

**21<sup>ST</sup>  
CENTURY**

# **BACK PAIN SOLUTION!**

Revealing a New, Safer and  
More Effective Back Pain Solution  
with No Side Effects.

**JAKE MORGAN D.C.**



# The 21st-Century Back Pain Solution!

Revealing a new, safer, and more effective  
back pain treatment with no side effects

Jake Morgan, D.C.

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Because you are smart enough to take time out of your busy day to invest in yourself, I already can tell certain things about your personality. Based on scientific study that analyzes people who invest in themselves and seek to generate more knowledge, these types of people are shown to have more control in their lives. In other words, instead of life's circumstances controlling you, you control life's circumstances and thus get the outcome you desire.

I dedicate this book to you. I truly understand the hardships back pain can bring. More important, I hope that you do something with the information.

Oh, and one more thing...

Thanks!

## **This Book Does Not Represent a Patient-Doctor Relationship**

The attorneys made me do this. Reading this book does not represent a doctor-patient relationship. This is not intended to diagnose or treat any condition. Every situation is unique and different. Please do not self-diagnose. If you have problems, please meet in person with me or another qualified doctor.

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## **What Others Are Saying about *The 21st-Century Back Pain Solution!***

“I am retired and an avid golfer. I began my treatments for a herniated disc in my lower back that was very painful and interfered with the quality of my life. With the great care and rehabilitation I received, I was back on the golf course in no time. I know the value of chiropractic care, as it is an essential asset in allowing my body to function properly and allows me to enjoy an independent retirement as well as continue to participate in the activities I love. Dr. Morgan has proven to be very knowledgeable and has presented nothing short of quality care. The only thing I would have done different is not waiting a month before coming in.”

—Arby Moorman, 74, retired insurance adjuster

Diagnosis: degenerative disc disease at L4-L5 and L5-S1 disc herniation

“I have worked countless automobile accidents and know firsthand the long-term effects of injuries. I was recently rear-ended in an auto accident, and before treatments with Dr. Morgan, I could not sleep well and had a stabbing pain to my left shoulder and spine, as well as lower back pain. After my treatment the pain is gone, and I seem to function better. Dr. Morgan can help and possibly keep you from having permanent damage to your body that could cause lifelong problems. Dr. Morgan has helped me tremendously. Great doctor and staff.”

—Steve Livingston, retired police officer

Diagnosis: whiplash, lumbar and cervical strain, misaligned vertebrae, severe muscle spasms

“Pre-treatment, I was in pain all the time for four months. I could not bend over far enough to put on my socks and shoes. I could not sleep well. I could not sit in a chair longer than 15 minutes because of sharp back pain. Post-treatment outcome: *No* pain. No more pain pills. I can sleep on my side, can put on my socks and shoes, and can sit in a chair for more than one hour without hurting.”

—Mark V., 45

Diagnosis: L3-S1 disc bulges

“Ten years ago, I fell on my back. I had a compression fracture of my upper back and lower back, which was never diagnosed. As time passed, the pain in my back progressively got worse. I had been seeing a neurosurgeon, and he decided to treat me

with medication and epidurals. As the injections in my spine seemed to become less effective, he told me to go see Dr. Morgan and that, if that did not work, he would have no choice but to put screws and rods in my spine to stabilize my back. After treating with Dr. Morgan and his treatment protocols for two months, I am 90 percent improved. I can't say enough about the wonderful job Dr. Morgan did for me. I avoided major surgery, and recovery has been fast! I am eager to do things I have not been able to do for the past 10 years. Thank you for giving my life back."

Lindsey P., 53

Diagnosis: lumbar stenosis, L5-S1 disc bulge, sciatica



# Chapter 1

## Why This Book?

Every back pain sufferer has a story, and I am no different. I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was a teenager, playing football my senior year in 100-degree heat, on a drought-stricken field that had become more dirt than grass, here in the great state of Texas. We had a great team, and expectations were high. We were performing tackling drills, when I collided with another kid we called “Mack” (because he was built like a Mack truck). I will admit Mack got the best of me—I was dazed and confused.

I felt an instantaneous sharp stinging sensation in my right arm, and as I began to walk back to the drill, sudden severe lower back pain dropped me to my knees. The coaches and trainer came over and told me to go into the locker room and put some ice on it, the usual advice for a kid who is injured and no longer an asset to the team. Days turned into weeks, and I was nowhere near 100 percent. I felt embarrassed, disappointed, worthless, and ashamed that I was in the locker room day after day with ice on my back and neck. I felt I was letting my team down.

I had been to a local medical doctor, who listened to my complaints but did no real examination of my spine. He basically told me to take Aleve and stop playing football for two months. Well, this was not going to cut it for me. I was not just going to roll over and not do anything for two months. I expected more out of myself, and I had to get back on the field.

One morning a friend and I were watching ESPN Classic network, which was airing footage of NFL legend Joe Montana playing in a Super Bowl. During pregame warm-ups, he was on the sideline, lying on a table as a man treated his back. I asked my friend about it, and he explained that Montana had some back issues and was getting worked on by a chiropractor. I was amazed to see what was going on. I thought to myself, if it was good enough for Joe Montana it's got to be good enough for me. The next day I began my search for a chiropractor.

It so happened a new chiropractor had just begun a practice in my town. He took X-rays, explaining to me that, due to my injury, I had subluxations (or misaligned vertebrae) that were irritating the nerves in my neck and back, along with severe muscle spasms. It would take time, but he felt certain he would be able to help me. I immediately began

treatment and, after five or six visits, I was 70 percent improved. Within 12 visits I felt *better* than my old self.

We had a great year that season going 15–1 with our only loss in the state championship game. I broke a single season record in points scored, and I was named 2002 District Football MVP. And so my journey began in helping others become pain-free in their game of life.

I tell you my story for three reasons:

- 1. I know what I am talking about.** Everything you read in this book is based on real live applications, while treating thousands of patients, young and old, who've experienced nagging painful conditions to severe disabling pain.
- 2. I don't want you to be frustrated or fall into despair.** The fact is that you can overcome back pain.
- 3. I don't want angry readers demanding to know, "Why didn't you tell me sooner?"**

## Chapter 2

### Your Health Is Your Most Valuable Asset

*To keep the body in good health is a duty...otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.*

—Buddha

#### **Is Back Pain Controlling Your Life?**

Does any of the following sound familiar? You might not be able to play with your grandkids, you begin skipping trips with a spouse, or you gradually stop working in the yard, something that you enjoy. Perhaps you are no longer able to play golf, work, or even sit in the car for a 30-minute drive. It's almost impossible for anyone around you to understand how you feel. You can't remember the last time you even had a restful night's sleep. Nothing's worse than feeling great mentally, but physically feeling held back from life because your strained back or sciatica pain in your leg hurts and won't go away! Your husband, your wife, your kids—they don't understand the sudden *catch* that can drop you to your knees.

They don't know about turning over in bed every five minutes and then sleeping in the recliner or couch the rest of the night when you can't get comfortable. They don't have a clue about trying to get up the next day and facing the world when you're totally *exhausted* and still in pain. You are slowly turning into a grumpy person (and no one wants to be around that). You might feel embarrassed or disgusted with the same old back pain or, worse, perhaps you minimize your complaints and think you just have to live with it. You realize that no one really understands what it feels like, as they might secretly think you are faking it. Or they know you hurt but think it can't be that bad.

Maybe you have seen other doctors or professionals who don't seem all that concerned with your back health. I can speak from personal experience on this case. I want you to realize the opportunities that can be missed in life if your pain is preventing you from your life goals or your ability to help secure your life, your family's life. I am truly passionate about helping back-pain sufferers find relief, but more important, helping them to an improved life by alleviating a burden that might inhibit the true quality of their lives or families' lives.

## **Help Me Help You!**

*Help me help you! Help me help you!*

—Jerry Maguire

It's crucial to value your health and, if you're reading this book, you probably understand this concept. Think about it—without your health you really have nothing. Pay more attention to your health since, as you age, it might become more difficult to find the time to exercise, watch what you eat, nurture your mind, or follow doctors' recommendations. This is sometimes due to life circumstances or the belief that you have other more important priorities, such as spouses, kids, or loved ones, who might take your time and attention because you know they depend on you and need you to be healthy. Most people have priorities, and many have others who depend on them, so no more excuses. Make a commitment to your health, knowing that it's difficult to serve others—and yourself—if you're in poor health. The smallest decisions or slightest changes every day can either move you toward or away from better health. The choice is yours—you always have a choice. Many people know they should improve their health, but the large majority never take action.

The majority of patients I work with—and, likely, most of the population—generally want one or more of these three things:

1. Sleep better
2. Improve energy levels
3. Decrease pain to maintain physical independence and to continue sharing life's experiences with loved ones

I am here to help you achieve success in all three areas of concern. And I'll need you to...help me help you.

## **You Must Love Yourself First!**

*I believe that the greatest gift you can give your family and the world is a healthy you.*

—Joyce Meyer

I am reminded of a patient named Pat, a 55-year-old lady who works from home. She sits at a desk, working on a computer for 8 to 9 hours a day, and suffers from chronic lower back pain. She is a good and caring person, but the fact is she cares for everyone

but herself. Pat has not given herself permission to take care of her own needs. In your upbringing you were probably taught to share and think of others, both good qualities but if you are physically unable you are limited in what you can do. Pat was a single mother who raised three kids and always took care of their needs, financially, health-wise, and in relation to extracurricular activities. She has battled a number of health issues, including back pain, digestive issues, complications from diabetes, but has really done nothing proactive to combat these conditions.

The harsh reality is that Pat even takes better care of her dog than herself. She told me how she noticed her dog limping and immediately took her to the veterinarian. The dog had a hip condition and underwent a surgery, or maybe multiple surgeries, that cost over \$7,500. Pat said she did not think twice about spending the money to help her dog. There is nothing wrong with that—she loves and cares for her dog. The dog still has a limp but seems to be feeling better. Yet, when I suggested Pat invest in a chair that better supports her lower back while working and possibly an ergonomically correct work desk to decrease the frequency of her neck and back pain, she responded with, “I can’t do that. I am getting new carpet for my house; it will be too expensive right now.” The items might cost her \$500 but could potentially save her multiple thousands, or even tens of thousands, of dollars in future health-care expenses, lost time at work, decreased years she is able to earn an income, not to mention the benefits such as enjoying life’s moments with her kids, free of pain and suffering. Now, I have a professional and moral obligation to help her...but I can’t help someone who doesn’t care enough about her health to make an investment in *herself*. You must love yourself first! Make a commitment to love and care for yourself. Give yourself permission to do what’s best for you.

## Chapter 3

### What You Should Expect from Any Doctor Treating Your Pain

*The art of healing comes from nature, not from the physician. Therefore the physician must start from nature, with an open mind.*

—Paracelsus

- Make sure the doctor listens to you—I mean *really* listens to your complaints.
- A physician should always start with conservative treatment first.
- Have him or her perform a complete physical exam, actually touching and feeling your painful region, not just looking at it with a shrug of the shoulders.
- Don't get confused by fancy doctor lingo. Did you understand the problem? Ask questions. If you're talked down to, like you're a child, move on to someone who will take the time to listen to and guide you with respect. Your doctor should be a trusted partner in your health plan, not a dictator.
- Learn about your doctor's qualifications. Is he or she up-to-date with the latest treatment and techniques, or has this doctor been doing the same old thing for the past 20 years?
- The most important thing is to properly work up and diagnose your problem, and not dish out a general diagnosis of "back pain," "neck pain," or "you're getting older so just deal with it." It is not a professional diagnosis if it tells you nothing of what is causing your pain.
- Determining what is causing you pain is done by listening to you very carefully, performing a physical examination, and proper diagnostic studies to pinpoint your problem, usually X-rays, MRI, CT scans, or nerve testing to name a few.
- A good doctor will perform a detailed and comprehensive treatment plan based on the most up-to-date treatment guidelines according to your type of back issue.
- Ideally your pain will be treated to a point of full recovery or to a point of maximum medical improvement (MMI).

- If needed, make referrals to other health-care providers.

At this point, you probably realize that just opening up the phone book and choosing the closest chiropractor, medical doctor, physical therapist, or...the guy with the biggest ad could prove to be a *very* costly mistake.

## Chapter 4

### 5 Back Pain Myths

*Change is the end result of all true learning.*

—Leo Buscaglia

If you are reading this book, most likely you or a loved one is experiencing, or has experienced, back pain. Maybe you've tried some of the treatments out there but haven't found any lasting relief. After treating thousands of patients, I've narrowed down the top five myths and mistakes back-pain sufferers have continued to make.

#### **Myth 1: "I think I am 'too healthy' and fit to have back pain."**

The reality is that even elite athletes constantly put their spines at risk due to the very nature of certain sports. Many people exercise every day in at-risk positions, creating a ticking time bomb of a soon-to-become injured or painful back. Many people create severe muscle imbalances, or make tight muscles tighter and weak muscles weaker, which leads to abnormal stress or pulling on the spine and hips.

#### **Myth 2: "Being overweight is causing all my back pain."**

Being overweight can increase the stress on your spine but, in most cases, is only a complicating factor. Your spine is designed to carry the body, large or small, as long as you have proper stabilization, such as proper muscle balance, properly aligned vertebrae, and evened pressure on your discs. So being overweight is usually not the cause of the pain but can create an extra burden, making it more difficult to institute changes in the spine.

#### **Myth 3: "I believe all doctors have the same training."**

Many doctors have good intentions, but there are specialists for a reason. The body is so complex, and it can seem even more complex when something is going wrong. Many doctors continue their professional training throughout their careers but, for some, the last time they learned anything new about their craft was during post-graduate schooling. Good devoted doctors constantly evolve, try new techniques, and prescribe multiple treatments (since no one patient is the same and many respond to different treatments).

#### **Myth 4: "Bed rest is the best thing for my back pain."**



Acute severe back pain might call for bed rest and limited mobility for a short time, but that is more of an exception than the rule. Improved healing includes light movements or exercise to increase blood flow, flexibility, and range of motion.

**Myth 5: “As I understand it, I probably just threw my back out.”**

Your back doesn't just “go out.” In other words, you don't catch the back-pain bug like a bacteria or virus. Back pain, neck pain, sciatica, disc problems, or pinched nerve comes about for the most part as a process. It takes weeks, months, and years to develop problems in your back. Your lower back system breaks down over time with imbalances of your back and pelvic musculature, along with misalignments of bones called vertebrae in your back. Eventually, you gradually start to feel pain or small meaningless tasks aggravate your back. Most back pain is due to years of skeletal and muscular changes from lifestyle patterns and habits or old injuries. I have seen the seemingly fittest people—cyclists, runners, body builders—all capable of developing back pain.

Recently a 30-year-old man was referred by his best friend to our clinic. This is the conversation we had about this back pain: “Doc, my back went out. It does this about once a month. This time all I was doing was picking up a bar of soap from the bathroom floor.”

I told him, “Your back should never ‘go out’ or cause pain while bending over to pick up something.” I explained that changes in his spine, and the muscles that support his spine, are imbalanced and the bending over to pick up the bar of soap was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. His back will continue to give him pain monthly until he addresses its cause.

## Chapter 5

### Five Deadly Sins Made When Dealing With Back Pain

*Man needs difficulties; they are necessary for health.*

—Carl Jung

#### **Mistake 1: Treating only the symptom.**

Taking NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) or other daily medications to control the pain is just masking the deeper cause of your symptoms. I have been treating patients long enough to know there is value in medications to control pain in acute situations or help you function in chronic situations. But believing a pill will cure your back pain is not realistic. Even small children know that when the fire alarm is going off, there is a fire—they don't just put earplugs in their ears and ignore the alarm. The same concept applies to physical pain—pain is a symptom, a warning, that something is wrong that you need to address.

