Discovering How Back Pain is Preventable

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Back Pain Prevention

You've likely heard it said that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This statement is particularly true regarding back pain.

A large percentage of the population will deal with low back pain at some point in their life. Americans spend at least $50 billion each year on low back pain, the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work.

Knowing how to prevent this common ailment can save you not only a lot of time and discomfort but a lot of money as well. There are several reasons people develop low back pain.

Some are due to acute trauma or accidents that are unavoidable. The more common cause of back pain in most people is preventable, however. This pain is more of a chronic nature and is brought on by several factors.

These include a sedentary lifestyle, poor ergonomics and poor exercise technique, among others.

The Sedentary Life

A sedentary lifestyle is damaging to the low back for multiple reasons. First, being sedentary indicates that one is spending a lot of their day sitting.

Whether this is sitting on the couch, in the car, or sitting at the desk at work all day, the results are the same. Sitting is problematic for the back in several ways.

First, the position our bodies tend to take on as we sit for extended periods is one in which the spine rounds forward into a C-shape. While this posture may feel comfortable initially, it is potentially damaging to the back because it allows your core stabilizing muscles to disengage, which makes them weak over time.

Sitting also puts added pressure on the discs in your lower back.

The Workplace and Poor Ergonomics

Poor ergonomics is another preventable cause of low back pain. Sitting at work, as discussed above, is a major source of back pain.

If possible, it is ideal to use a standing workstation. This keeps your core muscles/spinal stabilizers engaged throughout the day, and it is much easier to maintain good posture in a standing position.

Some companies provide adjustable-height workstations that allow you to go between sitting and standing. If

standing is not an option at work, getting up regularly to walk around the office may help.

Taking a short break to get up and move every 30 minutes will improve circulation and metabolism, and keep those protective muscles firing.

Proper Lifting Technique

An improper lifting technique is also another major cause of back pain. Repetitive bending and lifting, especially if twisting is involved, can be particularly damaging to the structures of the spine.

Like with sitting, repetitive bending can cause the stabilizing muscles in the lower back to fatigue, setting you up for disc injury and sprain/strain injuries to the lower back.

Proper bending and lifting require that you maintain a straight or even slightly arched low back, bending at the knees and hinging forward at the hips, not the lumbar spine.

Maintain an Exercise Routine

Maintaining a sound exercise routine that incorporates full body movements and puts extra emphasis on good core stability exercises can be extremely beneficial in the prevention of back pain.

When working the “core,” it is important to realize that this includes more than just the abs. Simply doing crunches in hopes of building a “six-pack” can be more detrimental to the low back because it only trains your body in flexion, which puts added stress on the supporting tissues of the lumbar spine.

It is best to choose an exercise routine or program that incorporates a wide variety of functional movements and includes components of flexibility. *Foundation Training* by Dr. Eric Goodman is a useful resource for exercising properly to prevent back pain.

If you begin to feel back pain coming on, it is best to take care of it immediately. Seeing a chiropractor or physical therapist at the early onset of pain can play a huge role in preventing your pain from becoming a chronic burden on you.