

Exercise for Better Back Health



Exercising helps produce strong back muscles; which in turn provides stability for your spine.

There are numerous kinds of lower back disorders, so you might be surprised to learn that exercise is part of almost every long-term treatment plan for lower back pain.

The good news is that the wide variety of exercise and fitness options ensures that nearly everyone can find a routine that is enjoyable and effective.

exercise

Exercise can help heal your back

A natural stimulus for your body's healing process is active exercise, but it needs to be performed in a controlled, gradual, and progressive manner. In part, this means you need to start slowly and build your way up over time.

Movement spurs nutrients and oxygen into the disc space and soft tissues in your spine to help heal your discs, muscles, ligaments. But the converse is also true - lack of exercise can worsen your pain by leading to stiffness, weakness, and de-conditioning.



Strong core muscles reduce stress on your spine

Strong core muscles - which include your abdomen, back, and pelvic muscles - help support and hold up your spine. This reduces the pressure on your discs, soft tissues, and joints; which in turn may bring relief from your lower back pain.

Unlike the muscles in your legs and arms, which are exercised by your everyday activities, your core muscles don't get much of a workout from daily movements. So, they need to be targeted with specific core exercises to stay strong.

In addition to strong core muscles, many lower back conditions can benefit from daily hamstring stretches, as tight hamstring muscles increase the stress on your lower back.



Walking

Walking is a gentle exercise for your lower back

Exercise walking has many benefits - it helps build strength in muscle groups that hold your body upright, brings nutrients to the spinal structures, improves flexibility, and encourages the production of pain-fighting endorphins. Perhaps best of all, it can also limit recurrences of lower back pain and reduce the intensity of lower back pain flare-ups.

Walking is also relatively gentle - meaning it has minimal impact on your spine. This contrasts with exercises such as running, which can cause significant jarring to your spine.

Exercise walking involves keeping a brisk pace, with strong posture, and going for about 30 minutes (around 2 miles) 3 or 4 times a week. If you're new to exercise, try starting with 2 or 3 short walks (5 minutes) each day, and over several weeks or months work up to being able to go for 20 to 30 minutes at a time.

If walking isn't for you, you can try any of the following low-impact aerobic exercise options:

- Water therapy
- Exercise bike
- Elliptical machine



Workout with friends

For many people, one of the most difficult parts of a regular workout routine is finding the motivation. You are busy, and you have dozens of things you need to accomplish each day. So, finding the time to fit in exercise between all your responsibilities can be a challenge, and some days all you want to do is go home and rest.

On the days you simply don't feel like exercising, the encouragement of friends can help keep you going. So, try to find at least one friend who you can exercise with on a regular basis.

If you can't think of anyone, try contacting your local park district. Odds are they offer group exercise classes where you connect with people who share similar exercise goals.

Speak.

Speak with your doctor before starting an exercise program

While exercise is part of nearly every treatment plan for lower back pain, certain kinds of exercises may make your pain worse. For example, exercises designed to treat herniated disc pain can make back pain from isthmic spondylolisthesis worse.

So, make sure to speak with your doctor before starting any exercise program to ensure you are matching the correct kinds of exercises with your specific lower back condition.

When it comes to exercise, it's important to keep trying. You may miss a few days, or not experience results as quickly as you would like, but if you keep going you may find long-term relief from your lower back pain.

Rasmussen Chiropractic

Call Today 770-461-8781

