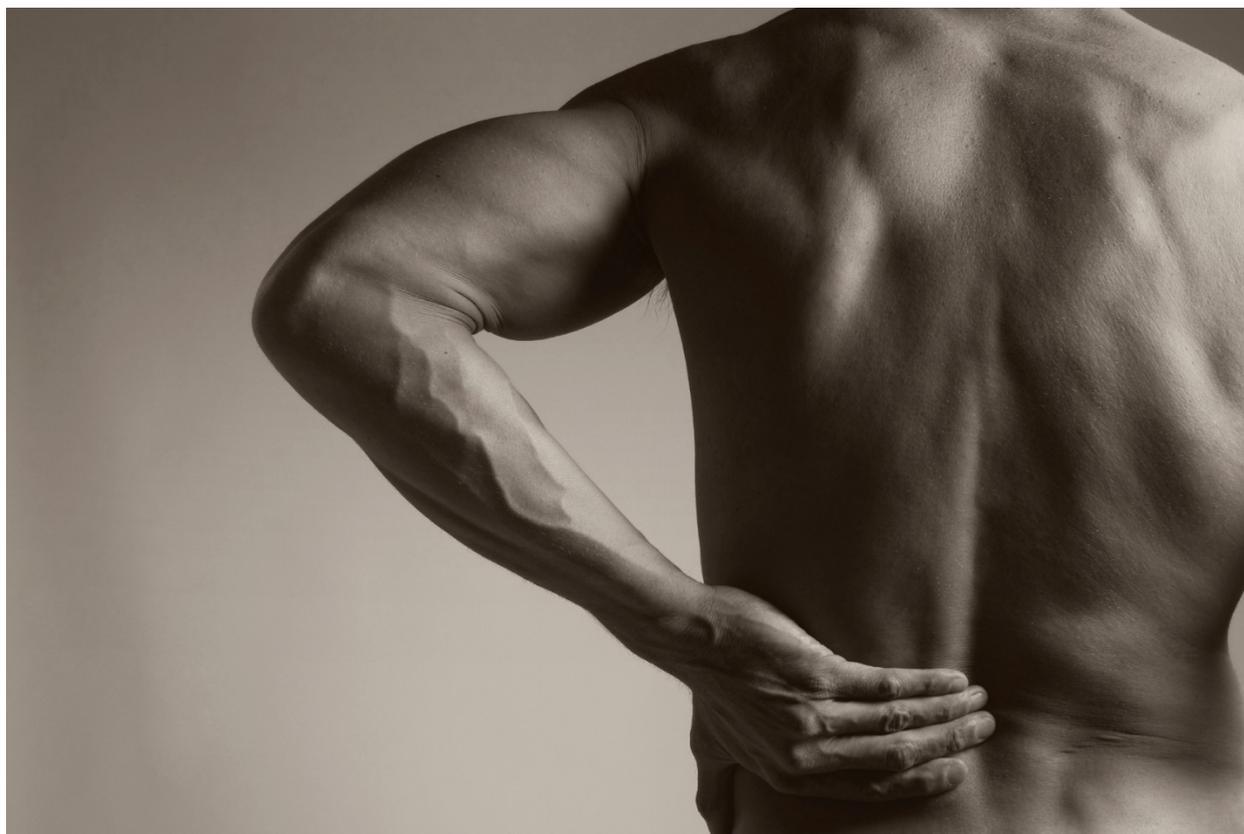


The Complete Guide to Back Pain



Low back pain, what is it and how to deal with it?

Lower back pain (waistline or below) is a very common problem and it affects more than 80 percent of Americans, both men and women at some point in their lives. It can be one of the most frequent reasons people seek medical care.

In this report I hope to uncover many of the symptoms and causes of back pain and what you can do to deal with a health issue that can be debilitating for many people.

While I make no claims to being a physician or a trained back specialist, I present this article as a patient who has suffered with back pain for years and who has researched and evaluated many various alternatives to the issue. I walk the walk with back issues every day and as such I feel I have become quiet knowledgeable on the subject.

While the results that I have experienced have worked for me I cannot make any guarantees that it will work for you based on your situation. You should always

seek professional advice before making any major changes in regards to your health.

So here is my story.

I have personally had to deal with back problems since I was a child. At the age of five I came down with Polio which was a prevalent disease in the late 40's and 50's. I was one of the lucky kids who came down with a lesser case but which did leave me with residual problems that became more pronounced as I got older. My left leg was shorter which eventually caused scoliosis or curvature of the spine and has resulted in constant back issues.

