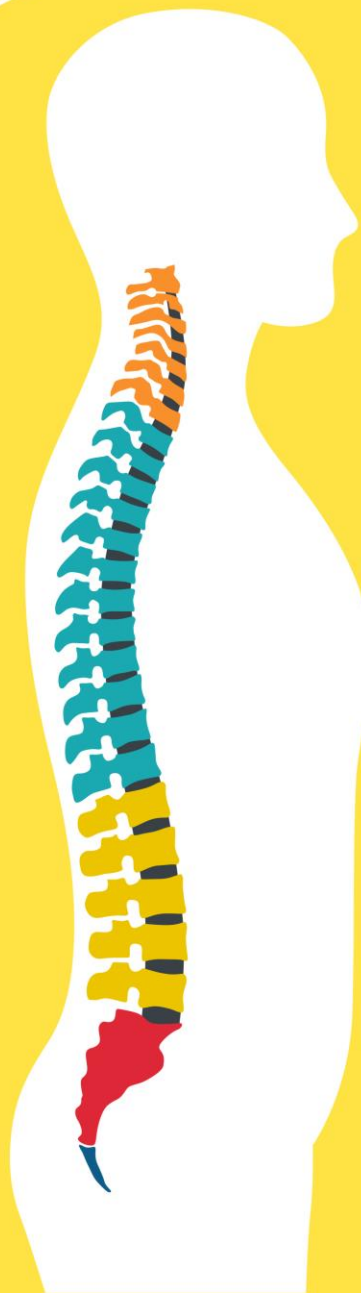


TIPS FOR LIVING
WITH BACK PAIN

BACK THERAPY



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Back Therapy: Tips for Dealing & Living with Back Pain

Back pain is one of the most common health problems experienced among people. Eight out of ten people will experience back pain some time in their life. It is estimated, that about thirty-one million people in America suffer from lower back pain. The American Chiropractic Association has stated that low back pain is the single leading cause of disability worldwide and that eighty percent of the population, at some point in their life, will experience back pain.

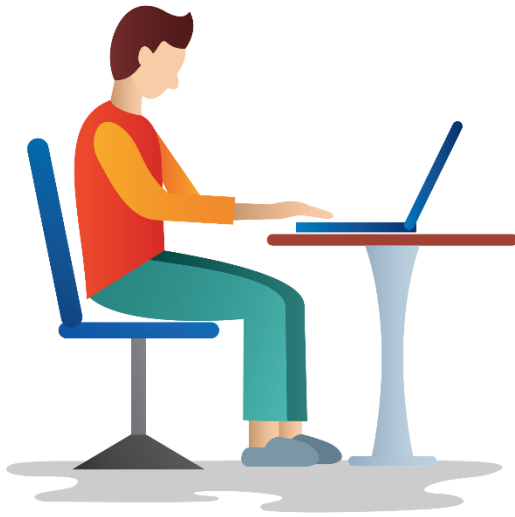
Back pain can be caused by pretty much anything. The wrong movement or even a normal repeated movement can cause back pain. The most common reasons for back pain are ruptured or bulging disks, arthritis, scoliosis, osteoporosis and strained muscles or ligaments. Poor posture, lifting an object that is too heavy or the wrong way, muscle spasm or an abrupt movement is also common reasons for back pain. Cancer and infection such as shingles can also contribute to back pain.

Whatever the cause, it's important to seek medical advice to find a way to treat it. Most back pain may go away on its own, but others need proper treatment and/or medicine. It's crucial to note that some back pain may never go away. The good news is that there are ways to deal and live with this pain so you can live your life in the most comfortable way.

Assess Your Lifestyle

If you have started experiencing back pain, the first thing you want to do is assess yourself and everything around you. There are simple ways you can alleviate some types of back pain just by changing some bad habits. Take note when the back pain occurs, what you are doing when it occurs, and how severe the pain is. Analyzing these patterns can help you determine what areas you can fix and possibly reduce or get rid of pain altogether.

