

## Back Pain Avoidance Tips

Back pain is possibly the most common pain experienced by people globally. Often indicative of unseen health problems back pain is repeatedly a pointer to the correct approach to rectifying the issue. Pain is Nature's warning that something on the body or in the mind needs to be checked. However, it doesn't always indicate that the problem is necessarily a serious one. Back pain is frequently a result of sitting or standing in a position that places strain on certain areas of the spine that, when they feel stress, send out the appropriate messengers of pain.

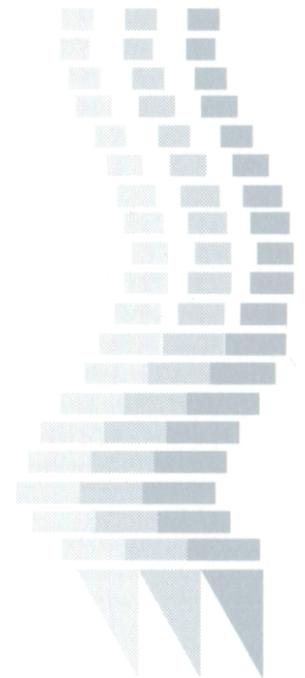
Pain can be avoided by setting the mind into specific patterns of control over the body – it's similar to a self-help process that conditions the mind to the right actions and thoughts, as opposed to the ones that send you down the wrong path. Here are some tips (tricks) to help you get 'grooved in' to avoid back pain:

### Physical

- **Sit Straight** – have your back supported so that the muscles on each side of the spine aren't forced to support any more weight than they have to. At your desk keep your feet about shoulder width apart with the knees slightly below the level of the hips – don't slouch.
- **Lie Straight** – in bed. If your mattress is a relic from the past, consider replacing it. There's nothing much worse for the back than lying in a trough that holds the spine in a curved state for several hours on end.
- **Stand Straight** – Standing badly or well has a marked effect on the quality of life you can expect as you grow older. Especially if you stand a lot during the day remember the following – feet should be shoulder width apart for a normal stance (at a work bench or table), standing cross-legged can be harmful over a period of time; neck and head should be held erect and level. A good test for a the best position of both is to look ahead to a distance of thirty to fifty feet and check a horizontal mark such as a line of bricks in a wall or a stringer in a fence – anything that is parallel to the ground. You should be able to view the horizontal line without lifting or lowering your head – again, don't slouch.
- **Lift Right** – When lifting heavy or bulky objects, again keep feet at around shoulder width, squat down with back straight, grasp the item with both hands and inner arms then raise your upper body with the aid of your legs muscles – the strongest in the body - all the time keeping your back as straight as possible.
- **Exercise** – We all know perfectly well that exercise assists the overall well-being of the physical body as well as the mind and its approach to life's everyday challenges. What we don't perhaps always keep close is the fact that it is necessary to exercise regularly. It is only beneficial when practised on a frequent and consistent basis. Te spine will benefit greatly merely from a regular, brisk half-hour walk each day.

### Mind

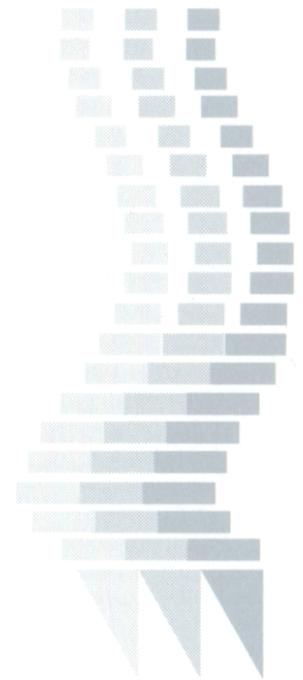
- **Reduce Stress** – Easier said than done? Not really, stress can be as much a matter



of the physical as the mind-induced variety. We know that the physicality of standing, sitting and lying in bed can, if incorrectly applied, induce the stresses that create back pain. These stresses and strains can be not only modified but completely eliminated if a regime of concentrated effort is introduced into everyday thinking. If the back is comfortable the chances are the rest of the body and mind will also be relaxed.