I am now 67 years young and have spent a good part of those sixty some years trying to deal with back pain that has affected my work and my ability to do many of the things most others take for granted.

I guess the one thing I can say that is a positive is that I have educated myself rather proficiently about back problems. I have tried most remedies other than surgery which I avoid at all costs. I'm not a big advocate of things like spinal fusions and the like and I have numerous friends who have tried various surgeries that have left them worse off than before the surgeries.

I must say that medicine has come a long way though and today there are a number of procedures that can be very successful but having any operation is a serious step and all I can say is you need to do your research and weigh the plusses and minuses before making the commitment. Later in this report we will discuss more about surgeries.

It is important to remember that back pain is a symptom. Common causes of back pain include nerve and muscular problems, degenerative disc disease, and arthritis. However, pain arising from other organs may be felt in the back as well. Other medical conditions, such as appendicitis, kidney diseases, pelvic infections, and ovarian disorders, among others, can cause low back pain. I highly recommend a doctor visit anytime you have severe back pain that comes on suddenly for no apparent reason, it could be a sign of something more serious.

Most of the time, back pain is relatively minor, and 80 percent of episodes of acute low back pain will resolve itself within a few days to a few weeks, regardless of whether you seek treatment or not. However, the following symptoms and warning signs may suggest a more serious condition and should be evaluated by a professional.

Seek medical attention if the pain:

1. Extends down your leg
2. Increases when you lift your knee to your chest or bend over
3. Follows a recent fall or trauma
4. Lasts more than three weeks
5. Becomes worse when you rest, wakes you up at night, or is associated with a fever
6. Is associated with bladder or bowel problems
7. Is associated with numbness or weakness in your legs

So what are the conventional treatments for lower back pain?

The most important aspect of back pain is how it impacts your ability to function in your daily life. So although it's important to reduce pain, the emphasis of the treatment isn't only on eliminating the pain, but on improving your ability to function as much as possible in your usual activities.

Treatment options include a variety of conservative approaches, such as medications, exercise and physical therapy, and counseling, or they include more aggressive approaches, such as surgery and again I encourage you to pursue as many options as you can before surgery and even get a couple diagnosis's.

1. Medications: Medications can be a double edged sword. You need to be aware of side effects to the drug and a potential for habitual use. The choice of medication depends on whether the pain is muscle and bone pain, nerve pain, or a mixture of both.

For muscle and bone pain, the general categories of medications used include:

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen and naproxen
- Narcotic medications or opioids such as codeine or hydrocodone. These do not treat the underlying cause, but rather mask the sensation of pain. Many of these drugs can have a habit forming potential and you should use caution.
- Muscle relaxants, such as Flexeril or Soma. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not recommend the *long-term* use of muscle relaxants because they are not effective in actual muscle relaxation after two weeks of use. I include them here only as a short term solution.

For nerve pain, some medications that are not normally labeled as pain relievers (but because of their properties, may help the body fight pain) I repeat they might

be helpful. These medications, which help the body re-program the messages involved in relaying the pain signals, include and should only be used with your doctor's recommendations:

- Tricyclic antidepressants
- Anticonvulsants
- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) antidepressants, such as fluoxetine and paroxetine
- Selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRI) antidepressants, such as effexor and cymbalta

Steroid medications, such as Prednisone and Medrol, can be useful in easing pain and acute flare-ups in inflammation. However, they must be used with extreme caution, especially if they are used for longer than a week.

2. Cold or heat therapy: Using cold and heat therapy may relieve pain and muscle tension in the initial days after back pain begins. Cold or ice applied to your back can reduce inflammation and swelling by constricting blood vessels. The cold also acts to slow nerve impulses and make it less likely that your muscles will contract, in this way reducing pain. Some studies show that heat is an effective approach for acute nonspecific back pain.

3. Electrical stimulation: Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) can decrease pain by delivering a tiny electrical current to key points on a nerve pathway. The current, delivered through electrodes taped to your skin, isn't painful or harmful. This can be provided through a chiropractic service or physical therapy service.

4. Cognitive behavior therapy: This type of talk therapy combines attempts to identify unhealthy, negative beliefs and behaviors and replace them with healthy, positive ones. It's based on the idea that your own thoughts determine how you behave. This therapy may have a role in the case of chronic low back pain for which no specific physical cause is evident.

