



Discover Life Chiropractic

Better Health Naturally

# Chiropractic Care and Low Back Pain

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Dr. David Hendrickson

Discover Life Chiropractic

5015 Tacoma Mall Blvd Ste E102

Tacoma, WA 98409

Phone #: (253) 472-4400

[www.discoverlifechiro.com](http://www.discoverlifechiro.com)

# Chiropractic Care and Low Back Pain

In a study conducted by the researchers of the University of Queensland's School of Population Health, low back pain is one of the common pains experienced by people across all demographics. Medical experts believe that about 80% of the population will experience low back pain in their lifetime and it is one of the most common reasons for absenteeism at work. Further, it is the second most common reason for hospital visits.

Most people suffer from low back pain but many do not realize that they can prevent or treat this condition with the right chiropractic care. It is crucial to understand lower back pain in order to avoid any complications.



## Understanding Low Back Pain

Low back pain is commonly seen as an acute type of pain; thus, it usually lasts for a few days and resolves on its own with proper self-care. There are two types of low back pain described by experts and these include sub-acute low back pain and chronic back pain. While the former is characterized with having a painful lower back between four to 12 weeks, the latter is more persistent often lasting more than 12 weeks. The magnitude of the inconvenience caused by lower back pain has grown in recent years. According to the study conducted by the National Institute of Neurological Disorder and Stroke, low back pain jumped

from the sixth to the third place of common diseases due to the rise of poor health practices.

The lower back is comprised of bones, muscles, ligaments and joints. Unlike other types of back pain, low back pain can be complicated. It is crucial to take note that there are different reasons why low back pain occurs. Moreover, sufferers experience different types of symptoms thus affecting the treatment strategies. It is therefore important to understand what back pain is before delving into its treatments.

## **The Anatomy of the Lower Back**

Familiarizing the anatomy of the lower back allows you to communicate with your healthcare providers better especially when you are suffering from lower back pain. The lower back is comprised of the five lumbar vertebrae referred to as L1 to L5. These vertebrae are odd-shaped and they signify the end of the typical bones of the spinal column. The L5 vertebra is connected to the sacrum and is the last bone of the lumbar vertebrae.

The lower back is not only comprised of the lumbar vertebrae. The spaces between the lumbar vertebrae are connected by rubbery pads that are called intervertebral discs that function as shock absorbers. Muscles are also connected to the vertebrae through ligaments thus allowing movement. Moreover, the deep muscles of the lower back are attached to the spinous processes. There are three types of muscles associated with the lumbar vertebrae which include the multifidus, spinalis, and longissimus. The combination of these anatomical structures make up the lower back muscles and provide an effective support system to the spine. However, it also plays other vital functions as follows:

- **Protection:** The lower back vertebrae protect the spinal as well as the nerve roots so that they can relay messages to the brain. Moreover, the rigid structure of the lumbar vertebrae and the intervertebral discs are shock absorbers whenever we move.
- **Flexibility:** The lower back region allows us to twist and bend or make a variety of movements.
- **Support:** The lumbar vertebra is very strong and together with the muscles and connective tissues, it helps support the upper body thereby allowing us to stand upright with ease.

## Facts about Low Back Pain

Having low back pain can impact daily lives. It is one of the most common pains that people complain about. The pain can range from a dull to sharp ache that makes it hard to move. But did you know that anyone can get low back pain? Below are some fast facts about lower back pain that you need to know about.

- More than 1/3 of American adults claim that low back pain affected their lives in engaging different tasks. Activities that are mostly affected by low back pain include exercise (38%), sleep (37%) and daily living (39%) in general.
- Around 72% of Americans who suffer from low back pain use pain medications to relieve symptoms. However, 55% use cold or heat packs as home remedy in treating low back pain.

Low back pain is one of the most common pains that people complain about in their daily lives.

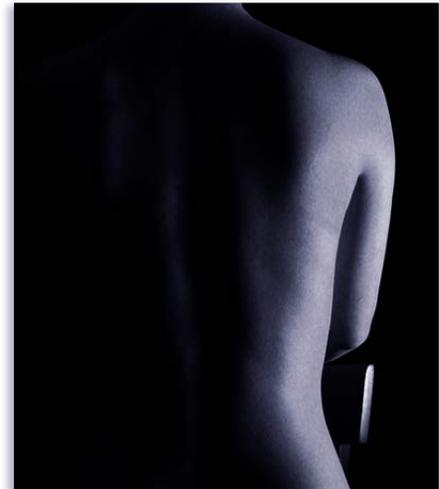
- Low back pain is not only common in people who spend too much time on their feet. In fact, 54% of Americans who are sitting all the time suffer from low back pain too.
- Men are more likely to suffer from low back pain than women. It was reported that 31% of men suffer from lower back pain that are debilitating enough to affect their ability to function at work.
- While it is a common condition in most adult Americans, it is surprising to take note that 37% of low back pain sufferers do not seek help from their doctors.

## Causes of Lower Back Pain

Most low back pain is caused by mechanical reasons. In fact, it is commonly associated with spondylosis, which is a condition that is characterized by the degeneration of the spine due to wear and tear. However, there are also reasons why low back pain occurs. Let's take a look at the other causes of low back pain.