Check Your Posture



Bad posture can cause back pain. If you are experiencing back pain while sitting in a chair it could be due to bad posture. To analyze this, have someone take a picture of you while sitting in a chair. If you notice you are slouched over and not sitting up against the back of the chair with your feet flat to the ground, then your posture is wrong. Chances are, if you are experiencing bad posture while sitting down then your posture is probably incorrect while

walking too.

Maintaining correct posture keeps your spine and the muscles surrounding your spine strong; preventing you from experiencing any back pain. Constant slouching or drooping can cause the muscles around your spine to become weak. Weak muscles have a harder time maintaining balance which has a negative impact on your back, resulting in back pain. Improving your posture can easily alleviate some pain with practice and time.

Check Your Lifting Technique

If you experience back pain while or after lifting an object, then you may not be lifting correctly. Picking up objects that are too heavy for you or incorrectly can cause strain in your back and/or cause bulging disks. Make sure when you are lifting objects that your feet are shoulder-width apart and that you bend down at the knees not your waist. Get as close to the object as you can and slowly lift straight up maintaining correct posture; stand straight up with your shoulders back. Never bend down to lift objects or carry large objects over your shoulders. If you find yourself above the object rather than level with it, stop what you are doing and start over. It might seem silly to do this even with smaller objects, but the goal is to get into a good habit to lower your risks.

Don't Live a Sedentary Lifestyle

If you find that you have constant back pain but are confused because you really don't do much throughout your day besides sitting around due to driving or working in front of a computer, then the problem could be simple. You are living a sedentary lifestyle and you need to find ways to add more activity in your day. Always sitting or lying down causes back pain for a couple of reasons.

You probably have poor posture, which as stated above, causes your muscles to be weak and it may also add on some extra weight. The extra pounds can weigh on your spine making it harder to have proper posture. If you find this to be true, you can easily fix this habit by adding in a few small activities each day. Don't do anything too major, too quickly, because the sedentary lifestyle has made your back weak and more acceptable to injury. Start by walking around your house or neighborhood for five to ten minutes every day and then add in more time as you go along. Eventually, you will notice a big change not only in your back but your happiness as well.

These changes might not make all your back pain go away, but it could help reduce it as time goes on. These bad habits are the most common cause of back pain. If you still experience a high amount of back pain visit a doctor.

Potential Medical Interventions

Learning to deal with back pain is a must if you want to live a long and happy life. But, it's important to first seek medical attention to make sure your back pain can't be treated or at least reduced as you build better habits. Not only that, back pain can be a sign of a much more serious complication such as cancer. A doctor can help you pinpoint where the pain is coming from and determine if there are any underlying medical issues that may be causing the pain such as inflammation or scoliosis.

Medication

The most common treatment for back pain is medication. This includes pain relievers, narcotic painkillers, muscle relaxers and steroids. Painkillers and muscle relaxers are very controversial because they are known to be habit

forming. If you find that they help you continue your day relatively pain free, and that you are using them safely, then nothing is wrong with taking them. Just take caution and understand the side effects.

Physical Therapy

If you are experiencing severe back pain, then physical therapy is a good potential treatment. It is used to strengthen those areas of your body that are weak or can't move around very well. A physical therapist will use heat, cold, water or electrical stimulation to reduce any swelling or pain you may have, and then teach you an exercise program to rebuild your strength.



Chiropractic Adjustments

Chiropractors are trained medical professionals that work directly with injuries related to the spine. Back pain is treated by manually adjusting or

manipulating the spine using special methods and equipment. These adjustments help reduce pain by restoring the functionality of the spine. Do not try cracking your back at home, go to a professional who has a good reputation as an adjustment done by someone who has no idea what they're doing could be very dangerous.

Surgery

When no other treatments have successfully relieved your back pain, then surgery is an option. Just like the above treatments, it may or may not help. This is because doctors are not able to predict one hundred percent if it will work or not. Spinal fusion is the most popular type of back surgery. During a spinal fusion the surgeon will fuse together parts of the vertebrae to reduce stretching of a nerve possibly responsible for pain. As with any surgery, there are major risks that could be life threatening and recovery may take weeks and require a lot of missed work.