5. Multidisciplinary treatment programs: A multidisciplinary approach to treating low back pain may include a combination of exercise, physical therapy, education, cognitive behavior therapy, vocational counseling, and other strategies.

6. Injections: Anesthetics, steroids, or narcotics into soft tissues, joints, and other areas can be injected in and around your spine. The purpose of such injections is to block nerve conduction, relieving pain and should only be administered by a doctor or a licensed professional.

7. Last Resort Surgery: There are several different types of back surgery, depending on the underlying problem causing the back pain:

- Discectomy removes the herniated portion of a disk to relieve pressure on a nerve.
- Laminectomy removes the lamina (bony structure) that overlays the spinal canal to relieve nerve pressure caused by spinal stenosis.
- Spinal fusion permanently connects two or more bones in your spine.
- Intradiscal electrothermal therapy (IDET) involves inserting a heated needle through a catheter into the disk, which thickens and seals the disk wall.
- Vertebroplasty injects bone cement into compressed vertebrae.

Consider all your options, and consider getting a second opinion from a qualified spine specialist before you agree to back surgery.

What lifestyle changes are recommended for low back pain?

Exercise and Physical Therapy

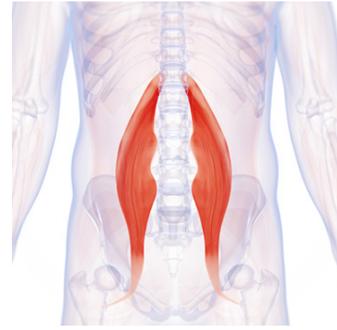
OK now we are going to get into what has changed my life and what I feel very confident in recommending!!

Physical activity plays a strong role in recovering from back pain and particularly in helping to prevent future pain and loss of function. An exercise program can include any or all of the following components: flexing, stretching, endurance training, strength building, and aerobic activity. There is no one-size-fits-all approach and what works for me might not be the perfect fit for your problem but I hope to give you a few alternatives. Exercise programs are individualized because people have different levels of pain and differing injuries that caused the pain initially.

Improving the strength, endurance, and function of your back helps minimize the chance of recurrence of back pain. One study showed that people who exercised after an initial episode of acute low back pain were less likely to experience a recurrence of that pain than people who did not exercise after the initial pain but again caution is recommended.

Any mild discomfort that you may feel as you begin an exercise program should gradually ease as your muscles become stronger and I am going to point out a few specific muscle groups that can have a huge impact on future episodes. The key is to start an exercise program at a low level to ensure your comfort and proper technique, and then progress slowly as your symptoms allow. Exercises for specific muscles that stabilize the spine may help reduce the low back pain.

Before we discuss Diet and weight I want to point out a muscle group that if improved can have a dramatic improvement in back health. I'm going to introduce you to **10 simple moves** that will bring vitality back into your life so that you can be strong, active, & energetic for yourself and your loved ones. The muscle group is your **hip flexors**.



Hip flexors are the engine through which our body moves. They control balance, our ability to sit, stand, twist, reach, bend, walk and step.

Everything goes through the hips.

It wasn't till I was introduced to Mike Westerdal, a national best-selling fitness author, sports nutrition specialist, personal trainer, Iron Man magazine contributor and founder of the internet's longest-standing strength site, CriticalBench.com. and leading Kinesiologist and Injury Specialist Rick Kaselj, MS. My world changed!

Mike and Rick revealed to me how most people end up having tight hip flexors yet never realize it, let me tell you just a bit of what I learned but first, let me explain just how deep-rooted the problem is.

Here's the truth: Most people don't realize the cause of their problems are tight hip flexors.

The impact that the hips have on the whole body never occurred to me until I actually began strengthening my own muscle groups. I could walk further without hip and pack pain. I had less episodes of back spasms and shooting pains. I could lift more effortlessly. Fewer cramps at night in my legs and I know there are other areas that have improved simply from improving the strength in my hip flexors.

As I built up my hip flexors I began to see a reduction in, of all things, belly fat. My posture was more upright. My shoulders began to move up and back. My whole posture improved.