#### **Mistake 2: Continuing to do nothing.**

Believing that there are no more treatment options or there is no one left to help you is The “I GIVE UP” Syndrome. Maybe you have tried treatments with minimal or no results, or did not follow through with treatment recommendations. Perhaps you were told that surgery is your only option left or that you will just have to deal with it the rest of your life. Even if no one has found the true cause of your problem, do you really think giving up is going to improve your situation?

#### **Mistake 3: Hoping it will go away on its own.**

Well, many times it might improve, temporarily, but not taking action to determine why there is pain leads to reoccurring problems. *Action* is the key word.

#### **Mistake 4: Not following doctors' recommendations.**

Back specialists treat spinal conditions every day, spent years studying disorders of the spine, and—unless you had an acute traumatic accident, such as a car wreck, that initiated your pain—know a gradual process occurs to develop back or neck problems. Specialists know it can take multiple treatments, education about your condition, and lifestyle changes, all of which take time. They know you can't always just cut out the pain or permanently mask it with medication. Let me put it this way: As a general rule, it takes 90 days to change human physiology. This is why military or police training is usually around a 90-day boot camp. Back specialists know that, to change your body or

lifestyle routine in a positive way, it takes about 90 days. So in order to change conditions in your spine, you'll need a little patience—nothing wrong with that.

### **Mistake 5: Failing to take responsibility for where you are.**

Many back pain sufferers go to doctors looking for a quick fix. Most doctors are very smart and good at what they do, but they are not necessarily miracle workers. No one should care about your body more than you do. You must be part of the process in helping relieve your back pain. Own or take responsibility for improving your condition. It takes the right mindset to overcome your back pain, so don't act like a victim. "What is the difference between an owner and a victim?" you might ask. Keep reading...

### **Owners vs. Victims**

- **Owners** take full responsibility for their outcomes, knowing they are the sole creators of their actions and reactions, successes and failures
- **Victims**, on the other hand, see themselves as having been dealt a bad hand, continually waiting on the next thing that will happen to them. They take no responsibility, placing blame for their circumstances or pain on life, other people, and bad luck.
  
- **Owners** take it upon themselves to seek professional guidance and to manage the pain, and say, "I want to be pain-free so I'm going to do my exercises, prescribed treatments from my doctor, and stop or limit things that make my condition worse," or, "I want to be pain-free so I am going to make time and do my exercises. even if it is uncomfortable."
- **Victims**, however might say, "I know I should do my exercises or follow the treatments my doctor told me to do, but it hurts too much. This is not fair. Why me? I will continue to do nothing to improve my situation."
  
- **Owners** take action and responsibility to get better.
- **Victims**, as you probably can tell, prolong recovery because they are their own worst enemies.
  
- **Owners** ask, "What can I do?"
- **Victims** ask, "Who can I blame?"

As it relates to your back, the way a person responds to pain is a choice. You can own your pain, or act like a victim.

### **Back Pain Is Not Your Fault**

You might have been programmed to believe you should just deal with the pain, stop complaining. Or perhaps you have not realized the destructive lifestyle you were putting your body through. I don't want you to be hard on yourself. All of that stuff doesn't

matter—what matters is that you currently take action to improve your condition. The action you take and the knowledge you gain will last the rest of your life.

I often have patients who do not like to hear how long treatment times could take. They are not committed to taking care of the most precious asset they have in their physical health—their bodies. If they are not ready to improve their health and change their lives, I cannot help them. Many of these people continue to go on wondering, through life, why they remain in pain and misery. I call that self-sabotage, as they always have a choice. I cannot help those who do not want to be helped. I would rather spend my time and full attention with the patients who have made the wise decision to improve not only their health but life. The principle of self-responsibility is imperative for those who want to get healthy.

Some people have a difficult time, emotionally, dealing with back pain. “What’s wrong with me? Why me? I should have done something sooner.” Don’t be too hard on yourself. Many of these changes have occurred over long periods of time. Someone told you not to worry about it, to take an aspirin and it will go away. It can be challenging to find the time to exercise, eat right, think right...until you perhaps find yourself in a crisis situation. Take the crisis, and turn it into a learning opportunity. Vow to take a proactive approach to solving your problem. Don’t dwell on it—do something about it!

## Chapter 6

### Treat the Cause, Not the Symptom

*The best way to escape from your problem is to solve it!*

—Tony Robbins

Treat the cause, not the symptom? *Well, duh, Dr. Morgan—everyone knows that!* Yes, most people might know it...but it is not always carried out. Identifying back pain is not as black-and-white as it might seem. Pain can be a nuisance, a dull ache, stiffness, or it can be debilitating. Back pain can be a tricky situation, and many sufferers continue to experience discomfort because the true cause of pain is never located. So, how do we track down the cause?

First, we need to discuss “referred pain.” You are familiar with referred pain, whether you realize it or not. A classic example is when someone is having symptoms of a heart attack—he might have pain in his left arm and neck, but the problem is not the neck or the arm; it is the heart. The same situation can occur in regards to back pain. Imbalances of the spine and movement dysfunctions can have direct effect on joint surfaces, thus potentially leading to joint degeneration or joint decay. In some cases, joint degeneration might be a direct *source* of pain, but the actual *cause* of pain is often secondary to muscle imbalance. Therefore, clinicians should find and treat the cause of the pain rather than focusing on the source of the pain. You might have pain that travels to your buttocks and think the problem is a pain in your buttocks, when it could actually be referred pain from your lower back. Conversely you might think you have a pinched nerve in your lower back, but it could be compressed in your buttocks or hamstring—treat the lower back all you want, but unless the problem in the buttocks or hamstring is addressed the pain might never go away.

There is way too much confusion in regards to addressing back pain. As the medical world evolves, we become so specialized to the point that many specialists have blinders on and focus on only one problem. In reality, the majority of the time there are multiple system breakdowns that need to be addressed. Instead the body becomes the territory of different specialists—for example, for ankle pain you might see someone to repair the joint or a therapist to strengthen muscles. They all do valuable work, but what gets lost is the realization of how the whole body or system works—bones, joints, muscles, nerves—and how they all coordinate and contribute to health and wellness, or to pain and dysfunction. Many back surgeries fail due to the fact that an already weak spine is now weakened even further. But, much of the time, failed lower back surgeries occur due to a lack of understanding the whole body system. Many traditional back pain

treatments focus primarily, if not exclusively, on just getting rid of the pain. In the process the cause of that pain fails to be identified and addressed.

As you will see, back pain can be a minefield of potential problems. Read on to learn about separate isolated problems with the back, when in reality it is usually a combination of dysfunction...and finding the true cause is key.

### **Pain Is Your Body's Alarm Saying Something Is Wrong...So Listen!**

I speak to patients daily, and many of them tell me this phrase: "I have this normal pain in my back." Normal pain? There is no such thing! Pain is the way your body says to you, *Something is screwed up*. Not exactly technical terminology, but it will do. Many people ignore an underlying problem, or a small monster, creating a recipe for continued problems that could very well lead to a huge problem, or a BIG monster you can no longer ignore. Ignoring your pain is like putting a piece of duct tape over the "check engine" light on your vehicle.

In an optimum healthy state, your body is pain-free. I will explain more on the system breakdown further in this book....

## Chapter 7

# How Your Back Works and When the System Breaks Down

*Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines.*

—Robert H. Schuller

Let's look at the spinal system—muscles, connective tissue, joints, bones, and nerves.

The spine is a very complex system and, to understand how it works, you need a basic comprehension of how its components work. No one component is more important than the other, as they all have to function and integrate properly in order to limit damage. The bones provide rigid support, while the muscles and connective tissue stabilize the joints, and the master system that controls all of the muscles is comprised of the nerves. All of these components have to work in a coordinated manner.

- The lower back is made up of *vertebrae*, bones that are stacked one on top of the other.
- In between each of the vertebrae is a *disc*, the cushion between the bones of your spine. The discs carries 70 percent to 80 percent of your body weight.
- The *ligaments* are strong connective tissue that attaches the bones together.
- *Tendons* are strong connective tissues attaching muscles to bones.

Any dysfunction of the above can lead to abnormal movement, wear and tear, or bony and soft tissue decay, thus leading to pain.

The back anatomy includes small nerves that control tiny muscles, holding your spine in alignment. The muscles control the joints, so it is very rare if you have an isolated nerve problem. When you have an injury or dysfunction of the spine via micro or macro trauma, the nerves that control the muscles do not fire properly. The muscles stop moving the joints of your spine, create joint misalignment or improper movement, and allow stagnation of fluid that lubricates your joints. The body slowly deteriorates—weeks, months, years pass, and potentially culminates into back pain or possible degenerative disc disease. This can set up a high probability category for disc herniations, disc bulges, nerve pain, muscles spasms, chronic pain, and impairment. As you see, it is a complicated system. Moving on, let's take a look at different conditions that cause back pain.

## **Old Injuries Come Back to Haunt You—Back Pain Is Not Just “Old Age”**

Your back takes a beating during your lifetime. Most back pain occurs due to two major categories: 1) micro or macro trauma or 2) too much stress to the back. This can include repetitive strains, such as sitting, or prior trauma or injuries to the back, like a fall, auto collision, or any type of accident. But many people believe their pain and decline are from “normal aging,” so they believe it’s normal to have back pain. This simply is not true. Just because it is common does not make it normal. If that were true, all 360 joints in your body would hurt since your whole body is the same age.

The majority of problems or conditions in the spine are due to new or old injuries, categorized as *macro* trauma (for example, that skiing accident that hurt your back, lifting a too-heavy bag of dog food, or falling off a ladder). Other back conditions result from *micro* trauma—postural strain is one, such as sitting for six to eight hours daily; compressing your spine while looking down or at a computer at work for the last five years; exercising the wrong way; repetitive movements, like picking up your kids; or an occupation that requires a lot of bending or twisting. Many people can relate to one or two macro traumas to the back in life, and it is very difficult to avoid micro trauma. So it is usually a combination of events that have an effect on your back, and it can affect multiple sensitive structures. Trauma in either form—macro or micro—and muscle imbalances are the most common reasons for lower back pain.

## **Lack of Stimulation or Nutrients Can Break Down Your Back**

We have talked about excess strain, as well as mechanical injuries from our past, but a sometimes overlooked reason for back pain is a deficiency, too little of something. This can include having too little nutrients in your body, too little water in your diet, or too much coffee or other diuretics that deplete fluids and can lead to toxic buildup in the body. You must be adequately hydrated at all times, as the majority of the discs, your cushions, in your spine are made up of water. Too little vitamins or minerals, due to a poor diet lacking in fruits and vegetables, can put a stress on the joints, muscles, and nerves of your back.

Lack of stimulation of your back is related to not enough movement in the form of exercise that helps keep your muscles toned and joints lubricated. Too little movement of your joints stagnates the fluids that lubricate them. This will stagnate and limit nutrients, oxygen, and blood supply to the cartilage of your joints in your back, potentially leading to inflammation, as well as early onset of arthritis and pain. We all know that the obesity problem we have in the United States of America is partially the result of sedentary jobs and poor dietary habits, all of which contribute to multiple health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, and so forth. So as you already know, it is time to get moving!



## Chapter 8

# Postural Syndromes That Can Turn into Monster Neck and Back Pain

*Good posture equals a good day.*

—Dr. Jake Morgan

Most people are unaware of the muscle imbalances that cause their lower back pain, symptoms including a dull, achy, tight feeling; sharp severe pain; or lack of mobility—all early signs of spinal problems that can lead to compressed disc, nerve irritation, blood flow restriction, or even limit the amount of oxygen you can inhale.

Your spine is the central support structure of your body. Your spinal cord carries the neurological lifeline from your brain to all other parts of your body. Your health really depends on the flow of energy through an unrestricted nervous system. When your spine suffers, your overall health can suffer too. When you respect your spine by taking good care of it, your spine serves you well by offering its strength and flexibility for a long time to come.

### **How Do I Know if I Have Muscle Imbalances or Postural Imbalances?**

The easiest way I can explain good posture to you is to have you imagine looking at the left or right side of your body in a full-length mirror. The first step is to visualize dime-size dots at the center of your ankle, knee, hip, waist, rib cage, shoulder, neck, ear, and head. The next step is to connect the dots.

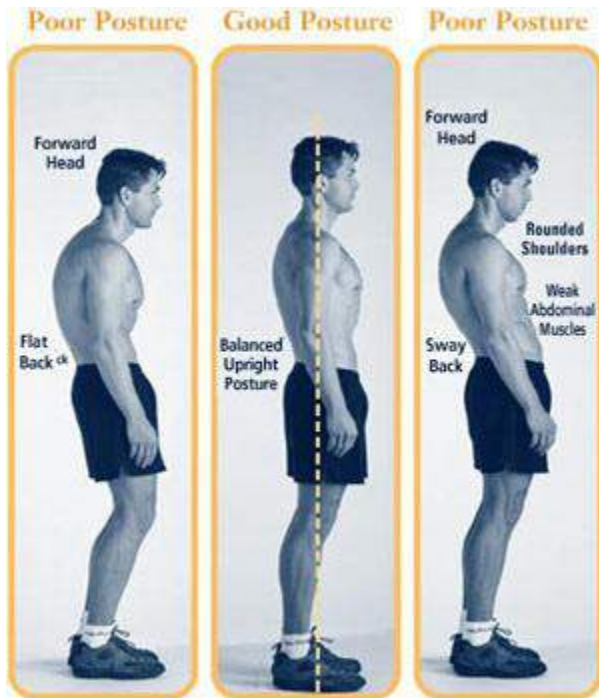
When all the dots align in a straight line, you have the least amount of pressure on your discs and joints. When the line connecting the dots is not straight, there will be pain or discomfort.

Here is an easy way to remember this: *Straight line, less pain! Hunched up, more pain!* Think about those two sentences during your day. Check your body position at least once an hour. Ask yourself, “How is my posture? Do I need to straighten up?”

Please realize that it’s actually easier to stand up straight than it is to stand crooked or hunched. You use more muscles when you hunch up your back. It’s similar when we consider smiling or frowning. We use fewer muscles to smile than we do to frown. I believe that means we were meant to be happy! So stand up tall, and *smile*.

## A Healthy Spine Equals a Balanced Spine

- **Upper Cross Syndrome**—refers to the postural imbalances of the upper portion of your body, including the neck, upper back, chest, and shoulders
- **Lower Cross Syndrome**—refers to the postural imbalances of the lower portion of your body, including the lower back, abdomen, hips, knees, ankles, and feet



(Figure 1: Postural syndromes)

In your mind, picture your spine as a sailboat mast stabilized and balanced by wire stays. Wires are in the rear of the mast, which represents the musculature in your back, and mast stabilized by wires in the front, your abdominal muscles. A muscle imbalance can create a tug-of-war on your back. Due to your lifestyle, whether repetitive or sedentary, imbalance creates some muscles to become very tight, which pulls and tugs on the spine. The opposite set of muscles get turned off due to a neurological process called “reciprocal inhibition.” For example, when you contract your bicep (the muscle on the front of your arm) your triceps, the muscle on the back of the arm is turned off—it’s how your body is designed to coordinate movement. Your muscles, when out of balance, do not properly support your back. This principle applies to your shoulders, neck, knees, hips, ankles, and wrists.

Let’s look at a couple of things some people do on a daily basis that can contribute to this muscular imbalance: long periods of sitting; working multiple hours on a computer; long-haul trucking; repeated bending at the waist, such as in construction work; talking on the telephone with your head bent to one side or the other; carrying a heavy purse or backpack around your neck or shoulder; carrying a baby on one hip or the other, causing the hips to be uneven or rotated; or exercising improperly. Oh, and one more

thing, take that darn wallet out of your back pocket. One of the worst things you can do is sit on a wallet and create uneven pressure on your pelvis and lower back, creating improper alignment in the spine—then one day you bend forward and have severe lower back pain, or a gradual increase of sciatica or pinched nerve. Again, these changes occur over time. If not corrected, this can lead to permanent postural deformities and a lifetime of chronic pain.