Proper Footwear

Back pain can also be associated with the shoes you wear. You may even be experiencing unevenness from your legs. A doctor can easily measure each of your legs to determine if this is the cause. If so, you can help with this issue by wearing special shoes with inserts that correct the problem.

Heating Pads or Ice Packs

Heating pads can be used to reduce back pain because it is believed that it warms and relaxes the muscles surrounding the spine. Ice packs can reduce back pain too because it reduces swelling and inflammation around the spine. In fact, if you have nerve pain, such as a pinched sciatica nerve, then ice is better than heat to help you get relief. Tip: Use small paper cups to freeze water, and then peel back the paper to reveal the ice to rub on the back.

Exercise and Diet Always Helps

Living with continuous back pain can really put a drain on your attitude and overall health. It's not easy and takes a lot of work to even get out of bed. To prevent your days from becoming harder you must take notice and make an effort to improve your overall health. Proper diet and exercise will

increase your happiness and even reduce or help manage your back pain. When it comes to exercise you should first contact a medical professional for advice. Certain activities can cause more harm than good.

Exercises to Avoid

Typically, you should avoid any exercise that produces more pain than is normal, even if it's been recommend to you by a doctor. Exercises such as toe touches, sit-ups, leg lifts, high-impact aerobics and lifting weights over the head should all be avoided. These exercises put too much strain on the back and require the spine to work too hard. This can result in more pain and other injuries.



Helpful Exercises

The best exercise for back pain is getting in the water. Water releases pressure on your joints and spine and makes you feel weightless. First start out with walking the pool and then gradually free style swim. Breaststrokes, if done incorrectly can cause more back pain so take caution when learning. Other exercises like wall sits, bridging and some Pilates can be very beneficial because it does not require too much work from your spine.

Eating Right

Diet is another important issue when you experience back pain or any pain for that matter. Certain foods in your diet might be causing an allergic reaction or inflammation that could be causing the back pain. Also, back pain can easily lead you to pick the most convenient option, which usually is not the healthiest, that causes you to gain weight. Excess weight can cause or increase your back pain due to it applying more pressure to the spine than it can handle.

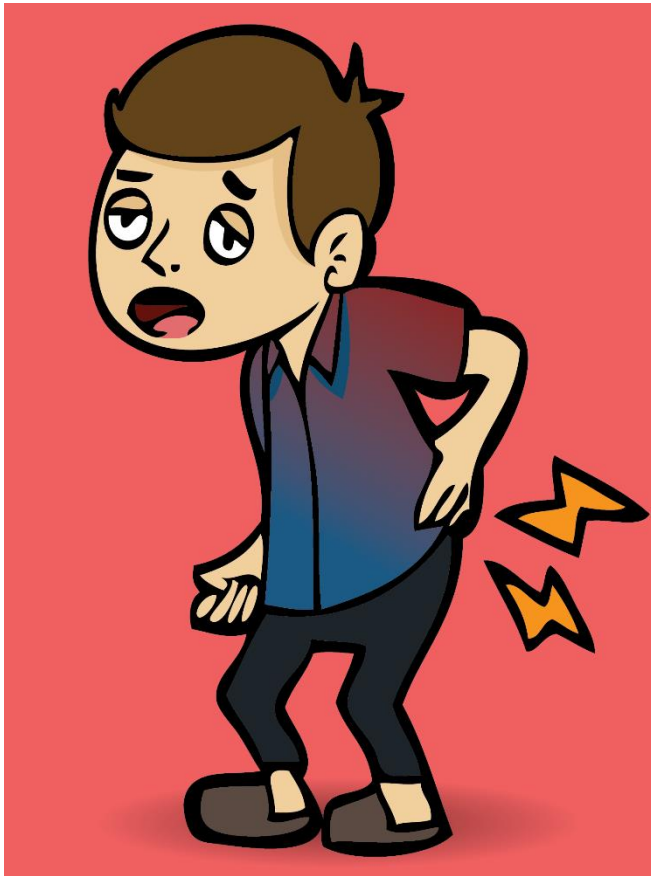
You should be grabbing for anti-inflammatory foods and not towards foods that are known to cause inflammation. The best diet for this is a mostly plant based diet. Go for brightly colored or highly pigmented fruits and vegetables because they are known to reduce inflammation. Avoid processed foods such fast food, white bread and pasta. You also should avoid high sodium foods and saturated fats. A good way to determine if a certain food group is causing your pain is to take it out of your diet for a couple of weeks and see how your body reacts. Eating right may cause you to lose weight or maintain a healthy body weight that your spine can support without any extra pain.