I had to deal with a bit of soreness; but I learned right off that tight hip flexors are the root cause of many problems not all of them I suffered from but Mike explained that many people suffer from other issues such as:

- Nagging joint pains in your legs, lower back or hips
- Walking with discomfort
- Hips locking up
- Bad posture
- Trouble sleeping

- Sluggishness in day to day life
- High Anxiety
- Digestive problems
- Compromised Immune System
- Circulatory issues
- Loss of sexual performance
- Lack of Explosiveness in the gym or sports

Now if any of these sound familiar to you, don't worry because you're not alone.

Tight hip flexors affect nearly everybody, but few realize the impact on your whole body.

Everything flows through the hips.

Think of the hips as a barometer. The health and flexibility of your hip muscles are an indicator of the strength and health of our whole body. Your entire upper body relies on a solid hip frame and strength.

Your hips are the bridge between your upper body and lower body. They are at the center of your body's movement.

Sitting within the well of your hip and lower spine is the psoas major muscle, one of the two muscles that makes up the iliopsoas.

It's often called the "mighty" psoas (pronounced so-az) for the many important functions it plays in the movement of your body.

The psoas is the only muscle in the human body connecting the upper body to the lower body.

The muscle attaches to the vertebrae of the lower spine, moves through the pelvis and connects to a tendon at the top of the femur. **It also attaches to the diaphragm, so it's connected to your breathing, and upon it sits all the major organs.**

A functioning psoas muscle creates a neutral pelvic alignment, stabilizes the hips, supports the lower spine and abdomen, supports the organs in the pelvic and abdominal cavity and gives you **greater mobility and core strength.**

When it functions well, it has the power to...

- ... help you achieve peak performance day after day after day.
- ... rapidly drop ugly body fat that stubbornly clings to your body.

- ... train harder, heavier and gain strength faster than you thought possible.
- ... hit your peak of sexual health.
- ... flood your mind and body with renewed energy and vigor.

Put simply, this muscle is the core of activity in your body. So, when it's out of balance or if the psoas tightens, there are serious consequences which flow throughout the body.

And there's one activity, in particular, that's the sworn enemy of your psoas muscle...

The No.1 activity that's making you weaker, fatter and is KILLING your sex life.



It may be the most harmless activity known to man, but it's also one of the biggest dangers to your health.

SITTING

Here are 3 ways that sitting is killing your physical and emotional health:

Even if you're the most active of athletes, you may still suffer from a tight psoas due to the amount of time you spend each day planted to a chair.

Weakness, shortening and tightness develops in the muscle through sitting for extended periods of time, poor sleep posture and even stress and tension.

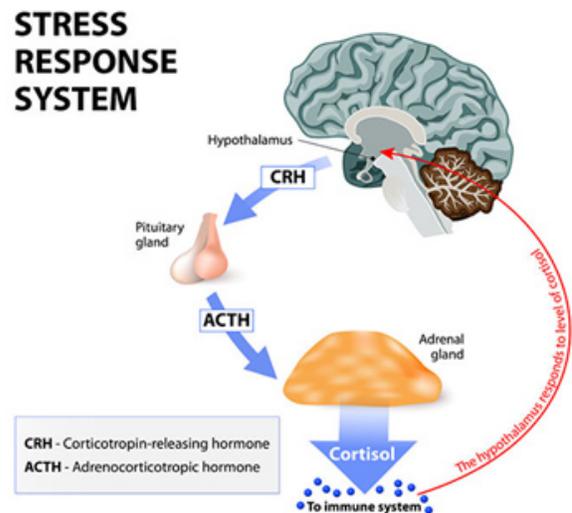


Bulging belly syndrome

Wonder why your stomach still sticks out even though you're hammering the core exercises every day? It's a common myth that bulging belly is due to weak abdominal muscles. The real cause is likely to be tight psoas muscles, which cause the lower back to curve pushing out the stomach. When the psoas works properly it pulls the abdomen back tucking the tummy in, giving you a strong, flat stomach.

Fat loss inhibitor

As the body's "fight or flight" muscle, your psoas is deeply connected to our natural survival instinct. It instantly tightens in moments of danger to either protect you (in a fetal position) or help you run, fueled by the release of adrenaline. However, if your psoas is constantly tight, **it signals to the body you are in constant danger, leading to overworking of the adrenal glands.** When this happens, your immune system suffers and your body automatically switches into fat storing mode in anticipation of danger. Can't shift that weight? Blame your hips also known as your "**survival muscle**".





Lack of sexual performance

Sitting all day causes your hips to become stuck in a forward thrust position. This leads to pulling on the lower back and decreased blood flow and circulation through the hips and to where it matters.