### **Look in the Mirror at Your Posture**

Do this self-assessment exercise, standing in front of a full-length mirror:

1. Does your head tilt to the left or right?
2. Is one shoulder higher than the other?
3. Is one pant leg longer than the other?
4. Now turn to the side, and have someone tell you if your neck is in front of your shoulders. Is it? If so, this is called “anterior head posture.”
5. Now look at the bottoms of your shoes or boots that you wear daily. Do they have areas that are more worn out than other areas of your shoe?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, these are direct examples of postural syndromes. To fix postural problems, your goal is to balance these predictable muscle and spinal postural positions.

Postural pain can be a small problem that is more of a nuisance...or it can be very debilitating. You might have more than one symptom, and I know I sound like a broken record, but you must always determine why or what is the reason for pain—not just, “I have pain here, so let’s fix this one spot.” I have found in my practice that 90 percent of people have structural problems that develop over years before pain arises. So I want you to look in the mirror: Do you have a slouched or slumped upper back and rounded shoulders? Look at your lower back—does your abdomen protrude? Is one leg longer than the other? Does one pant leg fit longer than the other? Have someone help you check.

As you now know, these distortion patterns, along with various muscular and joint imbalances that created your pain, interrupt your life. It can take months, usually years, to develop, and the true cause is the *habitual* nature of pain. Your body is a programmable system—when you perform any task repeatedly over time, it becomes a habit. For example, fitness is the body forming habits so you can increase endurance or speed for running.

**It takes approximately 90 to 120 days to change human physiology, so the goal is to create new muscle and joint memory.** Once you have adopted the various lower back or pelvis distortion patterns, the muscular and joint imbalances are set—after continued practice, they suddenly become a habit. Your body believes these to be “normal.” Once your body accepts these as normal, it then stops trying to correct or remove them.

These patterns are now ingrained in your spine and pelvis, and over time pain will develop. This is the main reason most back pain treatments fail—they don't change the habits.

If you don't identify the underlying cause, or have symptom-based treatment, pain eases temporarily but then returns again...and the cycle continues. To change and break habits, keep targeting the area initially for 90 days. If you only work on muscles, and not the joints or pelvic imbalances, chasing symptoms or temporary pain relief only, then habits will remain. **To get long-term back pain relief, you must balance your muscles, joints, and pelvic distortions, and break any unhealthy habits that have formed.** You must form new habits and train your body to become and remain pain-free. This can be achieved only if you learn to help treat yourself.

### **Your Chair Is Killing You**

If you're reading this book sitting down—the position we all hold more than any other, for an average of 8.9 hours a day—stop and take stock of how your body feels. Is there an ache in your lower back? Are you experiencing light numbness in your buttocks and lower thigh? Are you feeling a little down?

These symptoms are all so common, and they're not good. They might well be caused by doing precisely what you're doing—sitting. New research in the diverse fields of epidemiology, molecular biology, biomechanics, and physiology is converging toward a startling conclusion: Sitting is a public-health risk. And exercising doesn't offset it. "People need to understand that the biomechanics of sitting are completely different from walking or exercising. Sitting too much is not the same as exercising too little. They do completely different things to the body." University of Missouri microbiologist Marc Hamilton

In a 2005 article in *Science* magazine, Dr. James A. Levine, an obesity specialist at the Mayo Clinic, pinpointed why, despite similar diets, some people are fat and others aren't. "We found that people with obesity have a natural predisposition to be attracted to the chair, and that's true even after obese people lose weight," Dr. Levine says. "What fascinates me is that humans evolved over 1.5 million years entirely on the ability to walk and move. And literally 150 years ago, 90 percent of human endeavor was still agricultural. In a tiny speck of time we've become chair-sentenced."

Within a couple hours of sitting, healthy cholesterol plummets by 20 percent. So your posture and health of your spine are related to much more than back pain, it can affect the nerves that are protected by the spine or vertebrae, since these nerves help regulate every function of your body. There is a direct correlation between the health of your spine and the health of your entire body.

The chair you're sitting in now is likely contributing to the problem. "Short of sitting on a spike, you can't do much worse than a standard office chair," says Galen Cranz, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Generally speaking, the slight "S" shape of the spine serves you well. "If you think about a heavy weight on a C or S, which is going to collapse more easily? The C," Cranz says. When you sit, the lower lumbar curve collapses, turning the spine's natural S-shape into a C, hampering the abdominal and back musculature that supports the body. The body is left to slouch, and the lateral and oblique muscles grow weak and unable to support its weight.

This, in turn, causes problems with other parts of the body. When you're sitting, you bear all that weight through the pelvis and spine, putting the highest pressure on your back discs. Judging by MRIs, even sitting with perfect posture causes serious pressure on your back.

Due to current lifestyles, many sit and work at a computer—I do not believe we were designed to do this. At the very least, take action by investing in a lumbar support or, better yet, an inflatable exercise ball to activate muscles in your lower back while you sit. (Do not sit on the ball in a slouched position.)

If you must sit on a chair, the best sitting alternative is perching in a half-standing position at barstool height that keeps weight on the legs and leaves the S-curve intact.

Limit or eliminate all culprits of bad posture—television watching, computer time, and excessive pressing exercises.

In summary, as you've come to realize, dealing with back pain can be a complicated undertaking. All the major anatomical parts—the nerves that are involved with the spine, the cartilage discs that protect the spine, and the postural muscles that support it—must be balanced to be healthy. When these functions are compromised or altered, inflammation, irritation, compression, and pain can result. And by this time, you should realize that treating only symptoms is not the answer. There is no magic potion to cure back pain, but let's get one thing straight—you have quite a lot to gain by adopting healthy practices to take care of your back.

### **Why Didn't My Doctor Tell Me All This Information?**

You might wonder why your doctor has never told you about muscle imbalances or other potential causes of your back pain. Well, it could be several possible reasons. Health care has gotten so impersonal that some practitioners are just trying to see all their patients and be able to get home before dinnertime. Some medical schools tend to focus on treating symptoms, not causes. Many pharmaceutical companies are making billions of dollars in profits each year and might not be genuinely concerned with getting

you out of pain. Many practices have hospital or group systems that restrict them from sending their patients anywhere but at their locations.

Most medical professionals work very hard and provide good services, but it is difficult to stay current with all of the new teachings and advances. Many insurance companies have a stranglehold on doctors and will only pay for certain things or place time restrictions on treatment and so a proper treatment plan does not get set up, let alone identifying the true cause of your pain. Fortunately for you, there are other approaches to resolving back pain that do not involve surgery or potentially harmful medications.

## Chapter 9

### Types of Pain

*Pain is temporary. It may last a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a year, but eventually it will subside and something else will take its place. If I quit, however, it lasts forever.*

—Lance Armstrong

#### **Nerve Pain**

Nerve pain usually feels like numbness, tingling, pins-and-needles, sharp shooting, burning, or weakness. Usually the nerve or nerves are compressed, pinched, stretched, or injured in some way. This can be a tight muscle squeezing the nerve. For example, a condition called “piriformis syndrome” is a muscle spasm in your buttocks that creates sciatica or pressure on your sciatic nerve. The source of the problem is not in the back at all. You might have numbness, or tingling in hands or arms, which can be from nerves being irritated in the neck or arm.

There are small canals or openings in your spinal column that allow room for your nerves to live. These nerves are extensions from your spinal cord, and the nerves control the functions of your organs. Any pressure or inflammation around the nerves can create pain and dysfunction to the organ that it supplies. Several conditions can cause compression on nerves. These include stenosis, a narrowing of the canal due to arthritic or degenerative changes in the spine. You might have a disc herniation, a bulge that puts pressure on the nerve. You could have a disc or ligament that is torn or injured and the swelling is irritating the nerve. A vertebra in your spine can misalign or become out of proper position, putting pressure on a nerve. Nerves that are compressed long periods of time can be permanently damaged, leading to muscle weakness, a loss of muscle tone. A condition called “foot drop” is one in which the nerves, those that connect to the muscles that lift your foot while walking, are no longer functioning. Sometimes there’s compression in one area of a nerve and the far end of that nerve is where the patient feels the symptoms. To be clear, compression of the nerve might be in your back, but you can feel numbness, tingling, burning, or pain in your toes or feet. These can lead to peripheral neuropathy, which is a topic for another book.

#### **SUCCESS CASE STUDY**

Paul is a 55-year-old truck driver, who has been driving for 15 years. He came into the clinic with searing pain traveling down the back of his right leg. He was certain he had herniated a disc in his lower back. I asked him why he believed that, and he said that his coworker, who referred him to my clinic, had the same thing happen to him and it was a herniated disc putting pressure on his sciatic nerve. After examination and X-rays of his lower back, no real sign of any problems were found in his lower back. As I was

examining his lower back, I saw a three-inch wallet in his right pocket. I asked Paul if he typically removed the wallet while he was driving or sitting, and he responded “no.” I removed the wallet and felt a muscle, called the piriformis, which is located in the buttocks right where the wallet was setting. He just about came off the table when I touched the area. “What the hell was that, Doc?” he asked. *I think we found the problem.* It is known as piriformis syndrome, a compression of the sciatic nerve due to irritation of the piriformis muscle that lives in the buttocks. The piriformis muscle was choking his sciatic nerve—the problem was not in his back at all. I have seen many medical providers misdiagnose or run up medical bills on MRIs of the lower back and other diagnostic tests, all of which come back normal. Many just think a patient must be exaggerating the symptoms, but it’s an issue in how some of these medical professionals are trained. Paul’s condition improved after six weeks of muscle balance therapy, pelvic realignment, electrical nerve stimulation to heal the nerve, and laser therapy. Oh, and removing his wallet while driving is key in not making the sciatic nerve mad again.

### **Soft Tissue Pain**

Muscle pain and fascial pain.

Symptoms include burning, sharp pain, deep ache, spasm, or tightness. Fascia is the connective tissue or membrane that covers the muscles or encases our muscles. Visualize it as the casing around meat in a string of sausage. Connective tissue is very important in that it allows your muscles to move freely, limiting friction and irritation. This connective tissue is sometimes damaged by repetitive strains or micro traumas, which lead to damaged or scarred fascia. These types of problems will not show up on any X-rays or MRIs, but are usually diagnosed by palpation by a trained professional who feels the symptomatic region, watches how you walk, evaluates your posture, and moves the affected body part to get clues from the dysfunctional region (another good reason your doctor should always feel the painful region). Many health-care providers, although well-meaning, do not have the knowledge or training to diagnose these issues. They usually have tunnel vision, and if there is no evidence of dysfunction and the X-rays or other tests come back normal, they might tell you there is nothing wrong even when there is an issue.

### **Trigger Points**

You might be thinking right now of that knot in your shoulders or upper back—this is called a “trigger point.” An *active* trigger point will refer pain to other regions of the body when you apply pressure to it. A *latent* trigger point is when the pain in the muscle is localized and does not to other regions of the body. Trigger points usually develop in overworked muscles that contract and never relax. Contraction of the muscles compresses on the blood vessels that feed the muscle—nutrients such as oxygen can’t flow to the damaged muscle. What happens to most organisms when they can’t get oxygen? They die. Therefore, this can lead to permanent or chronic damage in muscle tissue. When chronic compression occurs, blood stagnates as it cannot escape and



rejuvenate. Lactic acid, a byproduct of muscle use, cannot escape, which leads to irritation and more trigger points, or commonly known as muscle knots. To treat this you want to restore healthy blood flow to get rid of toxins and allow healthy nutrients to return back to that region. Chronic muscle pain develops for several reasons, most commonly due to postural changes, repetitive motions, or emotional stress (we will talk more on stress later in this book.)

Predictable painful regions, which we will call problem areas, are usually located in muscles in the following regions: between your shoulder blades, around your buttocks, and on top of your shoulders. Trigger points or tight muscles can lead to misalignments of the bones of your spine. It is very seldom you don't find a trigger point without misaligned bones in the neck, upper back, or lower back.

Effective treatment for trigger points includes the following:

- Joint manipulation to restore proper joint movement and take unwanted workload off the spinal muscles
- Trigger point therapy to make muscle pain disappear
- Muscle balance treatments to improve postural strains
- Natural anti-inflammatory, such as Boswellia extract or turmeric hot packs
- Electrical muscle stimulation to repair, and relieve, muscle, joint and nerve pain.
- Magnesium supplementation to relax muscles
- BioFREEZE Pain Relieving Cream, unique formula containing a variety of effective anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving agents, good for immediate short-term muscle pain relief

### **What Is The Most Common Soft Tissue Injury That Can Leave You With A Life-Time Of Pain And Misery And Is Missed By Almost All Doctors?**

Spinal ligaments play a vital role in supporting the spine, and they are typically damaged due to trauma such as auto accidents or other traumatic injuries. If there is a rupture or tear in this ligament, it can cascade into a number of problems, such as nerve irritation, chronic muscle spasm, spinal subluxation (vertebral misalignments), chronic neck and back pain, or degenerative spinal arthritis, all of which we have covered in detail. These conditions might not kill you but, perhaps worse, you could slowly lose quality of life. *The American Medical Association Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment 5th Edition* grades these impairments even higher than some fractures. This is probably the worst soft tissue diagnosis you could have, and it usually occurs from an acute trauma or accident.

Sadly not all doctors realize this or do not have the specialty knowledge to detect this injury. It is very commonly overlooked and misdiagnosed. These ligament injuries may lead to nerve impingement, irritations, and almost always subluxations or misaligned vertebrae.

Every community in America needs providers who are specialists in the accurate diagnosis and treatment of spinal ligament injuries. When I say “specialist,” I mean doctors who specialize and put their attention, training, and treatment procedures together based on a deeper, more fundamental understanding of this condition.

## **Joint Pain**

Joint pain may bring to mind of that pain in your back when you bend forward or that “catch” when you rotate your neck, or pain in the knee when you get up after sitting for a period of time, from dull ache to chronic soreness, you have 360 joints of the body why do some hurt but not all, what causes joint pain. Keep reading to find out.

### **Spinal Subluxation (aka Misaligned Vertebrae)**

A “vertebral subluxation” is a partial dislocation or misalignment of one or more joints in the spine. Subluxations can cause abnormal wear-and-tear of the joint, abnormal muscle function, decreased range of motion, decreased nerve function, and pain. Prolonged subluxations lead to severe degeneration and create degenerative disc disease, known as “subluxation degeneration.” You might also develop loss of proper curvatures of the spine, causing abnormal wear-and-tear of the spine and putting unwanted stress on muscles. Some muscles might get tight or overdeveloped, and others can weaken and shrink. To correct joint or spinal subluxations, joint manipulation or spinal realignments are applied to restore proper alignment. This might be done with the use of a practitioner’s or chiropractor’s hands, or gentle low force using handheld instruments that gently realign the spine. The only way to reduce subluxations is with some type of mechanical force—just taking pills will not realign a joint problem.

### **Arthritic Joint Pain**

As the space between the vertebrae gets smaller, less padding between them creates bone on bone, and the spine becomes less stable. The body reacts to this by constructing bony growths called “bone spurs” (*osteophytes* is the medical terminology). Bone spurs can put pressure on the spinal nerves or spinal cord, resulting in pain and affecting nerve function. The common term to describe this is “degeneration” or *osteoarthritis*. As we discuss further in this book, you will learn about different types of potential joint conditions in the spine.

