

How To Win Your War Against Back Pain

HOW TO WIN YOUR WAR AGAINST **BACK PAIN**

SELECTED TIPS - 127 PAGES!



127 Pages!

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Causes Of Back Pain

Back pain will inhibit millions of Americans this year, and an estimated 80% of us will experience back pain sometime in our lives. For some, the pain can be excruciating. Back pain can be caused by a large number of injuries or conditions, thus making a proper diagnosis both difficult and critical. Back pain that occurs with other symptoms like fever and chills, severe abdominal pain or bladder and bowel problems can be an indication of a serious medical condition, and should be evaluated by your doctor immediately.

Musculoskeletal strains are more common among people who live sedentary lifestyles. Those with a higher level of physical fitness generally have stronger muscles in the back, legs and abdomen, all of which help support the back. Perhaps the most significant risk factor is obesity. The strain of carrying excess weight can contribute greatly to back pain. Regular exercise and a balanced diet can help control obesity, and reduce the frequency of back pain episodes.

There are many conditions that can cause back pain other than musculoskeletal strains. They include:

- Arthritis, a disease that causes inflammation of the joints. Three types of arthritis that affect the spine are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis.
- A herniated disc, or ruptured disc, occurs when the hard outer coating of the discs, the circular pieces of connective tissue that cushion the vertebrae, are damaged. These discs may leak, irritating nearby nerves. A herniated disk can cause severe sciatica, nerve pain that radiates down the leg.
- Spinal stenosis is a condition where the spinal canal narrows, compressing the nerves inside. It is often caused by bone spurs which are a result of osteoarthritis. Compression of the nerves can lead to pain, numbness in the legs and the loss of bladder or bowel control.
- Spondylolisthesis is a condition where a vertebra of the slips out of place. As the spine tries to stabilize itself, the joints between the slipped vertebra and adjacent vertebrae can become enlarged. This can pinch nerves, causing low back pain and severe sciatica leg pain.
- Vertebral fractures can be caused by trauma or by osteoporosis, a disease where the bones become fragile.
- Degenerative disc disease is an aging process where the discs between the vertebrae break down over time.

How To Prevent Back Pain

Simple lower back pain can be caused by straining the muscles, tendon or ligaments of the lower back. The most effective prevention is to take care as to how you lift heavy objects. Do not try to lift any significant weight by bending over the object. You should bend your knees and then lift with your legs. Avoid twisting your body while lifting. When moving heavy objects, pushing is less stressful than pulling. Routine activities, such as housework or gardening, can cause back pain. Avoid standing flat-footed while bent over.

A sedentary lifestyle will contribute to back problems.

Regular exercise will improve the flexibility and strength of the muscles which support your lower back. These include the abdominal muscles, as well as those in the legs and back. A simple exercise routine can help prevent back pain throughout your life. Obesity is a common cause of back pain. Aerobic exercise can help manage weight concerns. Swimming, jogging or even walking are all activities that will help you lose weight and feel better.

In addition to exercise, a proper diet is essential in managing your weight. However, there are also two nutrients, calcium and vitamin D, that help build healthy and strong bones and prevent osteoporosis, which can cause bone fractures that lead to back pain.

Many people whose jobs involve sitting for long periods of time experience back pain. It is important to get up and move around regularly. If driving for long periods of time, take the time to stop and get out of your vehicle.

Stretching your muscles and improving blood flow to your lower body will help prevent back pain, as well as help keep you alert for the rest of your trip.

Changing the position in which you sleep can also help prevent back pain. The best positions are either to sleep lying on your side with your legs bent, or lying on your back with a pillow under your knees. A firm mattress is usually the best bet. A sheet of plywood can be placed between the box spring and the mattress in order to increase the firmness of your bed.

Non-Surgical Treatment For Back Pain

Back pain may be relieved with a variety of techniques. For most common occurrences of back pain, a regiment of rest, hot and cold compresses, exercise and therapy, as well as various pain medications can be used to reduce the pain and provide a level of comfort.

Hot and cold compresses, used separately or by alternating, can have great benefit in reducing back pain. Heat is used to relax the muscles. It works by dilating the blood vessels, which improves the flow of oxygen to the affected area and reduces pain and muscle spasms. Cold packs are used to reduce inflammation, such as that from arthritis or injury. This works by decreasing the size of blood vessels and the flow of blood to the area. It is important to avoid prolonged application of either heat or cold packs, especially near the organs found in the abdominal cavity.

Exercising is of great benefit both to someone suffering from back pain and for anyone hoping to avoid it in the future. If you are suffering from acute back pain, exercising may not be possible or even a good idea.

However, for chronic back pain, a regular exercise program is recommended. Exercises will help strengthen the muscles that support the back, and increase flexibility and range of motion. A physical therapist can help you in developing an exercise plan that is suitable for you and your condition.

Nonprescription medicines can be used to reduce pain. They include medications like aspirin Tylenol, which are meant for general pain relief. Anti-inflammatory drugs are used to reduce swelling. These include such nonprescription medications as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil). Stronger prescription-based medication is available, both as pain relievers and anti-inflammatories.

Surgical Treatments For Back Pain

While the majority of treatment for lower back pain is non-surgical, there are some conditions for which surgery is appropriate. As well, in some rare cases, surgery can be used to treat chronic back pain for which other treatments have failed.