Muscle groups work together.

First thing to know, muscle groups work together to perform a movement. If one muscle is tight or injured or weak the opposing muscles and helper muscles will end up taking on the burden. This can happen from muscle overuse and repetitive movement, like sitting or standing for long periods. The muscle gets tight and shortened and stops firing correctly therefore putting strain into a different group of muscles. In the case of the hip flexor, the adductors and the calves may try to take over flexion when the hip flexor is shortened.

What can happen is not only pain in the hip flexor due to tightness, but pain on the inside of the thigh down to the knee because the hip flexors are no longer firing correctly and the adductor (inside thigh muscles) are taking up the slack. The calves may get tight and stop firing correctly too, adding more pressure onto the adductors.

Weak Glutes or Weak Core.

The core, hip flexors and glutes are all tied together. The glutes help stabilize the pelvis and if they are not firing, the hip flexors will take on the job of pelvic stabilization and this can also lead to tight hip flexors. If the abs are not firing properly or are not strong enough, then the hip flexors kick in and toil away for the abs. Developing core strength is another reason you will want to understand how it affects your back.

Working moves that the body is not ready to perform can lead to overdevelopment and underdevelopment issues. So if your glutes and abs are both not firing properly, it's double trouble in the hip flexors. Also a **tight or stronger side in the core** can cause problems as well.

Favoring a Dominant Side.

If one hip flexor is shortened, the other hip flexor can be weak, such as tight right hip flexor and weak left hip flexor. This throws the pelvis and hips out of

alignment and this misalignment can then strain the lower back and throw the shoulders out of alignment. The body is linked together and having a strong side and a weaker side can produce chaos.

What a dominant hip flexor may activate or misalign

1. Pain in the tight hip flexor(s)
2. Pain in the pelvis and hips due to misaligned sides
3. Weak non-dominant hip flexor
4. Pain in the inner thigh and knee (adductors taking on flexion when the hip flexor is too tight)
5. Pulling on the QL and subsequently the rhomboids and traps, pulling the shoulder girdle out.
6. Tight calves

Why "Static" Stretching Alone Isn't the Answer

Knowing you have tight hip flexors is one thing.

Knowing how to fix your hip flexors is another challenge altogether.

If you trust so-called experts on Youtube and online, they'll have you believe it's simply a case of holding a few static stretches for a period of time to try and lengthen the muscle.

Or rolling around with a tennis ball stuck to your hip (as if that will really make any difference).

It takes more than a tennis ball and foam roller to unlock your hip flexors...and doing it wrong could cause even MORE damage.

The reason few people manage to fix their hip flexors is simple.

It's really a hard area to reach.

If you see how the psoas is attached within your body, it's buried deep inside your core making it tough to access. It's a hard muscle to find, let alone train.

So it's little wonder why trying to loosen it requires more than a simple static hip flexor stretch like you've probably tried before.

You've probably found you're spending (or wasting) hours of your time stretching this way only to find it's having minimal effect.

That's because you need to attack the muscle from a variety of angles using a variety of exercise techniques and modalities in order to "unpack" the muscle in the right way.

The truth is, you can learn to release your tight hip flexors on your own.

If you think of your psoas as a combination safe lock, there are several numbers that will unlock it but they need to be entered in the right order.

There are a number of specific movements beyond simple static stretching you can use to unlock and loosen your hips, legs and back.

Loosening Your Hip Flexors Can Actually Be Easy with the SEQUENTIAL FLOW Method

Like unfolding a sheet or unpacking a parcel, opening up the muscles in your hips requires it to be done in the right order.

Try to release one muscle before another and you'll add to your tightness. Getting it wrong really can make it worse.

It's why so many people give up trying to fix the problem themselves and believe incorrectly that they have to live with the problem. But hoping the problem will go away by not exercising is just as damaging.

To explain in more detail about this flow, let me introduce you to the SEQUENTIAL FLOW Method

The Sequential Flow Method is a program that has become a part of my everyday regimen and since starting the plan amazing changes have taken place in my life.

At the age of 67 my mobility and vitality is that of a healthy 30-year-old. I can bend, stoop, reach, walk, run, lift even better than when I was 30. My overall health has amazed my doctor. I have no prostate issues that seem to trouble many men at my age. Cholesterol levels have dropped due to the improved diet I'm now on (more on diet in a moment). My mental awareness is that of a 30-year-old. The only thing that hasn't improved is my hair continues to go grey but I can say I still have a solid head of hair. Whether that has anything to do to my improved back and hip improvements has yet to be determined but it's a positive either way you look at it.