## Chapter 10

### What Is Causing My Back Pain—Joint, Muscle, or Nerve?

*Bad things do happen; how I respond to them defines my character and the quality of my life. I can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of my loss, or I can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift I have—life itself.*

—Walter Anderson

Joint? Muscle? Nerve? The answer is usually “all of the above.” That is why just addressing one potential source at a time or not addressing the true cause can lead you to frustrations and continued pain, even if you have seen multiple doctors. There is usually a primary source of pain, followed by a second or third dysfunction. The best way to explain a complex problem is with a real-life example:

Susie is a 51-year-old who has worked as an accountant for 22 years. She states that she has sharp lower back pain and occasional numbness in her left leg. She says all she did was bend forward out of her chair to pick up a pen she had dropped on the floor. Now, this motion is not a traumatic event. She probably bends forward to pick objects off the floor several times a day and has so for years. Then what was so different about this one event to cause her back pain? Due to the nature of her lower back, she initially had a muscular imbalance that created improper spinal biomechanics, which over time weakened her spinal supporting musculature. The nerves were slow in sending a message to her muscles to protect or brace her spine as she bent forward. She currently has muscle spasms, misaligned vertebrae, and a disc bulge compressing the nerve that runs down her leg. The primary problem is ligament-stretching or -tearing, causing lack of stability and one or more misaligned vertebrae. Muscle spasms are secondary, and nerve pain is tertiary (third rank). You can now understand that back discomfort is usually a combination of joint, muscle, and nerve problems.

It might be necessary to have medication or injections in instances of severe pain that is irretraceable and limits you physically. Medication should be a means to manage pain while beginning physical treatments or making changes to your muscles, joints, or nerves. Believing the medication is going to solve all of your problems is not accurate, and it can be a dangerous road to becoming dependent on drugs.

## Chapter 11

### What's Wrong With Your Back Pain

*We cannot always control everything that happens to us in this life, but we can control how we respond. Many struggles come as problems and pressures that sometimes cause pain. Others come as temptations, trials, and tribulations.*

—L. Lionel Kendrick

We have talked about different factors that cause back pain or dysfunction, and now we will discuss in further detail and name *conditions* that occur when the back system breaks down—either through postural changes, muscle imbalances, new or old trauma, nutritional or activity deficiencies or, yes, a cumulative effect of all. This is not a complete review of all conditions that can culminate in back pain, but we will discuss the most common disorders related to back pain.

#### What Is a Bulging Disc?

This complicated condition can also be known as a *bulging disc*, *disc protrusion*, or *slipped disc*. The disc is the cushion that sits between the stacked vertebrae that make up your spine. It has several functions, an important one being to act as a shock absorber. Visualize a disc like a jelly doughnut. Inside the disc is a jellylike substance that can attract water or gel-like substances to help absorb compressive forces. This is why we are actually taller in the morning than in the evening. After gravity pushes down on your spine throughout the day, the disc hydration decreases. When you lie down at night and take the compression forces off the spine, the disc rehydrates.

Many people have bulging disc but might not have any symptoms associated with it. Disc pain can occur when it is torn, irritated, or putting pressure on the nerve. The *outer* portion of the disc has painful nerve fibers, which can be a source of pain...and you can develop a bulging disc (or multiple bulging discs) when the *inner* portion of the disc. In terms of the jelly doughnut example, the jelly breaks through the outer ring of the doughnut and can put pressure on the nerves in your lower back. When the nerve is compressed, it can cause sharp shooting pain, numbness or tingling that might radiate into your buttocks, thigh, back of your leg, and even down into your lower leg and foot. If a herniated disc happens in the neck, you might experience numbness, tingling, or sharp shooting pain in one or both arms.

The source of disc herniations can be an injury from a car accident, or lifting and twisting your lower back, which creates extreme compression and torsion on the spine. But many disc herniations occur due to muscular imbalances that occur over time, creating slow abnormal pressure on the disc and spine, which allows a weak region of the disc.

This condition in chronic situations responds well to computerized spinal decompression therapy, a muscle balance treatment.

### **SUCCESS CASE STUDY**

Janet is a 45-year-old city administrator, suffering from persistent lower back pain, as well as pain that travels into her right buttocks and the back of her lower leg. For two months, she hoped the pain would resolve on its own and had been, as she says, “eating Aleve every day.” She was unable to get comfortable at night and couldn’t bend over to put on socks in the morning. X-rays and an MRI revealed multiple disc bulges. She had seen her primary care doctor, who was giving steroids but with minimal relief. She began treatment that included computerized lumbar decompression therapy, joint realignments, muscle balancing therapy, and electrical muscle/nerve stimulation treatment in our clinic. She had a 50-percent reduction of pain in eight visits, and was 80-percent pain-free in 12 visits; she had *no* pain by 24 visits. She told me the best part of her treatment was that she gained knowledge of how to stay pain-free.

### **Effective Treatment for Bulging or Herniated Disc**

Computerized lumbar decompression therapy • Muscle balance treatments to allow your body to take pressure off the disc • Core exercises to strengthen the muscles that support that joint • Natural anti-inflammatory such as Boswellia extract or turmeric • Lumbar braces with the goal of reducing pressure on disc • Cold laser therapy • Electrical muscle/nerve stimulation

### **What Is Degenerative Disc Disease?**

Symptoms usually include dull ache or pain traveling across the lower back, stiffness, and catching sensation in lower back. Upper back or neck degenerative disc disease can happen in any region of your spine. Degenerative disc is a condition in which the disc or cushion between your vertebrae start to break down, usually having been damaged at some point in your life. As they wear out they can create abnormal movement in the spine and send abnormal signals to the supporting muscles, leading to muscle imbalance, dysfunction, and pain.

These changes are more likely to occur in people who do heavy physical work, such as repeated heavy lifting. A previous sudden (acute) injury, such as a fall, leading to a herniated disc might also begin the degeneration process. Those old injuries you might have not given a second thought to sometimes come back to haunt you.

Some studies correlate a genetic relationship to degenerative changes, so be sure and thank your parents if you have this condition. As the space between the vertebrae gets smaller, there is less padding between them, which creates bone on bone and the spine becomes less stable. The body reacts to this by constructing bony growths, called “bone spurs” (*osteophytes*). Bone spurs can put pressure on the spinal nerves or spinal cord, resulting in pain and affecting nerve function.

If degenerative changes in the bones occur in your upper back, you might develop a slumped or hunched appearance of your back. We have all seen men or women who have humped appearance, loss of height, and permanent postural abnormalities. This might be where we get the term “little old lady.” If this has occurred, you are in advanced stages of degenerative disc disease and need to take action now to prevent further postural changes. If someone in your family—a mother, father, or grandparent—has this, it is possible you have a genetic predisposition for the same condition.

### **SUCCESS CASE STUDY**

Tim is a 70-year-old retired geologist. He was diagnosed in 1999 with degenerative disc in his lower back. He says he had occasional back pain but had always been able to work through it, until one day while playing golf he had tremendous lower back pain that was unrelenting for three weeks. He took high levels of pain killers and muscle relaxers with no relief. Hunched over and using a walker, he lunged onto my examination table. X-rays showed he had Stage 3 degenerative disc disease (DDD) at L4-L5 and L5-S1. After physical examination it was clear he also had severe muscle imbalances in his hip flexor muscles and lower back musculature. He said his number-one goal was to return to the golf course and that he would do anything it took to get back to swinging a golf club. Our treatment consisted of computerized lumbar decompression therapy, lower back joint realignments, a heavy dose of muscle balancing therapy, and electrical stimulation treatment. After four weeks he was 80-percent improved. He is now back on the course, and once a month he comes in for a tune-up treatment. He reminds me he can still shoot his age.

### **Effective Treatment for Degenerative Disc Disease**

Computerized lumbar decompression therapy • Joint realignment, which allows decreased pressure on the disc • Muscle balance treatments • Core exercises to strengthen the muscles that support that joint • Natural anti-inflammatory such as Boswellia, turmeric, and hot packs for temporary relief • Electrical stimulation • Lumbar braces with the goal of reducing pressure on disc • Self care in the form of stretching, lower back exercises, and ergonomic modifications

### **What Are Muscle Spasms?**

Acute symptoms include severe sharp stabbing or grabbing pain that can stop you in your tracks or bring you to your knees. Chronic muscle spasms can be deep, dull, and unrelenting pain.

Muscle spasm pain can be a primary source of pain but often accompanies other conditions, such as joint misalignments, degenerative disc disease, or bulging discs, sometimes overlooked by medical professionals. You must work to solve the underlying problem if the underlying problem is causing the muscle spasm.

The muscles in your back are large and powerful. Muscle spasms can be categorized as *chronic* muscle spasms, which often includes what most patients describe as “my back is

always so tight.” Chronic muscle spasms are usually due to chronic repetitive strains from work demands or postural strains. The longer the muscles are stuck in a spasm or chronically tight, the increased risk of damage to your vertebrae, disc, and nerve function.

Acute muscle spasm usually occurs due to acute injuries, such as a whiplash injury, weekend warrior sports injuries, or lifting injuries. Sometimes you have torn connective tissue in your spine or the muscle itself, and the tightness is the muscle trying to protect itself. If acute injuries and muscle spasms are not treated properly, these muscles have a high probability of turning into chronic spasms, tightness, and pain.

### **SUCCESS CASE STUDY**

Dan is a 40-year-old athlete who competes in marathons and triathlons...and will challenge you to a foot race if you look at him the wrong way. He trains hard and takes very good care of himself. He entered the clinic with pain in his lower back that limited his ability to stand in an upright position. He states that he just got off a 10-mile bike ride and started to jog when, after four steps, he had sudden severe lower back pain that brought him to a crawl. X-rays were taken, and he had no structural evidence of fractures, arthritis, or disc bulges. He did, however, have several misaligned vertebrae in his lower back, as well as severe muscle spasms in his lower back and hip flexor region, in a muscle called the “psoas.” He had severe muscle imbalances in the hip flexor muscle, a muscle that attaches to the hip and lower back—it is responsible for bending your upper leg or flexing your upper leg toward your waist. This muscle was so tight after riding his bike that where the hip flexor muscle, or the psoas, was still very short and tight, it created a tug-of-war with the muscle in the lower back—and the muscles in the lower back lost. He had a quick recovery, as I expected. Being the competitive athlete, he never missed an appointment, was at the clinic early, and stayed late, always wanting to know more about how to treat his back. After a short six weeks, he was back to running and has learned to stretch his hip flexors often. He has added weekly chiropractic visits to his routine and has not had another back problem for two years and counting.

### **Effective Treatment for Muscle Spasms**

Joint realignment or joint manipulation • Muscle balance therapy • Electrical muscle stimulation to ease muscle pain • Soft tissue manual therapies • Magnesium supplementation to help relax muscles

### **What Is Spinal Subluxation?**

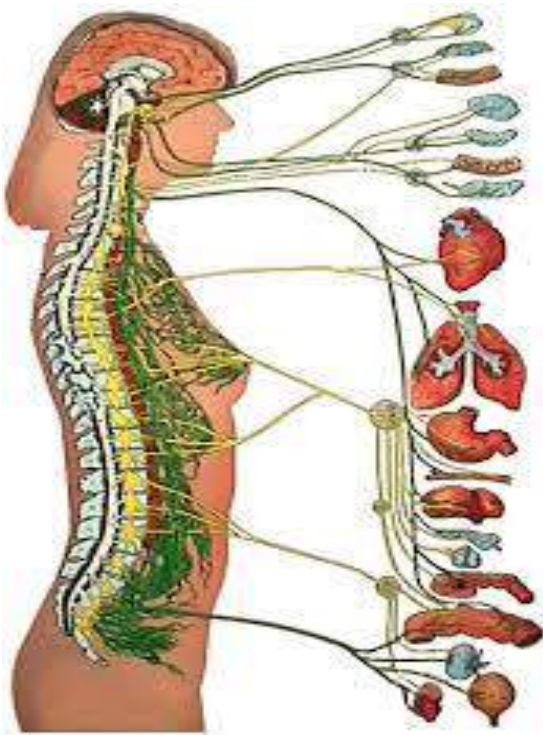
*America’s health care system is in crisis precisely because we systematically neglect wellness and prevention.*

—Tom Harkin

Symptoms include general localized pain, a tight locked-up sensation, dull ache, lack of mobility when bending or rotating the back or neck, sharp pain, catching sensation, and stabbing pain in the neck, upper back, or lower back.

Vertebral, or spinal, subluxation is a partial dislocation or misalignment of one or more joints in the spine. Subluxations can cause abnormal wear-and-tear of the joint, abnormal musculature, decreased range of motion, decreased nerve function, and pain. Prolonged subluxations lead to severe degeneration, known as subluxation degeneration. One might also develop loss of proper curvatures of the spine, which creates abnormal wear-and-tear of the spine and puts unwanted stress on muscles. Some muscles might get tight or overdeveloped, and others could weaken and shrink.

This subluxation complex, meaning multiple misaligned vertebrae, can contribute to other health problems, the most obvious being back or neck pain. Other less obvious symptoms might be dysfunction of the autonomic nervous system, which controls your organs.



(Figure 2: Visualization of nerves that control every organ of the body; any irritation of these nerve that may be caused by a subluxation or misaligned vertebrae can affect organ function)

Subluxations can irritate spinal nerves. To understand the importance of the nerves that are extensions of your spinal cord, think about all the different types of vehicles on the highway—trucks, cars, buses, motorcycles—each going to a specific destination to do a special or unique thing. Your nerve impulses act in the same way, traveling the superhighway of your brain, spinal cord, nerve root, all the way to the tiniest nerve in



your fingers, toes, organs, and systems of the entire body. They are all traveling at a proper speed and certain function, as long as there is no interference.

Improper position of spinal bones or vertebrae, overuse, and injuries can cause interference of the nervous system highway, causing too much or too little movement of nerve impulse. As mentioned before, you can develop nerve pain such as numbness, tingling, or sharp shooting pain, and might not be getting 100 percent of the signals to other organs of your body. Take, for example, a tree; if there is problem in the roots of the tree, everything from the trunk to the limbs, which are not getting proper nutrients, will slowly starve or become less healthy than the rest of the tree. In simpler terms, if you kink a water hose, it slows the outpouring of water. When dealing with the nerve signals that control every organ in the body, you want 100 percent of nerve function going to every organ and cell of that organ. Vital organs include your thyroid that controls metabolism, intestinal function, and many other organs. There are ways to measure the amount of signals coming from spinal nerves, to test if they are functioning at optimal levels. This is why so many people maintain strict weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly regular chiropractic care. They have decided not to wait for a problem to arise and are taking a proactive approach to their health. We call this “wellness care.” Subluxations might occur from repetitive abnormal motion at work, sitting too long in the recliner, old accidents and injuries, emotional trauma and chemical trauma or, in most cases, a combination of all of the previously mentioned.

### **Effective Treatment for Spinal Subluxation**

Joint realignment or manipulation by a trained chiropractor • Muscle balance treatments to improve postural strains

### **What Is Facet Joint Syndrome?**

Symptoms include general localized pain, a tight locked-up sensation, and dull ache. There is a high probability of chronic dysfunction if not treated. Often these joint dysfunctions occur in whiplash injuries of the neck, as well as lifting injuries of the lower and upper back.

The facet joints can be thought of as hinges of a door, preventing excessive motion, over-twisting, or toppling over. The segments of the spine are stabilized by a number of structures that allow the flexibility needed to bend forward or backward and to twist. It is not uncommon to develop misalignments of the facet joints in the lower back, causing or referring pain in the buttocks or other regions of the back. In the neck, it can refer pain to the shoulders, upper back, and even the base of your skull.

In the anatomy field, there is a fundamental physiological principle called “Hilton’s Law.” It is the principle that the nerve supplying a joint also supplies both the muscles that move the joint. If the joint is not moving properly or is misaligned, it will be giving no signal or abnormal signals to the muscles that support that joint. This is why spinal

manipulation works so well. If the joint is not moving or is misaligned, it can cause the supporting muscles to atrophy or weaken. You must first restore proper joint motion before strengthening so you get proper signals from the nerve to the joint. When your spinal joints are not moving at all, or not moving properly, that now creates extra workload on the muscles of the back and, nine times out of 10, creates trigger points in the muscles, or localized muscle spasms.