In a laminectomy, part of the lamina, a portion of the bone on the back of the vertebrae, is removed. It can be used to treat herniated discs and spinal stenosis. In microdiscectomy a much smaller incision is made and the doctor uses a magnifying lens to locate the disc.

The smaller incision may reduce pain and the disruption of tissues, and it reduces the size of the surgical scar.

With a laser discectomy, a laser is used to vaporize the tissue in the disc, reducing its size and relieving pressure on the nerves.

Spinal fusion may be used to treat spondylolisthesis and degenerative disc disease. In spinal fusion, two or more vertebrae are joined together using bone grafts, screws, and rods. The fused area of the spine becomes immobilized.

Vertebral fractures can be caused by trauma or by osteoporosis. A vertebroplasty injects a cement-like mixture called polymethylacrylate into the fractured vertebra to stabilize the spine. Kyphoplasty inserts a balloon device to help restore the height and shape of the spine before injecting polymethylacrylate to repair the fractured vertebra.

Disc replacement surgery can now be done in cases where the disc is severely damaged. Here the disc is simply removed and replaced with a synthetic disc.

Alternative Treatments For Back Pain

The term alternative therapy covers a wide array of treatments, with a corresponding variation in levels of acceptance amongst the medical community.

Alternative medicine is a growing field, but sometimes relies more on anecdotal evidence than careful study.

The most reputable alternative treatments include chiropractic, prolotherapy, acupuncture and acupressure, and massage therapy.

Chiropractors use spinal manipulation to adjust the spine. Their goal is to ease pressure on the nervous system by properly aligning the spine. Spinal manipulation tries to restore joint mobility by applying a controlled force into joints that have become restricted in their movement. Chiropractic is the most popular form of alternative therapy.

Prolotherapy is a treatment in which a sugar solution or other irritating substance is injected into the periosteum, the fibrous tissue covering the bones, in order to strengthen the attachment of tendons and ligaments.

Acupuncture and acupressure are based on the ancient Chinese philosophy that a life force called Qi flows through the body. If the flow is impeded, the body can become ill. Acupuncture uses needles to unblock the flow of Qi, while acupressure uses massage to accomplish the same thing.

Massage therapy can benefit back pain sufferers by increasing blood flow and circulation, decreasing tension in the muscles, reducing pain caused by tight muscles and even improving sleep. Massage therapy can provide relief for many common conditions that cause back pain, such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, sports injuries and various other soft tissue sprains and strains.

Exercise For Back Pain: Mattresses

Night time is a period when we all want to relax from our everyday tensions and troubles of life. However, if this also turns out to be a discomfoting experience, there cannot be anything more annoying. We all want to stay comfortable in our cocoons at night, but money is also an important consideration.

Due to this, homeowners have been divided into two divisions – ones who are ready to spend any price for their comfort and the others who are quite economical and therefore not very choosy about the mattress they are using unless they can actually afford those expensive comforts of luxurious mattresses.

Memory foam mattresses – a remedy for your back pain

The good news especially for these economical homeowners is that superior memory foam mattresses are now accessible at affordable rates providing you a refreshing and relaxed sleep.

One of the most common complaints that people make relating to their sleep is about their back pain. People are more likely to change sides frequently during the sleep if their hips or back is getting hurt. Foam mattresses cushion the body so well that you do not feel any pain and ensures you a sound sleep.

Even when you have any temporary pains like pregnancy, upgrading to this fine quality mattress can provide you with great rest.

By enhancing your experience of sleep, it can help you to rest your body and thereby increase your energy levels, so that you achieve more than what you decide without feeling lethargic. The popularity of memory foam mattresses has increased tremendously in the past few years. Also, its price is dropping with every passing year.

Regular v/s memory foam mattress

The disparity that lies between any regular mattress and memory foam mattress is awesome. They don't only have a visual appeal, they are something that you should actually go to the sales floor and feel it yourself to realize its true worth. Though most manufacturers make

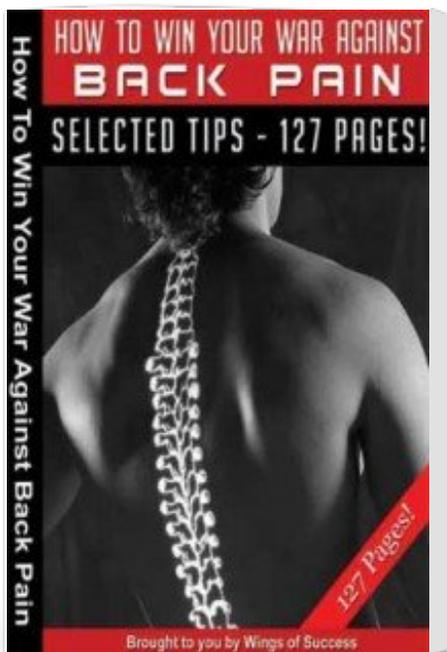
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available a complimentary trial period for these mattresses, but it is hardly possible to return it back after the trial period once you have experienced the luxury of sleeping on them.

Upgrade gradually to mattress

In case, you don't want to invest straightway into the memory foam mattress, you can initiate with a memory foam pillow or a topper. This will gradually acquaint you with the benefits of these luxurious products. It is advisable to start with a topper only and then shift to the mattress to make your experience the most contented one.

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