OK, so now before I discuss why diet can help to improve back issues, I want to introduce you to the Sequential Flow Method, "Unlock Your Hip Flexors" and how you can take advantage of this amazing program.

Unlock Your Hip Flexors gives you a practical, easy-to-follow program you can use today for instantly releasing your hip flexors for more strength, better health and all day energy.

You will experience immediate results the very first time you go through the program.

Only through learning how to do this properly will it enable you to start undoing some of the damage done to your psoas and start helping the body to naturally heal itself.

But first a warning...this isn't for everyone.

As you can imagine, this is a hugely technical field. The last thing you want is to be overloaded with too much or some complicated exercise regimen, so Mike and Rick have done their best to distill the program to the most essential elements so you can experience rapid results.

I guarantee you'll not find an easier program to pick up and start using as part of your everyday routine or workout. Inside the Unlock Your Hip Flexors program, you'll discover:

- Exactly how to target those hard-to-reach muscles with detailed, step-by-step walk-through videos of every single Key Move (Rick's simple, clear demonstration of these powerful moves will help them become second nature in no time).
- **The No.1 single most important element of human body posture and why your hips hold the key to peak performance (if this fails, your performance is drastically affected whether running, walking or even just standing).**
- The true impact of your body's "Mighty Muscle" and how it is really affecting your physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing (you'll be shocked how big an impact this has on your everyday life).

- How your body's natural survival response has been tricked into permanent "danger" mode, and how you can switch it off to see faster fat loss and more energy (the reasoning behind this is crazy, but completely true).
- **The main causes for your psoas muscle to change structure, a major danger sign for your body (any change, however minimal, has an overwhelming impact that ripples across your body causing other muscle groups to compensate).**
- Why you're just as likely to be affected by this problem if you're a balls-to-the-wall gym rat training 24/7 or a couch potato.
- Why, if you have a desk job or drive a car for long periods, you need to act NOW.
- **The shocking reason your intense core workouts could be doing more harm than good if you haven't loosened your hips first (and why crunches and sit-ups won't do a thing to help).**
- Why strong legs and glutes are important to your overall health and why you need to prevent too much flexion of your hips.
- **How trauma, injury and stress can build up within your posture and how it will ultimately affect your psychological state.**
- Why the "cure" isn't simply to stop sitting (you need to be more pro-active in targeting the muscles affected to undo the damage from sitting all day).
- **Why the damage is most likely ALREADY done and exactly what you need to do to redress those deep-seeded imbalances before the damage becomes permanent (if this doesn't kick you into action, nothing will...)**
- Why "comfort" and "support" are the enemies of our natural physiology and how we can start to move back towards our natural posture (forget pillows, support cushions and belts.)
- **How tight hips affect your sexual performance through decreased blood flow and circulation and what you can do about it right now to achieve peak sexual health again.**
- Why some guys end up with "old-guy butt syndrome" that isn't sexy but also inevitably leads to hip pain and how to avoid it by loosening the hips.

- **The 2 situations you NEED to be aware of when training your glutes to ensure they're properly activated for maximum athletic performance.**
- How to clear your mind and re-energize your thinking simply through learning how to relax your psoas muscle (this alone will help you wipe stress from your mind in an instant).
- **Plus, much more...**

I encourage you to check out this incredible life changing program starting today. [Check it out here](#). It will change your life; it has for me.

Now let's look at the another element to relieve a bad back... Diet and Weight

Obesity is a leading cause of back pain. Reducing your weight by only 10 percent can make a huge difference in decreasing back pain. Extra abdominal fat and weight on the pelvis pulls the body forward and puts strain on your lower back muscles. Although obesity may not be the cause of the pain, it takes the pain to a whole new level. Extra weight throws off your posture and makes it difficult to properly align your body for a good sleep. It requires your back muscles to pick up the slack. Eat a healthy diet to maintain an ideal weight.

When it comes to inflammation, a known cause for back pain, it's true that you are what you eat. Many foods have been shown to reduce inflammation, as well as to increase it. So when you have back pain, diet may help you avoid it. You just have to carefully choose your foods so you can reduce back pain and maintain good nutrition.

Left unchecked inflammation will run rampant through your body, causing all kinds of problems, including low-back pain. So creating an anti-inflammatory diet to battle back pain becomes that much more important.