### **SUCCESS CASE STUDY**

Susan is a 37-year-old homemaker and mother of four. She was having sharp pain in her back that in certain movements “catches” and won’t let go. She was unable to lift her youngest child for fear of her lower back catching. She had not been taking any medication because she feels there is something mechanically wrong and that medication will not change that but only cover up her problem. After careful examination, it was determined that Susan had severe facet joint syndrome. Just as she suspected—and a women’s intuition is usually right—she had developed a marked increase in curvature of her lower back, irritating her joints, causing severe misalignments and, in certain movements, bringing marked pain. This condition did not occur overnight and, likewise, treatment consisted of 24 sessions of joint realignment via manipulation, along with muscle balance therapy. I am happy to report she ended treatment 100-percent pain-free in all planes of motion.

### **Effective Treatment for Facet Joint Syndrome**

Joint manipulation by a trained chiropractor • Muscle balance treatments to improve postural strains • Core exercises • Natural anti-inflammatory such as Boswellia, turmeric, and hot packs • Electrical stimulation

## **What Is Sacroiliac Dysfunction?**

### **Your Back Pain May Not Be Your Back at All!**

Symptoms include pain in the buttocks or might mimic sciatic nerve pain. Many people come in and say, “My back and hips hurt.” What most people refer to as “hips” are called the *sacroiliac joints*. They connect the base of the spine to the pelvis. They are important joint as they are at the base of your spine. If you look in the mirror and see two little indentions at the top of your hips just under your lower back and right at your belt line, those are the sacroiliac (SI) joints. If you feel you are walking with a hitch or restriction, this is usually caused by misaligned sacroiliac joints. This can be seen by one leg being shorter than the other.

Lie face-down and have someone put your heels together and look at your feet to see if one leg is longer than the other. Also look at the wear patterns on your shoe or boot soles. Uneven patterns might be related to the foot, but misaligned hips can alter the way you walk as well. Stop reading right now, and look at the heel of your shoe. Sacroiliac problems rarely show up on an MRI and so are commonly missed by doctors, but if left untreated, arthritis and chronic inflammation create continued pain. SI joint

dysfunction can occur due to years of muscle imbalance or postural strains. Many pregnant women develop problems that can last well after pregnancy, usually due to abnormal strain on the pelvis and a hormone, called “relaxin,” that releases in the body to tell the ligaments of the pelvis to loosen up and prepare for delivery. The ligaments might never fully regain supportive properties at the sacroiliac joint.

### **Effective Treatment for Sacroiliac Dysfunction**

Joint manipulation by a trained chiropractor • Muscle balance treatments to improve postural strains • Natural anti-inflammatory such as Boswellia, turmeric, or hot packs • Electrical stimulation • Muscle balance therapy • Core and pelvic strengthening • Sacroiliac braces

## **What Is Spinal Stenosis?**

Spinal stenosis is a condition in which the canal of the spine, where the nerve lives, becomes narrowed by bone spurs or arthritis, compressing or squeezing on the nerves. This is a common problem for senior citizens. When the nerve is irritated, there might be constant or intermittent numbness and or tingling. It can cause muscle cramps in the legs, but often if you bend forward or sit down the pain will subside because, in this position, you open up the canals and make more room for the nerve.

Spinal Stenosis occurs due to a physiological process called “Wolff’s law,” in which bone function changes cause bone-structure modification, leading to bony changes such as degenerative arthritis or bone spurs (osteophytes). The body puts more calcium or bone in joints that have abnormal stress. Some doctors might tell you arthritis in the back is just due to “normal old age.” Although it is common, it is not necessarily normal. If it were due to old age, wouldn’t every joint in your body have arthritis? If you do not have any degenerative changes or bone spurs, continue to take great care of your spine by getting regular spinal adjustments or keeping your spine in alignment, developing and maintaining strength and flexibility in your back, and being aware of and combating postural strains in order to prevent future problems such as stenosis.

### **Effective Treatment for Spinal Stenosis**

Joint manipulation to create proper joint movement • Muscle balance treatments to improve postural strains • Natural anti-inflammatory such as Boswellia, turmeric, or hot packs for temporary relief • Electrical Stimulation • Surgery in some instances but only as a last resort

## **What Is Spinal Compression?**

The spine is made up of a stack of bones called *vertebrae*, which are stacked one on top of the other. In between the bones are the cushion called the *discs*, which are gel-like structures that are mostly filled with water and are the shock absorbers of the spine. We have talked about the different ways injuries, lifting and twisting, along with postural imbalances can compress or squeeze down on a disc. One side of the disc having increased stress on it puts unequal pressure on the disc. Visualize a water

balloon that is being pushed down on one side with your hand—the water is pushed to the other side, and the more pressure increases the likelihood that the balloon will eventually burst.

Discs operate in virtually the same way. This is how some patients develop a herniated or bulging disc with no history of acute injury. Gravity provides a daily stress on our spines. Studies show we are actually taller in the morning after lying down for several hours, which allows a decrease in pressure on your discs. By the end of the day, we experience gravitational compression. Over the years, chronic compression can dehydrate discs and, in our senior years, we will likely shrink.

### **Treatment for Spinal Compression**

Computerized spinal decompression therapy is just how it sounds—it decompresses the disc by reversing the effects of gravity. This is done by having the patient lie on a table, the lower back and upper half strapped to a machine, and then a computer is programmed to gently pull at a certain weight as it slowly stretches the lower back for a period of 10 to 30 minutes. Most patients nap while the treatment is in progress. The spinal decompression machine attempts to create some room and a vacuum-like suction in the area of disc compression to return to its normal position. That means pain relief. Space gives the painful or injured disc room to heal and repair itself.

I have had countless success with the spinal decompression table, as it is safe and effective, and it takes only 10 to 30 minutes a treatment. Many clinical studies demonstrate the lasting effects of decompression therapy. But what I consider even more valuable than clinical studies is what I have seen firsthand—back pain that has plagued patients for years totally disappear within a few minutes on the decompression table. Other cases reverse back pain after a couple weeks of treatment. When a patient is not responding, it is likely that other complicating factors, such as muscle imbalances or piriformis syndrome, have been overlooked. Computerized spinal decompression therapy is a valuable tool for treating the spine without drugs or surgery.

### **What Is Scoliosis?**

Scoliosis is a curvature of the spine from one side to the other. There are many causes of scoliosis—genetics, cerebral palsy, other neurological disorders—but the most common is what doctors describe as *idiopathic*, meaning “we don’t know why.” Some clues that a person has scoliosis include uneven shoulders, a prominent shoulder blade, uneven waist, or leaning to one side. Girls are more likely to be affected than boys. Idiopathic scoliosis is most commonly a condition of adolescence, affecting ages 10 through 16. Idiopathic scoliosis can progress during the “growth spurt” years but usually stops progressing once skeletal maturity is reached. The diagnosis of scoliosis and the determination of the type of scoliosis are made by a careful spinal exam and X-ray to evaluate the magnitude of the curve or curves.

Functional Scoliosis is a mild form of curvature that can be contributed to old injuries that don't heal properly, lifestyle habits, or muscle imbalances that slowly pull the spine and create misalignments. It is not uncommon for degenerative spines to develop curvatures. Patients can develop chronic muscle tightness and joint pain due to abnormal pressures on the spine.

### **Treatment for Scoliosis**

Most curvatures are mild in nature and can be managed by improving joint motion and retraining the muscles that support the spine. • Short-term relief includes using electrical stimulation to relax the musculature. • Bracing is the usual treatment of choice for adolescents who have a spinal curve between 25 degrees to 40 degrees, particularly if their bones are still maturing and if they have at least two years of growth remaining. • If the curvature is over 40 degrees, surgery to put rods in the spine might be recommended. With this amount of curvature, even with bracing or a surgery a perfectly aligned spine is not likely.

## **What Is Spondylolisthesis?**

A spondylo-*what?! Spon*dy-lo-lis-thesis is the forward displacement of a vertebra, especially the fourth or fifth lumbar vertebra, most commonly occurring after a fracture. Backward displacement is referred to as *retrolisthesis*. The vertebra "slips," most commonly in the lower back or lumbar spine. The amount of forward slip can vary from mild to severe. I see many women with this condition, due to severe "sway back" or too much curvature in the lower back. It is also a noted condition that occurs in many gymnasts or athletes who perform hyperextension maneuvers. Older adults can develop spondylolisthesis, because wear-and-tear on the back leads to stress fractures. It can also occur without stress fractures, maybe due to severe degenerative changes. Symptoms include generalized lower back pain with intermittent shooting pain from the buttocks to the posterior thigh, or numbness and tingling in feet or lower leg via the nerve. Coughing and sneezing can intensify the pain. An individual might also note a "slipping sensation" when moving into an upright position. Sitting and trying to stand up might be painful and difficult. This condition is not necessarily reversible but needs to be managed in order to limit pain and further forward translation of the vertebra. Maintenance treatment is necessary to manage this condition.

### **Effective Treatment for Spondylolisthesis**

Joint realignment or manipulation by a trained chiropractor • Muscle balance treatments to improve postural strains • Core strengthening • Natural anti-inflammatory such as Boswellia or turmeric • Ice packs for acute pain and hot packs for chronic pain • Electrical nerve stimulation • Computerized spinal decompression therapy • Inversion therapy

## Chapter 12

### Protect Your Back

*An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure!*

—Unknown, but I will give credit to my mother

The things you do on a daily basis can help prevent back pain. Here's how I remember to stand correctly while lifting something heavy or just standing for long periods of time: I think to myself, *Brace yourself!* So, for example, if I'm reaching down into the crib to pick up a baby, I get ready for the act of lifting by bracing myself. I brace myself by bending at the knees and keeping the weight as close to my body as I can. The farther the baby is from my body, the more I'm at risk of injury.

Reaching for things far away from you is not a good habit if you want a strong spine. Instead of reaching out to push or pull something, get as close to the item as you can before bracing yourself and then lifting it. If you have to stand on your feet for a long period of time, don't get in the habit of putting most of your weight over one foot or on one leg. Brace yourself by spreading your feet about shoulder distance apart, and stand solidly. You'll feel better and look more confident, too. Standing on a carpet makes for less stress on the spine than standing on a hard floor. That's why a lot of multimillion-dollar companies that set up booths at trade shows have carpeting on the floor inside their booths. They want you to feel more comfortable with reduced stress on your body since you've likely been walking for long a period of time.

#### **Ice or Heat?**

A question I get daily in my practice is, "Doc, should I use ice or heat for my back pain?" The rule on this is simple: During the first 48 to 72 hours of acute onset of pain, apply ice to the region to minimize inflammation. After that time period, I recommend moving to moist heat. Many people get short-term relief while taking a hot shower or bath. The heat opens blood vessels to the painful or injured regions, allowing more blood flow, which brings in oxygen and other healing nutrients and can flush stagnant toxins from that region.

#### **Stretching Dos and Don'ts**

I am willing to bet that all back pain sufferers want long-term relief. One way to accomplish this is to stretch predictable muscles that become chronically tight and pull on your spine.

**Start stretching today.** It's simple. No whining—just do it! Focus on the following muscle groups, as most of them are the muscles that are very commonly affected in postural conditions and can create pain in neck and back regions. Start stretching these muscles:

1. Hamstrings (backs of thighs)
2. Hip flexors (front of pelvis)
3. Buttocks
4. Lower back
5. Front of neck
6. Sides of neck
7. Forearms
8. Calves (backs of lower legs)
9. Chest

## Chapter 13

### Inversion Tables

*You may hate gravity, but gravity doesn't care.*

—Clayton Christensen

A common query I get is, “Dr. Morgan, I feel better and want to stay this way. What can I do at home to help ease pain? My friend has an inversion table—do they work?” It depends on your condition and the type of inversion table. As a general rule, inversion therapy is useful for those who suffer from pinched nerves or nerve-based pain, bulging or herniated discs, and degenerative disc disease. I have patients who incorporate their treatments in our clinic *and* at-home inversion therapy with great success.

Inversion therapy acts in a similar manner as computerized spinal decompression therapy, which is utilized in our clinic every day. Inversion tables are not quite as effective or sophisticated as computerized spinal decompression therapy, due to the fact that you are not able to control the amount of weight that is being pulled on your spine and can place you back in different positions, to properly position you back depending on the spinal condition that is causing pain. You also need to be in relatively good health, having the ability and mobility to maneuver yourself on the table.

An inversion table inverts the body into an upside-down or partial upside-down position. The idea behind this therapy is to reverse the effects of gravity, which can compress or squish the spinal discs or cushions that are in between the vertebrae. Early in this book, we discussed compressed disc and the impact it can have on your back pain. The table allows you to stretch your spine out, providing room for discs to reabsorb fluids and move back into their proper positions.

There is only one inversion table I recommend, because it is the best I have found in the market. It is called the Total Back Solution Inversion Table. My patients who are interested in inversion therapy take their health seriously and are willing to make a wise investment that pays in good-health dividends. You want a table that is high on quality and will last, and since you will be hanging upside-down, you want to be safe. This is why I will not recommend a lesser quality Inversion table. I only recommend a table that is only available to physicians, as many doctors use this as a therapy in their clinics. This table is the most durable on the market and has scientific studies to back up its effectiveness. I have chosen this particular inversion table because I know it to be durable, safe, and adjustable. The high-quality frame holds up to the weight of most individuals, and it has different settings so you can start self-treatment at different angles, gradually working to an upside-down position. I recommend starting at a 45-degree angle for only 10 minutes a day, since you need to give your body time to adjust



to this new treatment. After five days, if you are comfortable with the 45-degree angle, then you may lower the settings to a higher angle and increase treatment time.

I made an oath to do no harm, and I consider my patients part of my extended family. These are the top three things I consider when I recommend this premium inversion table:

1. **Safety**—It must be of high quality. Has it been tested in independent studies?. Will it hold the weight of your body, time and time again? I guarantee that someone will see your inversion table and want to try it. If they are bigger than you, will it hold their body weight? Are there ergonomically molded ankle cushions so you do not develop pain at the ankles? If you decide to get an inversion table on your own, check the weight limit. Make sure the table has tough rubber nonskid floor stabilizers so the table does not slide or wobble.
2. **Durability**—I highly discourage a plastic-framed inversion table. You want a steel frame and high-grade back board that will not stretch or wear out over time.
3. **Manageability**—Are you physically able to handle the table on your own without assistance? You also need to be in relatively good health, having the ability and mobility to maneuver yourself on and off the table.

Inversion therapy is not recommended for uncontrolled blood pressure or hypertensive patients due to the fact that blood pressure increases as you hang upside-down. A better alternative is computerized spinal decompression therapy, as you do not have to lie upside down.

An inversion table is an investment you do not want to go cheap on, as it can save you a lot in future health-care costs. This piece of equipment will last you a lifetime if you make the right purchase. If you feel inversion therapy is right for you, ask me if you and your condition would benefit.

## Chapter 14

### Psychological Stress and Pain

*Being in control of your life and having realistic expectations about your day-to-day challenges are the keys to stress management, which is perhaps the most important ingredient to living a happy, healthy, and rewarding life.*

—Marilu Henner

Have you ever noticed that pain increases during times of stress? Why is that? Emotions are a powerful force. We feel emotions every day. Women tend to be very in touch with their emotions, and those emotions can manifest in a variety of ways. Some can create havoc and a vicious cycle for musculoskeletal dysfunction.

Emotional stress can be contributed to nearly every health ailment known to mankind. Stress can reduce blood supply, create tight muscles, reduce oxygen, and release hormones that trigger inflammation, limit your ability to repair joints, and cause nerves to be overactive. Stress must be kept in check in order to manage chronic back and neck pain. Your body's response to a short-term stress is known as the "fight-or-flight" mechanism. When you are being chased by a bear, you want your body to move all its blood away from areas of your body, such as your intestines and stomach, to the skeletal muscles so you can run away as fast as you can. That is necessary as long as it is short-lived. When your body perceives stress for long periods of time—weeks, months, years—you create a neurological reflex of tight muscles that can actually change the shape of your spine over time, irritate joints, and pull vertebrae out of alignment. Chronic stress slowly but surely starts to degenerate your nerves and your brain. The physiology of chronic stress is a topic for another book, but underlying stress is the source of many if not most ailments. Not all stresses are easily identified.

