractor is used to helping people with spinal issues that result in back pain. You may need to be “stretched.” It’s not like the process of making taffy but a gentle stretching of your back to lengthen the spine and alleviate pain and pressure.

Active physical therapy involves something that you do with supervision from the physical therapist.

- **Aerobic activity** – This may be as simple as using a treadmill or stationary bicycle. The goal is to increase your blood circulation which increases oxygen intake. This increased circulation and oxygen will help muscle flexibility and strength.
- **Strength training** - Building muscle in the back and body improves your back's strength and resilience. The therapist will help you do strengthening exercises and will give you exercises to do at home as well. Start out slow to avoid injury and increase your repetitions as you get stronger. Follow your therapists instructions and stick with the exercises.
- **Stretching** – Yoga and other stretching exercises perfects the connection between our muscles, bones, and mind. Stretching your entire body works to increase mobility and flexibility in your back. Your physical therapist will work with you on the perfect stretching exercises for your particular back problem.
- **Manipulation** – Physical therapists are trained in the ins-and-outs of muscle structure and how each muscle interacts with the other muscles, bones and nerves. You may have the need for a procedure in which the therapist manipulates your muscles in a massaging fashion which “revs up” the healing process by stimulating the nerves. This procedure is sometimes compared to revving up a car's engine to get it to idle smoother.

Is physical therapy for your back pain a good option? It can be. Most doctors will work with you through a series of basic methods to relieve your back pain. They will then move you into the physical therapy area when they see you need additional rehabilitation to get your back, and you, back on track.

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## Over-the-Counter Medications – What Works for Back Pain?

When your back hurts, the only thing that you want is relief and fast. The fastest way sometimes is to reach for a pill or tablet or powder. But, are these over-the-counter medications the right move for long term pain relief?

Over-the-counter medications, or OTCs, are sometimes advertised as the solution to all your back pain troubles. When something hurts, stings, pinches, twitches, or has us bent over in pain, we reach for a pill. Which one we take is a result of that “armchair physician” again. Which pill do you choose?

Here are a few facts about OTCs to help you decide which one is right for your back pain, and which one isn't:

- **Aspirin** – This is sometimes prescribed for heart health, but it is actually one of the earliest known pain relievers. Although known as a pain reliever, aspirin is actually used widely as an anti-inflammatory. Some reasons to avoid aspirin? If you have an ulcer, aspirin will aggravate it and can cause dangerous results. Aspirin are not to be given to children because of a condition called Reye's syndrome.
- **Cox-2 inhibitors** – These would be Celebrex and Vioxx. Celebrex has been controversial as it pertains to heart issues but is still prescribed for back pain. Cox-2 enzymes increase pain and inflammation.
- **NSAIDs** – The proper name is Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. This is most of the other OTCs that are given for pain: Naproxen sodium (Aleve), acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).

It is worth noting that, while OTCs are not addictive like some prescription pain killers, they do have side effects when taken incorrectly or over a long period of time. Follow the label directions precisely. It's when we don't follow the directions, for instance when pain is intense and we take a few more pills or take them closer together, that we are endangering our health. This is considered to be an overdose and very dangerous.

NSAIDs inhibit the Cox-2 and the Cox-1 enzymes. Cox-1 enzymes provide a protective coating for the digestive system. Taking too many over-the-counter drugs eliminates that lining and causes gastro-intestinal issues; yes, you could develop an ulcer.

So are OTCs safe to take? Normally yes, if taken in moderation and for mild pain at the outset. When you begin to overdose, taking higher and higher doses to compensate for the pain, it is time to investigate other methods of treatment with your doctor or health care professional. Medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter, are meant to be taken seriously and

monitored. For your health and the health of your back, only take medication as directed and only when the results are positive.

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## OUR RECOMMENDATION

If you or someone you know is suffering from back pain, we at **A Pain in the Back** strongly recommend the **Lose the Back Pain System**. This system has brought relief to thousands of back pain sufferers. Follow this link to get more information:

[Lose the Back Pain](http://bit.ly/gqLlxV) – <http://bit.ly/gqLlxV>

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