Recent research suggests that persistent inflammation is at the source of many diseases such as arthritis, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and even Alzheimer's disease. Generally, inflammation is a defense mechanism in the body that helps stop growth of abnormal cells, promotes healing of injured tissues, and signals cells to fight off viral and bacterial infections. But when inflammation persists, it requires the body to recruit different mediators to protect the cells. And when these mediators are present for prolonged periods of time they can destroy healthy tissue and trigger disease.

The best thing, though, is that if you're prone to back pain, these diet tips can be very tasty, really colorful, and fun to eat. Don't get me wrong I don't want you to think that to have a healthy back it will require you to start grazing in the back yard. Surprisingly enough once I started changing my diet I found that there are a lot of healthy foods that I actually enjoyed, so if you are a meat lover or have a sweat tooth that just won't let you get past the doughnut case bear with me just a few minutes longer.

Fight Back Pain: Eat Your Veggies

A mostly plant-based diet that includes such things as flax and chia seeds, is probably your best bet to avoid inflammation, especially when eaten in combination with omega 3-rich cold water fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring, black cod, tuna, and trout. I throw in Crab and lobster now and then simply because my wife and I love it.

Naturally pigmented produce is a key part of an anti-inflammatory diet. So if you're looking for foods that reduce back pain and are high in nutrition, try carrots, beets, sweet potatoes, cherries, berries, grapes and red wine, pomegranate, and watermelon. Herbs and spices, including basil, cinnamon, ginger, rosemary, garlic, curcumin, onions, oregano, and turmeric tend to be especially rich in anti-inflammatory agents, so season generously. Also, drink healthy herb teas and true teas (green, oolong, and white). Try to avoid or limit your use of sugars and salt.

Olive oil, green tea, and brightly colored fruits and vegetables have all been proven to reduce inflammation in cartilage in the spinal column, which helps to control back pain and stiffness. When eating vegetables, think the greener the better, spinach, and broccoli are all list-toppers for an anti-inflammatory diet with back-pain-fighting properties.

Other good food choices for an anti-back pain diet: avocados; nuts (walnuts, almonds, pecans, and Brazil nuts); lean proteins, such as chicken and turkey; beans; and cocoa.

What about Manual therapies?

Chiropractic

Back pain is the most common reason that people seek chiropractic care. Studies have shown that after six months, chiropractic manipulation reduces pain and disability to the same level as conventional medical care, but with higher levels of patient satisfaction and no side effects from medications. Manipulation of the lumbar area has very low risks.

Osteopathy

Osteopathic manipulation is distinctly different from chiropractic manipulation. Some studies have found no difference in outcomes between osteopathic manipulative therapy and approaches such as physical therapy, ultrasound, and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), although those getting osteopathic therapy used less medication than those using the other approaches. Another study has shown that of a group of conventionally "untreatable" patients, 75 percent were returned to full prior functional status with osteopathic manipulative therapy.

Practitioners recommend that you try at least three to four treatments of either chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation before determining whether they are effective for you.

Massage Therapy

Various reviews explore the evidence for and against the effectiveness of treatments in specific circumstances, based on the best available published information. A few reviews found thirteen randomized trials on back pain and massage therapy.

These reviews found that massage was more likely to work when combined with exercises (usually stretching) and education. Massage produced more benefit in pain reduction and return of function than joint mobilization, relaxation, physical therapy, self-care education, or acupuncture alone. Acupressure or pressure point massage techniques appeared to provide more pain relief than classic (Swedish) massage.

Mind-Body Practices and Stress Reduction

Like any chronic pain problem, low back pain has a strong association with psychiatric issues, like depression, substance abuse, stress, and anxiety. An individual's coping skills, attitudes, and other illness behaviors all impact the extent of continuing pain. A systematic review of research on mind-body therapies in low back pain found strong evidence of positive effects of cognitive therapies, progressive muscle relaxation, and other such techniques.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is a program of meditation and gentle yoga that has been scientifically validated. It is currently used in more than 200 hospitals and medical centers to complement the medical management of chronic pain and stress-related disorders. Research has studied individuals with many different kinds of pain (not just low back pain) and shown dramatic

reductions in pain levels and an enhanced ability of individuals to cope with pain that may not go away.