A patient named Misty is a 35-year-old mother of four, working 30 hours a week as a telemarketer. She and I were talking about the chronic muscle pain in her shoulders and hips. When I asked about stress in her life, she replied, "Dr. Morgan, I don't really have stress. Everything is going well. I have a job I like, my family is healthy—I don't really have any stress in my life." Well you might not perceive things as stresses, but your body sure does. I asked her to walk me through her day. She begins by getting up two times a night with an infant, starts her morning with three cups of coffee while trying to get the kids up and dressed, often running late she decides to not cook breakfast and picks up doughnuts at the bakery, still late she eats in the car on the way to drop the older kids at school, goes to work, has one more cup of coffee, works for several hours, skips lunch and instead replaces it with a Red Bull or Monster Energy drink, and snack on a bag of chips while working. Hang on—there's more.... She leaves work, picks up a few kids, hurries home to cook and clean for the kids, eats a TV dinner and drinks a cola,

helps with homework, bathes kids, and does some laundry. She doesn't even have time to sit down and unwind before bed. By about 9:00 p.m., she hits a brick wall, knowing she should go to bed, but decides to have one more cup of coffee or iced tea for a pick-me-up so she can finish some work around the house. In bed by 10:30 p.m., she has difficulty going to sleep because she says she can't turn her mind off. After lying in bed for about an hour, she decides to take a sleeping pill. Her infant wakes up twice, usually around 1:00 a.m. and again at 4:00 a.m. Her alarm goes off at 6:00 a.m., when she gets up to start all over again.

I explained to Misty that even though she might not believe she has any stress—such as a loss of a loved one, difficulty at work, or a child who is disobedient or having issues at school—the amount of caffeine she consumes and poor dietary habits are just as bad. Caffeine is a stimulant and, if not kept in moderation, the body's chemistry and nervous system perceive the stimulation as a constant fight-or-flight response. She doesn't sit and eat at a slow or normal rate, she is rushed everywhere she goes, and it's difficult for her to find the time to be in a rest-and-digest state. She eventually burns out the adrenal glands, responsible for stress hormones, and the body now feels it constantly needs stimulants to function.

High levels of stress hormones make it easy to put on weight around your waist, decrease your lifespan, and accelerate the progression of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and dementia.

So, how should you deal with and ease emotions and stresses that might not be in your control? Here are a few tips:

**Tip 1: *Exercise.***

When researching for the effects of exercises on mental conditions, it is clear that exercise is one of the most beneficial activities to burn off stress and give your brain an increase in feel-good hormones such as serotonin. Exercise doesn't have to be strenuous. Walk, stretch, perform light jogging—just move, feed your brain.

**Tip 2: *Meditate.***

Go somewhere quiet, close your eyes, be still for 10 to 20 minutes, and let your brain slow down. I have to meditate daily—I like to do it for about 10 minutes in the morning and five minutes at lunch. Purchase a book or DVD with meditation or yoga techniques. While meditating, put slight pressure on your closed eyelids and a physiological reflex will occur that lowers blood pressure and heart rate.

**Tip 3: *Condition your mind with positive influences.***

Read positive books, watch uplifting television, go see comedy movies. Avoid the fear, doom, and gloom that is in newspapers, film, and downtrodden conversations with people always complaining (some might be our own family members). For your own health, limit your time with people who see everything as negative—or steer the conversation away from depressing talk. Such relationships can be toxic and drain

mental energy. Turn toward positivity by choosing to turn off the nightly news and instead read the cartoon section of the newspaper. Watch the movie *Dumb and Dumber*—dare you not to laugh! Get the old films of The Three Stooges, laugh, smile, surround yourself with positive people, positive images, or pictures of happy times. I hang in my clinic pictures of my kids laughing and playing, as well as pictures of patients who have had great success in our office and become our extended family. They evoke happy thoughts in me and block out negative influences. You must protect your mind.

**Tip 4: *Track your moods throughout the day.***

Keep a journal to write down when your moods are at their best—notice patterns, and try to engage in more of those activities that are joyful. When you notice you're mood is more blue, fill that time also with positive activities, a funny book, or an upbeat song—not a heartbreak country song. Surround yourself with people who are positive and encouraging. Create a space in your living environment or workplace that is comfortable and peaceful. Turn off the phone and relax, even for 10 to 20 minutes.

**Tip 5: *Get rid of clutter.***

Environmental clutter can clutter your mind. Get rid of clutter by donating it to charity if you haven't used it in over a year. You won't miss it—trust me. *Give it away.* You will feel better.

**Tip 6: *Do something fun.***

Go to the park, go fishing, go shopping, walk in the park, work on your hobby. Give yourself a “me” day or even an hour of fun to give yourself a mental break. For serious emotional or physical traumas that might have happened in the past but have not been resolved, it is best to seek the assistance of a licensed therapist. Emotional traumas can linger in your mind and could very well be the source of chronic pain and continue to be chronic for years to come if not addressed.

## Chapter 15

# The 21st-Century Back Pain Solution Is a Way of Taking Control

*Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity.*

—Hippocrates

The 21st-Century Back Pain Solution is a comprehensive approach to treating back pain. It lays out the first truly integrated approach to the care and recovery of back pain without excessive amounts of dangerous drugs or surgeries.

### **Do You Know Your Body Is Miraculous?**

You might already know researchers and doctors have discovered that every part of the body can be healed. In 2008, medical doctors announced that even the brain is capable of regenerating itself! A few years ago, it was announced that the liver can regenerate itself. In alternative healing, we have known this for decades. I have seen seemingly impossible cases of healing occur when the nervous system to the ailing body part is restored. The beauty of the body healing itself is that healing and recovery happen again and again.

Now if your brain and liver can heal themselves, couldn't the tissues in your discs do the same? They're composed of collagen, vitamin C, silica, protein, and manganese, just like other connective tissue. In fact, there's no reason at all for you not to heal, unless you really don't want to heal!

Years ago, the only medical treatment prescribed for disc bulging was rest, painkillers, medical leave from work, and surgery. The medical treatment hasn't changed much. However, one reason I'm so thrilled to put together the 21st-Century Back Pain Solution is because we are making distinct headway into treating disc bulging with new alternative methods. The field of nutrition alone teaches us how to decrease inflammation and reverse the aging process, diabetes type 2, and even heart disease. I not only now pay attention to these latest developments, but also use them to our patients' advantage.

### **Overview of *The 21st-Century Back Pain Solution* Treatment Options to Kick Pain Out of Your Life**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Back Pain Solution is a combined unique approach utilizing the latest technology, science and time tested techniques to overcome you back pain.

**Computerized Spinal Decompression Therapy**—Extremely effective for compressed disc or degenerative disc pain. By decompressing the disc, this safe and highly effective treatment has helped millions of back pain sufferers. There are several different types of spinal decompression, each with a different effect on the body or pain being treated. The goal of this treatment is to allow the machine to take pressure off your spine and allow misaligned discs to be sucked back into their proper space and away from nerves. A recent study has determined that over 73 percent of patients who used computerized decompression therapy were able to cancel planned back surgery.

**Moist Heat**—Very good for short-term relief. It can melt away your pain because deep penetrating heat delivers more oxygen-rich blood to painful areas and speeds up the body's natural healing processes.

**Cold Laser Therapy**—21st-century technology used for healing precision. During treatment of the tissue with the laser beam, an interaction between cells and photons takes place, thus a photochemical reaction. Photons from the laser affect the tissue at the cellular level. The cold laser enters the tissue, speeding up the healing process at a cellular level. The *mitochondria* are the “powerhouse” of the cells and make ATP, which is needed for the life enhancement process of every cell. Cold Laser therapy is great for treating knee pain and peripheral neuropathy. Here are some benefits to laser therapy:

**Rapid cell growth.** The laser accelerates cellular reproduction and growth, helping the body increase output of specific enzymes; greater oxygen to blood cells and more effective immune response are also induced by laser.

**Reduced scar tissue formation.** The laser reduces the formation of scar tissue following tissue damage from cuts, scratches, burns, or surgery.

**Anti-inflammatory action.** The laser reduces swelling caused by bruising or inflammation of joints to give improved joint mobility.

**Increased vascular activity.** The laser stimulates lymph and blood circulation to allow the affected tissue the best possible circulation.

**Improved nerve function.** Slow recovery of nerve function in damaged tissue can result in “dead” limbs or numb areas. Laser speeds the process of nerve-cell reconnection to bring the numb areas back to life. Laser also increases the amplitude of action potentials to optimize muscle action.

**Spinal Realignment**—Also known as “chiropractic adjustments,” an innovative approach in correcting spinal misalignments. Chiropractic adjustments have come a long way since the old-school days of your parents’ or grandparents’ spinal alignments. There are many gentle and safe spinal alignment techniques to realign bones that might put pressure on nerves. Spinal realignment is much more than just putting bones or back in alignment, since there is a cascade of events that help relieve joint pain and improved healing. Many patients ask, “So how does the adjustment to my spine work?” This is a loaded question. It would take a full-day course to explain all the neurological processes that occur when your spine or any joint is restored to proper alignment. I’ll give the

short version: When a joint is adjusted by a trained chiropractor, many physiological events take place. One is reduced pressure on the outer layer of the disc between your vertebrae. You also get an endorphin release, which is your body's natural painkiller—the more endorphins in your system, the better you feel. The localized nerves that send signals to the joint from your spinal cord then relax. The nerves that feed your muscles relax, so it is almost instantaneous for muscle spasms to relax. You maintain proper nerve impulses to your joints, muscles, and other organs. You increase joint awareness and proper joint motion, all of which are important for a healthy back and to alleviate acute and chronic pain.

**Muscle Balance Training**—A new way of eliminating the cause of your back pain by addressing the imbalances of your muscles. It's a way of properly aligning your misaligned body.

**Active Trigger Point Therapy**—The most effective treatment for knotted-up muscle pain.

**BioFREEZE Pain Relieving Cream**—Good for immediate muscle-pain relief. Its unique formula contains a variety of effective anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving agents. It penetrates deeply to lessen inflammation and soothe muscle and joint aches and strains. It helps stimulate immune defense and support the body's optimal healing process. Its key ingredients—methylsulfonylmethane (MSM), Arnica, Boswellia, and Ilie—are proven for their soothing relief and to help naturally combat joint and muscle pain.

**ReZume Supplement**—Natural anti-inflammatory enzymes in one capsule. This supplement is what I recommend to my patients. The natural anti-inflammatories are key ingredients, and it is easier to take one supplement with all the natural pain-relieving benefits than three to four different supplements. It's simple to take and is a combination of the safest, most powerful anti-inflammatory ingredients. It has no dangerous side effects such as with Aleve, aspirin, or other NSAIDs.

**Braces or Supportive Devices**—Many times pain is so severe that extra help is needed. Braces and supportive devices are a great way to continue treatment at home at work. The technology of these supportive devices improves every year. In my clinic, we use only the most up-to-date and effective devices that I would be willing to use on my own family. Every supportive device or brace I recommend is put through the family test. I have a family member try it before I tell a distributor I am willing to recommend it to my patients.

## Chapter 16

### Why Do So Many Surgeries Fail?

*The...patient should be made to understand that he or she must take charge of his own life. Don't take your body to the doctor as if he were a repair shop.*

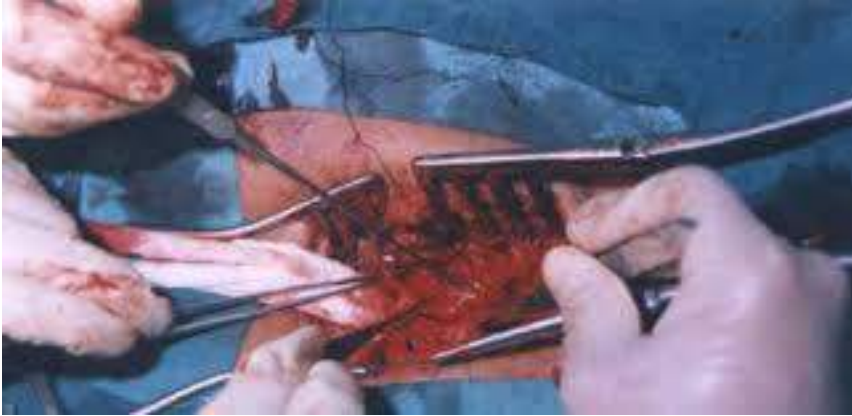
—Quentin Regestein, MD

#### **Are You Considering Spine Surgery? Get a Second Opinion.**

Do you believe that having a surgeon cut away the problem will make it go away? Is that really your best choice? This is like having a toothache and believing you automatically need to pull the tooth. Remember that 80 percent of back pain is mechanical in nature and can be managed without surgery. Surgery should be a *last* option. Many people do not correctly understand the anatomy of the spine or musculature. Open-back surgeries are highly invasive and often weaken the spine, create scar tissue, increase risk of infection, require time off work, and can set you up for future problems. All of the above can lead to an eventual second or third procedure. The good surgeons understand this and want you to try every form of conservative treatments before they recommend surgery.

Every year, about half a million spine surgeries are performed in the United States, about twice the rate of other countries. Some experts believe that about half of these back surgeries are unnecessary. Some people also come out of spine surgery with persistent symptoms. The spine is a very complex structure—it is not a simple as just cutting out the pain. There is occasionally a time and a place for surgery, usually most successful in acute emergencies, but research tells us that many who have lower back surgery experience only initial short-term relief. A recent study compared conservative lower back therapy (like computerized spinal decompression therapy, muscle balance therapy, electrical muscle stimulation therapy, and lifestyle modifications) with surgery. One group of patients had surgery; the other had conservative treatment. They were then followed for 10 years to determine their progress. After four years, there was no difference between the group that had surgery and the group that did not have surgery. Many studies show that with conservative care and time, disc herniations decrease along with the innate intelligence of your body to heal itself, particularly when various stressors are reduced. This is *great* news for the patient who suffers with a herniated disc and other ailments.





(Figure 3: Actual picture of an open-back surgery)

You can't afford to *not* do something! In a recent study, it was projected that 21st-Century Back Pain Solution patients would save more than \$21,000 over a five-year period.

### Comparison Chart

*21st-Century Back Pain Solution vs. Minimally Invasive Surgery vs. Open-Back Surgery.*

|                        |                       |                                |                           |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Success</b>         | <b>Extremely High</b> | <b>Moderate</b>                | <b>Variable</b>           |
| <b>Risk</b>            | <b>Very low</b>       | <b>Low</b>                     | <b>Moderate</b>           |
| <b>Recovery</b>        | <b>No down time</b>   | <b>Weeks</b>                   | <b>Months</b>             |
| <b>Negative Result</b> | <b>Minimal Risk</b>   | <b>Minimal</b>                 | <b>Significant</b>        |
| <b>Tissue Damage</b>   | <b>None</b>           | <b>Moderate to significant</b> | <b>Extensive</b>          |
| <b>Anesthesia</b>      | <b>None</b>           | <b>Variable</b>                | <b>General</b>            |
| <b>Cost</b>            | <b>\$500-\$5,000</b>  | <b>\$30,000-\$75,000</b>       | <b>\$60,000-\$200,000</b> |

***The remainder of the book is designed for you to begin to examine different areas of your life that might contribute to back pain. I encourage***

***you to engage in the worksheets and recommendations. Go ahead—write in the book, bring it in to show me, and we’ll look together at your scores.***

### **Things Your Parents, Teachers, and Doctor Never Told You!**

Every day we learn many new facts and bits of information. For example, when we turn on the radio or television, someone is usually speaking about a current event, past event, new research, or new products that promise amazing results. We even learn information by watching game shows that test our knowledge...and compare it with that of a fifth-grader.