- **Sprains and strains:** Sprain is caused by the overstretching of the ligaments while strain is caused by tears on the muscles and tendons. These conditions can occur by lifting a heavy item improperly or overstretching the muscles and ligaments.
- **Herniated discs:** Also called ruptured discs, this condition occurs when there is compression of the intervertebral discs. Thus, creating a bulge of the disc which causes low back pain.
- **Intervertebral disc generation:** This condition occurs when the rubbery discs lose their integrity due to aging. Intervertebral discs give height to each vertebra and allow you to bend and move your lower back. Once it deteriorates, they limit the movement of the vertebrae as well as lose their cushioning ability.

- **Sciatica:** Sciatica is characterized by sciatic nerve compression. This nerve extends from the buttocks to the back of the leg. The compression of the sciatic nerve creates a burning sensation on the lower back, buttocks, and leg.
- **Traumatic injury:** Traumatic injury such as car accidents, fall or playing sports can injure the muscles, ligaments and tendons thus resulting in lower back pain. Aside from causing injury to the muscles, ligaments and tendons, traumatic injuries can also lead to spine compression. Thus, leading to intervertebral disc rupture.
- **Skeletal irregularities:** Skeletal irregularities such as scoliosis or the curvature of the spine may cause pain on the lower back through time.
- **Infections:** Infections especially when they involve the vertebrae can lead to low back pain. Spinal infection called osteomyelitis, although rare, can spread to the vertebrae of the lower spine and is caused by bacteria like *Propionibacterium*.
- **Tumors:** Tumors are rare but if they grow near your lumbar vertebrae, they can be very painful. Aside from painful low back, tumors can be malignant that can lead to cancer.
- **Kidney stones:** Kidney stones often cause sharp pain particularly on one side of the lower back.



There are different causes for lower back pain and dismissing it as ordinary pain can be very dangerous. This is the reason why it is so important to seek a professional who can address your pain appropriately.

## Chiropractic Care

While lower back pain is a very common problem for most people, it shouldn't have to cause a lot of pain in your daily life. Think of it this way—you can still be active even if you suffer from low back pain. How? As long as you manage your low back pain. Chiropractic care for low back pain is one of the ways of treating pain without resorting to surgery. If you are in Tacoma, Washington there are reputable chiropractors that can help you manage or cure your lower back pain.

## Chiropractic Diagnosis

Reliable Tacoma chiropractors can provide a combination of treatments and exercise programs to treat your lower back pain. But before any treatments can be made, chiropractors will take the complete history of your symptoms. The chiropractor will need to accurately find the cause of your problems. Thus, you will be asked to undergo different tests such as Surface EMG or X-ray. By doing these tests, the chiropractor will have a clear picture on what he or she must deal with. This will allow him or her to create a customized treatment program designed particularly for your own condition. The thing is that, discovering the root cause of the low back pain and creating the appropriate regimen is the main essence of good chiropractic care.

Dismissing low back pain as ordinary pain can be very dangerous

## Chiropractic Treatments

Upon the completion of the tests, your chiropractor will determine the reason for your low back pain thus he or she can design the right

treatment for your condition. There are different types of treatment options that are available for low back pain sufferers. Below are the possible chiropractic treatments that will be used to improve your condition.

- **Spinal manipulation:** Spinal manipulation is considered as the safest chiropractic treatment for lower back pain. Also called spinal manipulative therapy, chiropractors use their hands to apply a controlled force to the joint of the affected spine. Chiropractors can also use a special device to aid in the manipulation of the spine. The amount of force applied largely depends on the form of manipulation used by the therapist which includes a short arm thrust or high velocity thrust. The goal of this chiropractic treatment procedure is to improve the functionality, restore range of motions of the lower back, and reduce nerve irritability.
- **Chiropractic mobilization:** Referring to low velocity manipulation, chiropractic mobilization involves moving and stretching the joints and muscles using slow movement. The goal of this treatment procedure is to increase the range of motions of the affected area.
- **Flexion distraction technique:** This chiropractic treatment is a gentle and non-thrusting type of spinal manipulation. The treatment is carried on a special chiropractic table. It is commonly used to treat low back pain caused by ruptured or bulging discs.
- **Trigger point therapy:** With this treatment procedure, the chiropractor determines areas that are hypertonic or tight. These areas are characterized by painful muscle points. Applying direct



pressure using the fingers to relieve the tension is the best way to perform the trigger point therapy.

- **Therapeutic massage:** Chiropractors can also perform therapeutic massage to improve the joint mobility and to return to the normal motion of the spine. Aside from therapeutic massage, the chiropractor will also recommend other types of therapeutic exercises.

## Conclusion

Lower back pain can be a debilitating condition especially if not treated sooner. There are different treatment options to deal with low back pain and chiropractic care is one of the most effective and non-invasive treatment that you can rely on. If you have been treated with medication and physical therapy and are still suffering it's about time you tried chiropractic. If you have had back surgery and still have pain it's time to try chiropractic. At Discover Life Chiropractic we have successfully treated thousands of cases from failed back surgeries to car accidents to slips and falls with great results. Give us a call today to see if chiropractic can help you feel great again.

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