Overall, whatever exercise you do, make sure you stop immediately if you experience abnormal levels of pain. A little discomfort is normal, as is some soreness after a workout, but pain requiring medication is too much. Find exercises you feel comfortable doing and try to avoid being too sedentary. The urge to lie around may be strong, due to the pain, but regular exercise can help you manage the pain over time because you will build up strength.

In addition to exercise, a proper diet full of anti-inflammatory foods like high water fruits and veggies may reduce back pain. Inflammation is a major contributor to back pain as well as excess body weight. Exercise and proper diet will leave you feeling confident that you are doing the best you can in alleviating your back pain.

Coming to Terms with Your Back Pain

The best thing you can do for health and overall happiness is to come to accept the fact that you may indeed have to live with chronic back pain. Living with chronic back pain is not easy, but it can be made worse by not being accepting and thus becoming depressed. Constantly dwelling on and being angry about your back pain will only lead you down a negative path. Finding ways to ease the pain is important but coming to terms with your pain can help you move on and live a fulfilled life.



Don't let back pain get in the way of your relationships or happiness. Try to find ways to move on and focus on other issues that are important to you. Even if you believe there might be a cure to your back pain, it is still a good idea to think about the possibility that there won't be one. This way you can be prepared for the worst, and your life won't be put off track any more than it has.

Just because you have come to terms with your back pain doesn't mean you should go out there and expect to do what you once did. You still need to make sure you are not getting involved in activities that cause more pain and strain on your body. It does mean to get yourself out there and experiment and see what you can

do. You might find activities that you can bear with and will be happier in the long run.

Your family and friends should also still understand that you are in pain. It might be frustrating at times, but make sure your family and friends really understand what you are going through. Don't get frustrated if they get confused or forget. They might see you doing similar activities and just forget because you are doing such a great job. Don't let that get in the way of your happiness. Sadly, your friends and family can't comprehend what you are going through. They won't be mad if you remind them in a calm matter that you're experiencing pain. They will only want to help even more.



Conclusion

In the end, it is believed that more than half of the American population will experience some degree of back pain, at one point in their life. Dealing with back pain can be quite depressing and frustrating. Thankfully, there are ways to manage this pain but first it's important to notice why you are in pain in the first place because it helps you fully understand what activities cause you the most pain so you can avoid them.

Assess your movements and notice when you are in pain. Changing little bad habits can lead to less pain. Bad habits include bad posture when standing, walking or sitting, lifting techniques and becoming too sedentary. You may want to lie around, but you need to realize this can make your pain much worse. Add in a few easy activities throughout your day so that you can build up strength in your back.

If you find that you are still experiencing a great deal of pain for a long period of time, you should seek a medical professional's advice. They can determine if there are any other serious complications such as cancer or scoliosis. They can also offer advice and other treatments such as pain relievers, muscle relaxers, physical therapy, proper foot ware or other issues that can contribute to your pain.

If you want to make sure you are doing everything you can to manage your back pain, ensure that you are eating healthy and exercising daily. Choose gentle activities such as swimming, yoga or walking.

If all else fails, the best thing you can do for your health and sanity is to come to terms with your back pain. Every person is different in how they do this, but it's important because it allows you to continue your life. Don't let back pain control how your life goes because you can still laugh, love and be with your friends and family even when you still have pain.