We learn from our friends, coworkers, bosses and other employees, parents and grandparents. We also learn from every professional we hire—dentist, medical doctor, chiropractor, lawyer, accountant, website master, and personal trainer.

As researchers discover more and more knowledge, our knowledge has to be updated. Remember when you were a child, taught to wash your hands with bar soap? Years later, there was a shift to antibacterial soaps. And now, the latest research is that good ol’ regular bar soap is really the best way to get our hands clean and keep bacterial counts low.

Have you noticed there are gaps in knowledge about how to do things “right” or “better”? For example, years ago when you had a fever, your parents tucked you into bed with a dose of aspirin and covered you with a light blanket. You slept on a flat pillow, and a few stuffed animals surrounded you. They believed they were doing everything they could do to help you get better. Now knowledge has progressed to the point where we know it’s possible to burn out a fever by piling up the blankets and administering some anti-infectious herbs. We know the flat pillow might have been OK for you as a young child, but as your body grows, the pillow width should also grow to fit the curve in your neck.

There are time gaps in our knowledge, and some of these gaps might contribute to delayed recovery from whatever ails you. As a doctor, I am well educated as a health-myth buster, ready to fill in any time gaps in knowledge! I keep up-to-date on the latest research findings and love to educate my patients about how to stay healthy. It’s only when you’re healthy that I’m happy!

### **I’ve Selected Five Topics for Home-care Recommendations:**

I will give you some tips on how to treat your own back pain. Small acts that you can do on a daily basis such as the five I will recommend will pay dividends in reduction you back pain and overall health.

1. Sleeping instructions
2. Stress reduction
3. Dietary methods to reduce pain and inflammation

4. How to sit at your desk and have good posture
5. Nutritional support for joints

The more of these recommendations you can incorporate into your lifestyle, the quicker you can put your health issue behind you. If you have any questions about any of the recommendations, be sure to ask me during your next visit to the office.

### **The More You Know, the Healthier You Will Be**

Knowledge is power! When I was in post-graduate school, every day was so amazing to me because I was learning so much! I found out why I had neck pain from sitting at my desk in a certain way, why my arm felt numb when I woke up in the morning, why taking a little mini-vacation during the middle of the day is one of the best stress-busters, and all sorts of things like that.

As I see it, you can now be the recipient of all that knowledge—without paying for the expensive education! Everything you learn here is to help make your life easier, and this report is my gift to you. Continue reading this whole book to the very end, and I'm sure you will discover answers to some questions you have probably had for years....

## Chapter 17

### Sleep Instructions to Ease Back and Neck Pain

*Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

—Benjamin Franklin

We spend about 33 percent of our lives in bed! That's a lot of time, and if we "do it right," the sleep restores and rejuvenates us like clockwork. I've created a little quiz for you on your sleep habits. To take the quiz, simply check off your answers and, when finished, count the number of true and false answers.

#### True or False?

- 1. My mattress has lumps and bumps in it; it's not firm.
- 2. My mattress sags.
- 3. I sleep on my stomach—it's one of the most comfortable ways to sleep.
- 4. I like to sleep with no pillow at all.
- 5. I like to pile up the pillows and sometimes (or often) sleep with more than one pillow underneath my head.
- 6. When I sleep, my head is dropped forward with my chin toward my chest.
- 7. I don't use a supportive pillow.
- 8. I love to read in bed and can prop myself up on my elbows to do so.
- 9. I use a regular foam pillow.
- 10. Sometimes I rest on the couch with my head propped up on the armrest.
- 11. Sometimes I rest on the couch with a pillow and have to look up at the television set to do so.

**Sleeping Quiz Score:** \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False

OK, now total up the number of “true” statements you have. The lower your number of “true” statements, the better your sleeping score. How did you do? Here’s a breakdown:

Let me explain how to sleep, because there’s more to it than just plopping yourself into the bed and covering up with blankets. There are good sleep habits and bad sleep habits. It’s possible to have bad sleep habits for years without bad consequences. The problem with bad sleep habits is that you could be wearing down the joints in your neck. The constant wearing down of the joints is risky because once there’s a trauma to the neck, those joints “give out.” This is degenerative joint disease.

### **Why Take Risks When Bad Habits Are Easily Changed?**

The good news is that simply by changing some bad habits, you can stop any future joint damage in its tracks. Sleeping on your stomach is a bad habit because it forces your neck in one position—to the side—for long periods of time. While your neck is turned to the right or left, several of the muscles and joints in your neck are working hard to keep your head in that position. Other muscles then have to work hard to balance the positioning muscles. Neck muscles that are tight for several hours can cause pain, inflammation, and headaches. It’s certainly no fun to wake up with a headache.

Here’s another way to think about it: When you work out at the health club, how would your legs feel if you did leg presses for over an hour? Would you be able to walk home or to your car? It would be very difficult after stressing them so much. It’s the same with your neck. You’re doing something similar when you sleep on your stomach and turn your neck to the side, holding it in that position for such a long period of time. Now, that doesn’t mean you should sleep on your stomach and put your head straight down into the pillow—you’d suffocate! So what’s the alternative?

### **Dr. Morgan’s Sleep Instructions**

Sleep on your back or side instead of the stomach. *When sleeping on your back*, lie flat with a pillow under your head and neck, and a pillow under your knees. Do not ever sleep with more than one pillow under your head. Your neck should not be pushed up so that your chin moves down toward your chest. A pillow should support your neck according to its natural S-shaped curve, allowing your head to rest in a neutral position. *When you sleep on your side*, support your head and neck with pillows in such a way that your spine remains in a straight line. Your legs should be at a 35- to 45-degree angle and not drawn up in a knot or in the fetal position. You might feel more comfortable with a pillow between your knees to keep your pelvis from tilting to one side.

### **Let’s Check Out Your Pillow**

The type of pillow you use Sunday night can make a big difference in how good you will feel on Monday. Do not use a regular foam pillow. A shaped cervical pillow or a water-based pillow with a pillow-top is best, because the curve of the pillow supports your

neck. With the water-based pillow, you can customize the firmness with the amount of water used and the cool water decrease low-grade inflammation in the neck. When your neck is supported, all its muscles, tendons, and joints can relax. As they're relaxing, the blood sends in healing, rejuvenating, and restorative nutrients. You wake up refreshed.

It's a bad habit to lie down on the couch, especially with your head propped up on the armrest. Propping up your head results in a cervical-curve angle that stresses out the joints and the muscles of your neck. Every time you engage in this type of activity, you willingly create stress in your neck. Decide that your body wants to be loved and cared for, and never engage in this activity again.

If you prop yourself up to read in bed on your elbows or lying flat to read, this movement stresses out your shoulder joints and puts undue stress on neck muscles and joints. Don't do it!

The best way to sleep is on your back. When it's time to rest or sleep, lie on your back or on your side on a firm bed and don't settle for anything else. Make these changes to get your sleep score down to 0. One month of sleeping with a score of 0 *will* dramatically improve your health.

## Chapter 18

### Stress Reduction to Relax Your Pain Away

*If you're happy, if you're feeling good, then nothing else matters.*

—Robin Wright

I'm sure you have many avenues of reducing stress, but take this little quiz to see if any of these very stressful situations have crept up in your life. In the questions that ask about three or four items, answer "true" for each item that applies to you.

#### True or False?

- \_\_\_ 1. Sometimes at night or during the day, I catch myself gritting my teeth.
- \_\_\_ 2. Lately, I've noticed I overreact to other people's mistakes or bad choices, maybe even flying into a rage.
- \_\_\_ 3. After an argument or heated discussion with someone, it takes me a long time to get over it.
- \_\_\_ 4. At night, it's difficult for me to fall asleep quickly.
- \_\_\_ 5. The old methods I've used for reducing stress don't really work well anymore.
- \_\_\_ 6. While working on a project, I feel like the clock is ticking and I am rushed to finish it in time.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am feeling some social anxiety about a few upcoming events in my life.
- \_\_\_ 8. In the last year, I've had a jail term or minor violation of the law.
- \_\_\_ 9. In the last year, I've moved, experienced a marriage or divorce, lost a loved one, experienced a foreclosure, or had to take out a loan. (Give yourself a check for each stress mentioned.)
- \_\_\_ 10. In the last year, I've experienced a son or daughter leaving home, trouble with in-laws, retirement, or a pregnancy. (Give yourself a check for each stress.)
- \_\_\_ 11. In the past year, my income has not improved.

\_\_\_ 12. In the past year, I was fired, changed to a different line of work, experienced trouble with the boss or coworkers, or had more responsibilities piled onto my regular workload. (Give yourself a check for each stress.)

\_\_\_ 13. I recently started or ended school.

\_\_\_ 14. I recently experienced a personal injury or illness, or have a family member who has been ill or needs caretaking. (Give yourself a checkmark for each stress.)

\_\_\_ 15. I recently experienced an incident of prejudice, social injustice, or a crime committed on me. (Give yourself a check for each stress.)

\_\_\_ 16. I have diabetes, cancer, blood-sugar issues, high blood pressure, or memory problems. (Give yourself a check for each stress.)

\_\_\_ 17. I am overweight or seriously underweight.

**Stress Quiz Score:** \_\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_\_ False

How did you do? The higher your number of “true” statements or “true” checkmarks, the higher your level of stress.

### **What Can You Change in Your Life to Decrease Stress?**

The big question is how to arm yourself against the stress that occurs in life. I have my own story of stress and its health effect on my body. Recently I had been under some increased stress, which anyone who runs a business can relate. We were having problems with Medicare and other Insurance companies. Basically Medicare was making several new compliance rules that mandated health-care providers to implement in a certain period of time or incur penalties. This happened at the same time I had switched to a new electronic health-record system, was building a new clinic, skipping lunch to talk to contractors, not getting enough rest, working 60-plus hours a week for the past four years, and missing time with my family—we had not taken an official vacation in about five years. My family obviously and rightfully wanted me to cut back, but I always respond with, “Now is not the time.”

Now don’t get me wrong—I love what I do, but things in my life were out of balance. It finally came to a head when one day the right side of my tongue and face began to get numb. It was subtle at first but, within about two days, I could not move the right side of my face or close my eyelid. I had to tape my eye shut to sleep at night—many of you might remember this, when you asked me what was wrong with my eye. The first thought in my head was, *Did I have a stroke?* But as I examined myself, I soon realized I had Bell’s Palsy. This condition causes paralysis of the facial nerve and is brought on



by—you guessed it—stress and a compromised immune system. This was a real eye-opener for me, pun not intended. This health scare forced me to change some things. I had to slow down, take an occasional weekend off for fishing and hunting (what I enjoy), play baseball with my boys, limit the number of patients I see—and not feel guilty for letting any patients down. The best thing I can do for my patients and my family is to take care of myself first. I had to let go of some responsibilities I thought, in my mind, only I could do. To this day, I have to make a conscious effort to know my limits and balance my life in order to maintain my health...because without my health I can't do anything.

The reason doctors like myself are so concerned about your stress levels and the skills you have to decrease your stress is because stress makes the body kick out hormones, such as cortisol, that destroys your body's ability to rejuvenate. High levels of stress hormones make it easy for you to put on weight around your waist, decrease your lifespan, and accelerate the progression of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and dementia.

So now, let's look at ways you can relax. Check off the methods below you use to relax. At the end of the list, there are blank lines for you to write in any other relaxation methods you use.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling and taking a long vacation              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing a musical instrument                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading            | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching sports games or attending sporting events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching entertaining movies                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driving            | <input type="checkbox"/> Attending concerts, plays, or going to art museums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praying            | <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time outside in the fresh air             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socializing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing, cheering up friends, comedy shows        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking             | <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with pets                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____  |

I'll bet you already have ways to relax, but I will ask you this: When was the last time you took the time to do some of these things that de-stress you? Don't declare that you

have no time! You have to carve out time for these things, just to keep your sanity. So now in the space below, write down what you are going to do for stress reduction in the next week.

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Commit to it, and stick to your word. You will feel better—I guarantee it!

## Chapter 19

### What You Put in Your Mouth Can Affect Your Pain

*If we can get people to focus on fruits and vegetables and more healthy foods, we'll be better in terms of our healthcare situation.*

—Tom Vilsack

Did you know that diet and inflammation can be directly related? A diet that reduces inflammation is high in antioxidants from fruits, vegetables, and foods in that category that are known for their anti-inflammatory properties. Incorporate these foods into your diet to see your pain and inflammation decrease:

**Fruits:** apple, acerola berry, fresh pineapple, guava, grapefruit, rhubarb, kiwifruit, lemon, lime, orange, kumquat, black currant, blueberry, raspberry, mulberry, strawberry, papaya, cherry, tomato

**Vegetables:** spinach, sweet potato, bell pepper, cabbage, bok choy, onion, leek, garlic, green onion, broccoli, cauliflower, broccoli sprout, Brussels sprout, collard green

**Herbs and Spices:** basil, oregano, mint, clove, turmeric, cayenne pepper, chili pepper, parsley, rosemary

**Fish and Meats:** cod, halibut, salmon, snapper, bass, whitefish, herring, trout, sardine, grass-fed beef, pork, naturally raised (not on grain) chicken and turkey

**Whole Grains:** brown rice, whole wheat, buckwheat, barley, rye, millet, spelt

**Fats:** extra-virgin olive oil, avocado, hazelnut, almond, walnut

#### **You Should Know about the Red-Meat/Inflammation Connection**

Researchers have found a connection with red meats and inflammation, but that doesn't necessarily mean you shouldn't eat red meat. They found the reason for this correlation is that most cattle are fed grains that fatten them up and change the fat composition of their meat. A cow that's fed grains can't even digest them properly in the first place! The grain is high in omega-6 fats, which increase inflammation.

When cattle are fed a diet that is high in omega-6 fats, their meat ends up low in omega-3 fats and high in omega-6. So when you eat meat with an improper balance of fats in it, you now have an imbalance in your own body and are more susceptible to inflammation.

What's the answer? It's this: Eat only grass-fed beef and other meats. That way, the meat still has its correct balance of omega-3 to omega 6-fats. By the way, grass-fed beef is a lot tastier than the regular beef you purchase at the grocery store. Fancy restaurant chefs use grass-fed beef because it tastes best!

## **Dehydration Increases Inflammation**

Your body needs water to constantly flush its toxic wastes out to the lymphatic system, where they are eventually taken to the kidneys and liver to process. If you're taking prescription medication, you need water to flush out the drug residues from your body. Not drinking enough water leaves the toxins the body creates naturally right there in the tissues. Decrease inflammation by attacking it nutritionally:

**1. Take antioxidants.** The best way to start is by taking 25,000 IU vitamin A, 2000 mg vitamin C, and 400 IU vitamin E, in addition to your multivitamin/mineral tablets. At these levels, do not worry about overdoses! You can take this level infinitely without concern. Expect decreases in your pain level.

**2. Dietary supplements can include omega-3 capsules, two caps twice daily.** Most capsules are 500 mg DHA and EPA each. Increasing omega-3 decreases omega-6 fats in your body, creating a switch of biochemical pathways so prostaglandins are not produced.

It's easy to break into the habit of drinking enough water. As soon as you get up in the morning, commit to drinking 24 ounces of water in five minutes. You'll see how much better your day goes when you drink more water!

## **Natural Remedies That Help Decrease Inflammation**

### ***Ginger***

Ginger contains over 500 different compounds, many with anti-inflammatory properties. Try a 500-mg capsule or about one-third of a teaspoon, when you feel pain or inflammation—but don't take it with prescription medications. Leave at least an hour between prescription meds and any herbs. Cook with ginger regularly. One simple recipe is to braise beef or chicken strips with broccoli and one-half cup diced or sliced ginger. Use pineapple juice as a sweetener in this dish. Serve with brown rice and a spinach salad.