- Cut Out Smoking – In this day of enlightened health and fitness it is superfluous to say "stop smoking for good health". People today continue to smoke in spite of their common sense and the knowledge that it creates all manner of physical and mental illness. If you smoke, you'll know the sensible thing to do.
- Nutrition - (Think 'eat right') – But what is 'right' when it comes to eating and how can this affect my back pain? That's easy – the right nutrition, in general terms, is any food that provides the required daily intake of vitamins, minerals, fibre and various other additions to aid a healthy mind and body. Individuals require individual intakes of food – not a 'standard diet' created by a faceless adviser. Check your body type (easily done these days via the internet) and begin to eat accordingly.
- Attitude – Most activities followed by human beings are principally governed by 'attitude'; that elusive and nebulous entity that determines things like good and bad motorists, champion tennis players, artists, musicians and a host of other career paths. An attitude of positive and constructive approach to health, coupled with a determination to achieve your ambition, in this case to enjoy a healthy and pain-free back, will find you succeeding.
- Sleep Calm – Avoid television or that exciting novel you're half-way through just before turning out the light and putting your head down. Take water to bed with you but, unless you have a bladder or kidney condition, don't drink before sleeping. You want to create the conditions for a long, deep sleep – don't make it difficult for yourself by eating a heavy meal just before retiring. The same goes for alcohol; you may fall asleep but the chances are it won't be the most beneficial form of sleep.

If, after practicing all these tips, you are still experiencing back pain, see your chiropractor and get advice from the one who is dealing with these situations every day.



## **PEAK ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE AND CHIROPRACTIC CARE**

Athletes wishing to perform at peak fitness know that there are certain necessary rules to follow in relation to the body's frame or neuro-muscular-skeletal system. The human structure, although strong in the many areas required by a top athlete, needs to have care extended to it. An understanding and consideration of the bones, soft tissues and their configuration and use in the order of the particular athletic activity will go a long way to maintaining fitness and preventing injury.

This is not to say that an intricate, in depth working knowledge of each and every bone, muscle and nerve in the body is necessary. A simple understanding of the correct way to bring into play certain regions of the body as related to your specific activity is generally sufficient to guard against most serious injuries. With care, chiropractic and otherwise, even minor injuries can be avoided.

However, having said this, accidents do happen and, when they do, your friendly chiropractor is a very welcome sight through the pain! Remembering that it is the spine that is, essentially, the body's 'core' in terms not only of strength but also from a communication standpoint. The nerves that run along the spinal column and out to the extremities are normally protected by the sheath that surrounds them. An injury caused by a sudden jolt or impact by landing awkwardly, falling or colliding with an opponent, even simply standing or sitting for an extended period in a pose that is alien to the spine's natural position can create mis-alignments (subluxations) that may lead to either mild discomfort or aggravating pain.

One method a chiropractor may use to determine whether you are in need of a spinal adjustment is to look at certain aspects of your posture - you can try the tests for yourself.

- Stand and look at yourself in a full length mirror, carefully examining your head and how it 'sits' on your shoulders; does it appear to lean to one side or the other? If so this may indicate that your spine inclines to one side.
- If one shoulder appears lower than the other this could be sending the message that there's a mis-alignment centred around the middle back.
- In the event that one hip is higher than the other the chances are your pelvis and lower back may be out of alignment.

These are a few of the simple tests that could point to a visit to your chiropractor.

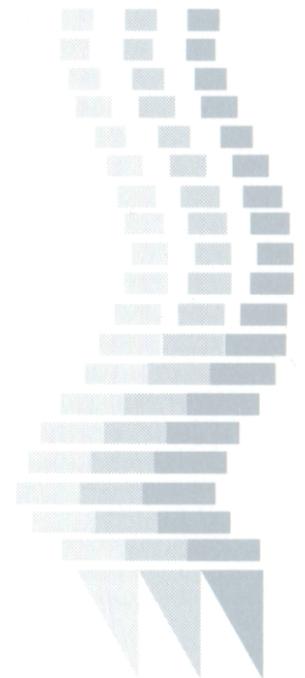
Good (natural) posture is the essence of a healthy, flexible body. This enables athletes to perform at their peak. Bad posture can create a number of problems leading to pain as well as loss of co-ordination, energy, balance and strength.

Chiropractic care for athletes can help toward peak performance by ensuring that each region of the skeleton is functioning in optimum mode regarding joints, vertebrae, muscles, tendons and ligaments.

Your chiropractor will be able to make an assessment of the general and often specific condition of each as it relates to the type of activity engaged in. You will receive advice on the correct methods to adopt in gently acclimatising the various parts of the body for your particular sport – stretching and other warm-up exercises included.

Whenever an injury is sustained the wisest thing to do is to stop the activity and take stock of the situation. You will normally instinctively know if the injury is serious or not. First aid is often necessary at this stage. For simple injuries the acronym to remember is R-I-C-E, Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. You can prevent further injury by resting the affected part. Applying ice wrapped in a towel every twenty minutes to half hour can reduce swelling and limit bruising and bleeding. Compression using bandages (not so tight that circulation is restricted) can reduce swelling. Elevation also reduces swelling and bleeding.

As a general rule of thumb, if your injury was serious enough to require first aid, there is a good chance that it was serious enough to cause changes or compensations through other parts of your body too. A quick check with your chiropractor can give you an insight into whether or not intervention beyond first aid may be appropriate.



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CHIROPRACTIC: Natures Gift