Yoga is a holistic discipline that includes mental, physical, and breath work practices. One National Institutes of Medicine study of more than 100 people with low back pain compared a 12-week program of yoga to conventional therapeutic exercise or a self-care book for patients with chronic low back pain. The yoga proved more effective in improving function, decreasing the "bothersome" of pain and days of restricted activity, improving general health status, and reducing the amount of medication, and the benefits persisted for at least several months.

Psychological and Emotional Practices

One long established mental/emotional program for chronic back pain is from John Sarno, MD, a rehabilitation medicine physician at NYU School of Medicine. He has diagnosed what he terms tension myositis syndrome, or TMS. This is a psychosomatic illness that causes chronic back, neck, and limb pain that is not relieved by standard medical treatments.

His treatment programs have patients complete mind/body processes to learn about the relationship between emotions and physical symptoms, as well as the power of self-awareness. They then resume their physical activities, but avoid manipulation, exercise, acupuncture, and massage. He reports treating more than 10,000 patients and has published four books about back pain throughout the past 25 years. Research studies have not yet been done to validate his work. I have read his books and I have to say the jury is still out but I did get some valuable insights.

Botanicals and Supplements

People often use non-steroidal drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, for short-term relief of back pain. For those who wish to avoid, or cannot tolerate, anti-inflammatory pharmaceuticals (ibuprofen, diclofenac, indomethacin, ketoprofen, piroxicam), some naturally occurring substances have anti-inflammatory effects, with much less risk of gastrointestinal distress. As with any medications, these should ideally be used for limited periods of healing, not for indefinite, long-term use.

Typical doses for each botanical are indicated below. However, you should talk with your healthcare provider before adding botanicals to your health regimen and ask about the right dosage for you.

- **Curcumin** is the active anti-inflammatory agent found in the spice turmeric. A large double-blind study demonstrated that curcumin was as effective as a powerful anti-inflammatory drug in reducing pain, swelling, and stiffness in

rheumatoid arthritis patients, and has also been shown to be effective in the treatment of postsurgical inflammation. A 95 percent standardized extract of curcumin derived from turmeric is recommended. The daily dosage to consider is 400 to 600 mg, taken one to three times per day, when not taken in combination with other products. Theoretically, it should not be used with prescription blood thinners, but human clinical trials to evaluate bleeding risk have not been done.

- **Bromelain**, extracted from plants in the bromeliaceae family (like pineapple) contains anti-inflammatory enzymes that have the proven ability to suppress the inflammation and pain of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, sports injuries, and other joint inflammatory conditions. Bromelain also helps to break down fibrin, thereby minimizing local swelling. The usual dosage is 400mg, one to three times per day (a lower dosage can be used as part of a combination anti-inflammatory formulation). Bromelain should not be used with prescription blood thinners.
- **Quercetin** is a phytochemical found in the skins of apples and red onions that blocks the release of histamine and other inflammatory enzymes at supplemented doses (minimum 100-1500 mg per day). Although human studies are lacking at this time, anecdotal evidence is strong for this application, as is experimental research investigation. There are no known contraindications or drug interactions.

How to use integrative therapies and healing practices in back pain

Many people who suffer from back pain experience either chronic, persistent pain, or chronic pain with occasional episodes of acute pain. Because long term use of oral medications (e.g. NSAIDS, muscle relaxants, pain-killers, or tranquilizers) is not optimally effective and has risks of side-effects and dependence, you should consider alternative strategies.

To help reduce acute aggravations and avoid additional pain, it is important to have a maintenance/prevention plan. This should include a regular exercise program with stretching, strength training, and endurance and aerobic activities. Yoga is a good base activity for many people.

It can also be beneficial to have an on-going relationship with a manual therapist, be it a chiropractor, osteopath, or massage therapist, as regular bodywork can help prevent additional pain.

A regular meditation or relaxation practice can help you cope with pain, as can a self-reflection practice that honestly addresses emotional awareness and health.

Maintaining a healthy weight is an important practice for preventing and maintaining back pain since it decreases the stress on your muscles.

With these behaviors and relationships as a foundation, you should be well positioned to respond to an aggravation or acute flare, should that occur.

So now you're ready to begin a new regimen to improve your health and alleviate back issues. Start by getting the Sequential Flow Method and Unlock Your Hip Flexors program, it will change your life I can assure you.

[Get it here Now!](#)

I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to my story and I wish you all the best in your search for better health and fewer back problems.

Bob Kimsey

Disclaimer

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