### ***Omega-3 Fats***

Americans have eaten too many omega-6 fats in their diets over the last 20 years, which has resulted in a widespread omega-3 fat deficiency. Omega-3 fats prevent inflammation in the body and are correlated with keeping allergies, asthmas, skin

disorders, and many other diseases in check. Make sure you have omega-3 fats in your diet by adding three to 10 daily capsules of 500 mg EPA with DHA (these are fish oils).

### ***Antioxidant Vitamins***

Did you know that increasing your vitamin C intake could reduce inflammation in the body by 45 percent? That's what researchers reported in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in March 2006. Taking about 2000 mg vitamin C is a good way to start decreasing inflammation in the body. You can always increase the amount of vitamin C as needed. Also, make sure you get at least 400 IU vitamin E in your supplements daily. Vitamin E is responsible for reducing inflammation of the muscles, which might be extremely helpful for your present health situation.

### ***Germanium***

Germanium oxygenates your body cells, organs, and tissues, providing pain relief in many people. Take germanium on an empty stomach, never at the same time with any prescription medications; 200 mg to 300 mg germanium or more could prove extremely helpful.

## Chapter 20

### Nutritional Support to Soothe Back Pain

*A year ago I had a back injury and followed a good nutrition program to help speed up my recovery. I focused on exercise and staying healthy in order to get back out on the ice.*

—Sasha Cohen

Now I'm going to let you "listen in" on a conversation I had one day with a friend who has a master's degree in nutrition. I asked about her thoughts on the two most common nutritional supplements on the market for joint support—1) chondroitin sulfate and 2) glucosamine.

"Research studies have proven that a lot of people can get relief from these two supplements," she said. "They usually see results in about six to eight weeks."

"So you recommend them to your patients?" I asked. I have been recommending them to my patients for years now, and they do help my patients quite a bit.

"If they're already taking them, I don't tell them to stop. That would be like pulling a crutch away from a crippled person. What I do is ask my patients five questions. If they answer yes to at least two questions, then I can just about bet that they have a mineral deficiency without running a lab test," she asked.

"What five questions do you ask?" I was quite curious.

"The first is this: *Do they have pain?* The second question is: *Do they notice they are pulling muscles and tendons more than usual?* Maybe they notice sore muscles and tendons after a short hike, or after working out in the gym, or some part of their body hurts more than before, as examples," she said. "One of my patients in her fifties said her knees hurt after kneeling in the garden after five minutes while working with her flowers. This isn't normal."

"OK, that makes sense so far," I said.

"The third question is this: *How bad are their joints feeling on a scale of 1 to 10?* A score of 5 or more is a bad answer and is too much pain and inflammation. The fourth question is this: *Do they have scoliosis?* And the last question is this: *Does it feel as if their condition is worsening?* If I get two 'yes' answers, chances are good that it's a manganese deficiency," she said.

“And this is something that you can almost bet on?” I asked.

“I’ve never been wrong yet. I’ve seen people getting ready for hip-replacement surgeries that didn’t need the surgery when we replaced the manganese in their diet. There have been countless patients with carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow, all deficient in manganese. I confirm it with a hair analysis.

“One woman in her 40s,” my friend continued, “was in tears because her knee pain was so great and she couldn’t walk anywhere for weeks. After three days on manganese replacement and laser therapy, she was able to do her normal routine again. Another woman in her 50s was able to jump up and down in aerobics class because her body ‘told her’ through intuition that her knees were more stable after taking manganese for three days.”

“Yes, our body gives us signals all the time about whether or not we’re ergonomically correct or if we are strong enough to do certain movements,” I agreed. “So what about the chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine?”

“If they’re already taking them,” she told me, “the supplements may be doing some good, so they can continue. But what I’m looking for is the decrease in pain and inflammation that results from restoring the proper levels of manganese. It should occur in as little as three days and as long as two weeks. When it comes to muscles, joints, bones, tendons, and ligaments, manganese is key to their health! I start them on a level of 20 mg manganese two times daily for six months, depending on how low their hair analysis test results are. If we don’t have a hair analysis test, then I recommend 10 mg manganese daily for a week. If there’s no improvement in one week, then it’s probably not just manganese the person needs. That person is probably very, very low in many minerals and needs a whole protocol of supplements to build up their body.”

“Do you think manganese can replace chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine? I knew it was important for joints, tendons, muscles, and ligaments, but I had never learned it was *that* important,” I said.

“The reason I don’t recommend chondroitin sulfate or glucosamine is that the active ingredient in them *is* manganese. You see, there’s so little manganese in the product that it takes two to three months to get relief using that chondroitin sulfate,” she said. “I want my patients to experience the quickest healing possible, so I’ll use the real substance they are missing—manganese. My patients who have been on manganese for a while sometimes stop taking it, but when they notice their joints start hurting again, it means their manganese levels are falling again. They get back on track, and the joint pain disappears.”

“Manganese can be a simple solution for a lot of people. How many years have you been using the manganese as a way to help your patients heal?”

“About 15 years now,” she said.

“What else do you add to make sure your patients’ joints are getting all the nutritional support they need?” I asked.

“Here’s my usual protocol....” And this is what she shared with me:

- A good multiple vitamin/mineral. I have one I depend on exclusively because it contains 450 mg calcium, 200 mg magnesium and 350 mg phosphorus. These three have to be in the proper ratio for joint health. A joint without calcium is a weakened joint. Without the phosphorus, you can’t absorb calcium, and calcium and magnesium have to be present together.
- 10 mg manganese, up to 50 mg manganese (50 mg is too much to guess on without a hair test; the mineral can be toxic in high amounts unless there is a deficiency).
- 200 mcg selenium (another mineral most are deficient in).
- 150–300 mg germanium (reduces pain, oxygenates the area thereby decreasing Inflammation)
- 400 to 800 IU vitamin E
- 3000 to 6000 mg vitamin C
- 100 mg CoQ 10 (this can be wonderful for decreasing pain and inflammation)
- 3000 to 5000 mg omega-3 oils

“These are what I use generally speaking,” my nutritionist friend explained, “but every case is a little different. Sometimes my patients modify their protocol a little bit, like take more germanium or more CoQ 10. Oh, one more thing...they still have to get the chiropractic care, too.”

You can see from my discussion with my colleague how much of a difference something as simple as eating right and taking your nutritional supplements can make in people’s lives. Using nutritional supplements can speed your progress and even prevent further injury and surgery. Don’t be afraid of them. The best news is that approaching your health from a natural standpoint can only improve any health issue right now.

**Take Action!**



You now have increased knowledge and many tools to begin taking control of your healthy back. I don't want to wish you luck because it's not about luck—to feel better, you need to take action and implement what you now know.

### **P.S. Don't Fall into This Trap**

The “no more pain/no more problem syndrome” is what I call discontinuing treatment or self-treatments too early. Depending on the severity of your problem, the cause of the pain might be completely gone. But after thousands and thousands of treatments, the patients with the best and most lasting results continue treatment recommendations, self-stretching, prescribed exercises, and lifestyle modifications, or undergo maintenance treatments. It is easy to fall victim to an out-of-sight/out-of-mind approach or, more appropriate, no-pain/no-problem. Lack of symptoms is not necessarily a predictor of health. Many back pain sufferers fail to realize that just because they begin to feel better or pain stops, the problem is not necessarily permanently gone.

No magic pill, potion, or lotion, but very successful treatments allow people to get their lives back. Even after knowing all this information, 90 percent of people fail to incorporate any advice from this book or take action to improve their situation. Many believe their pain is not all that bad and don't take it seriously, all the more reason to start now to do something about it. The patients in my clinic who truly get it are very good at listening to their bodies and seeking treatment before a full-blown back attack occurs. They prefer to be proactive, to stay ahead of the pain, rather than reactive. Regular maintenance is much easier for the patient and doctor to handle. It takes less treatment and time out of your busy schedule.

**If you need more information or additional help, please don't hesitate to contact me or my team at 325-695-9355, email me at [www.abileneadvancedchiro@gmail.com](mailto:www.abileneadvancedchiro@gmail.com) or visit [www.abileneadvancedchiro.com](http://www.abileneadvancedchiro.com).**

### **Patient Testimonies**

*I suffered from lower back pain that limited my sleep, difficulty rolling over in bed without pain, and pain did not let up throughout the day. After treatments with Dr. Morgan, I am pain-free and sleeping through the night. Dr. Morgan and his staff are terrific. Jake is professional and forthcoming about your treatment needs. I am able to relax and receive the treatment I need because of the atmosphere and attitude of the personnel at the clinic. Trust is a powerful ally in medical treatment. I trust my care to Dr. Morgan, and after 26 years of firefighting, some of the strain I have put on my back has been alleviated with the help of Dr. Morgan. Thanks! —Russell Pope, 51*

*I have had the extreme pleasure of having Dr. Morgan provide care to me and my teenage daughter over the past year. I have been a patient with other doctors for the prior five years. I can truly say that Dr. Morgan has been, by far, the best provider that I have ever had. Dr. Morgan has a great personality and excellent knowledge in his field, and his attention to detail serves him greatly. I would recommend his services to anyone without hesitation. —Richard Salinas*

*Ever since 2003 I have had two major surgeries on my back, the last surgery fused vertebrae in my low back. I have had several efforts of therapy, used the swimming pool, and this seemed to help some but only would get relief for short periods of time. I exercise at least three times a week; this helps me to keep on functioning. I have been walking with the help of two canes. I tried not to be dependent on them but have not succeeded yet. Dr. Morgan did adjustments on my spine, able to work around the fused area. He did electrical nerve stimulation for my back, and electrical nerve impulse therapy for my neuropathy that affected my feet and both legs. My neuropathy has dissipated so much that the gabapentin medication was cut in half. The atmosphere in Dr. Morgan's Office is very pleasant, and the staff should be commended for the help they offer. Thank you! —Don Copey, 79*

*Before treatments with Dr. Morgan, I could not get out of bed without extreme lower back pain. There were times I had to crawl to the bathroom. I always had to hold my lower back and lean to the left to walk until the pain meds took hold. After receiving the first treatment, I was able to stand right up from the bed the next morning and walk. I still had pain, but it was so much better. Now, after a month of treatment, my pain is almost gone. Before I started coming here, I had to have a walker to go more than a block. Now I walk anywhere I want to without the walker! —Rose Helser, 73*

*I could not sleep at night for weeks. I suffered from gripping pain in the calf of my left leg, and lower back, that was awakening me at night. I would have to massage it and walk to enable me to try to get back to sleep. I followed my family doctor's suggestion of painkillers with no noticeable change. He recommended I try the services of Dr. Morgan. Dr. Morgan and his staff were very gracious. He evaluated my need for relief and, working with my doctor, obtained my history and necessary X-rays. He explained to me the course of treatment. His confidence and manner of adjustments, followed by electronic stimulation of noted areas of pain, was truly "advanced" and helpful. His evaluation after a number of treatments suggested that I should have further examination of my spine, which required an MRI. The outcome of the MRI indicated considerable arthritis and degeneration of my spine and consequent pain. Dr. Morgan made me feel I was his highest priority, and he delivered on everything he advised. Dr.*

*Morgan's occasional adjustments now assist me greatly, and I gladly recommend his service to any and all. —Harvey Pace, 80*

*I had severe neck pain and could not turn my head in any direction. I had difficulty getting out of bed by myself. I am currently still treating but have had much improved pain levels, I can get out of bed by myself. Dr. Morgan is, by far, one of the best. He knows what he is doing and has an excellent attitude (always!). I not only have less pain but leave happier when I exit his office. Go see Dr. Morgan and staff—they are amazing. —Justin Strickland, 18*

*I had knee pain that was difficult and painful when standing up, sitting down, and getting out of my car. I had already stopped doing the things I enjoyed. After just two visits with Dr. Morgan, the pain in my knee was gone and my life was back to normal. I would say, if your knee pain of any kind is bothering you, give Dr. Morgan a chance to help you. The staff is excellent; they take the time to get to know you and treat you like family. —Joe Potosnak, 48*

*Before I started treatment, I could not bend over or raise my arms too high. I had difficult doing tasks at work. After my treatment, I can bend over and move around real well. I feel years younger and able to do my job! I was very pleased with the staff and Dr. Morgan. Thanks so much. —Toni Esparza, 69*

*Before treatment at Advanced Chiropractic, I could not move my right arm due to a severe fall. I was very sore all over, having difficulty performing everyday activities. After treatment with Dr. Morgan, I am back to normal. I can pick my arm up and have better movement in my whole body. I highly recommend Dr. Morgan and his staff. —Ethel Shirley, 67*

*I could not walk confidently without using a cane. I also suffered sciatic pains in my left leg, as well as lower back pain, which caused me to walk bent over. I have found relief from the sciatic pain and no longer have to take meds to help me sleep. I feel so much more confident in walking that I have forgotten to use my cane! Dr. Morgan has given me treatments that are showing great improvement in my condition. Dr. Morgan and staff are most helpful and joyous in the treatments of my condition. —Scott Smith, 82*

*I suffered injuries from a car accident and, before treatments, I could not stand for long periods of time without severe pain in my lower back. Lifting was nearly impossible without any pain! After treatment from Dr. Morgan, I can now work for longer periods of time without taking breaks to rest. His staff took care of all my insurance needs with ease and professionalism. Let him help you! —Dillon McMahan, 20*

*Before my treatment with Dr. Morgan, I could not stand up properly (straight) due to back-muscle cramps. I have pain in my neck that made me stiff and sore. After receiving treatments at Advanced Chiropractic, I can now stand without my back cramping. I can move my head and neck without pain. I have more of a drive to work out and do more activities. I can walk longer distances without hurting. I would recommend others in pain to get checked out by Dr. Morgan. It has done a world of good for me, and I know it could for anyone who is in pain. —J. R. Shirley, 77*

*Before treatments with Dr. Morgan, I could not bend over, walk vary far, ride in the car for an extended period of time, clean house, or pick up my grandbabies, due to lower back pain. My life has changed after treatments and I can now walk one to two miles per day, travel, and am on the golf course without hurting so much. Go see Dr. Morgan. The treatments helped after just a few days. I try to do what they have taught me, religiously. Everyone at the office is so nice, and I highly recommend them. —Dice Stovall, 64*

*Since receiving treatments at Dr. Morgan's clinic, I now realize that prevention is the key to keeping me healthy. I initially had lower back pain for about six months before I decided to do something about it. My primary care physician told me to go see Dr. Morgan. My lower back pain has diminished considerably, and I do not wake up in the middle of the night with severe leg pain. I can put on my shoes with no pain. The treatments I found to be very comfortable. In fact, I still look forward to my maintenance visits. After my initial 18 visits he recommended, I now get a treatment two times a month whether I have pain or no pain. I am able to work with less pain and be a better father, husband, and individual when I am feeling good. I also am grateful for the inversion table Dr. Morgan ordered for me. I use it three to five times a week for 15 minutes, and have no severe pain in my lower back for over two years now. Thank you! See you next visit. —Mark Dunn, 38*

## **This Book Reveals the Hidden Causes of Back Pain Along with Safe and Effective Treatments**

### **In This Book You Will Discover the Following:**

- Six mistakes nearly all back pain sufferers are making right now
- Why back treatments fail
- Why 90 percent of health-care professionals can't tell you what's causing your back pain
- How to treat your own back pain
- How to sleep with less pain and more energy
- Nutritional secrets no one has ever told you about to soothe pain
- Breakthrough treatments that can make back pain disappear without risky surgery

**If you are one of the millions suffering from back pain, this could be the book that potentially changes, maybe even saves, your life.**



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jake Morgan is a leading back and neck expert, frequently featured on major television shows and in newspapers. He publishes a newsletter read by over one thousand readers. Dr. Morgan is a father of three rambunctious boys and states that being a dad is the greatest gift in the world.

Dr. Morgan's Personal Statement: "My goal is to significantly reduce the needless suffering, discomfort, and disability that a lack of understanding of back conditions has brought. I strive to be an asset to the community I serve."

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- *Jake Morgan D.C.*

