

Walking upright on two feet has advantages, but it also puts intense pressure on the spine as well as on other muscles and bones. Add to this improper sitting, lifting, reaching, and the normal wear and tear of working and playing, and you have the perfect recipe for back pain. That's why back pain is the second most common reason for visits to the doctor's office, outnumbered only by upper respiratory infections. In fact, some experts say, as many as 80 percent of us will experience a back problem at some time in our lives.

Back injuries are a part of everyday life. They can cause a sharp pain or a dull ache and can be accompanied by a tingling, numbness, or burning sensation. You may also feel weakness, pain, or tingling in your pelvis and upper leg—a condition known as sciatica. The spine is quite good at dealing with back injuries. Minor injuries usually heal within a day or two. Some pain, however, continues. What makes it last longer is not entirely understood, but researchers suspect that stress, mood changes, and the fear of further injury may prevent patients from being active, and also may exacerbate the pain.

With a thorough knowledge of the structure and functioning of the human body, doctors of chiropractic make diagnoses and take steps to correct problems using spinal adjustments, dietary and lifestyle advice, and other natural tools. Spinal manipulation, which is the primary form of treatment performed by doctors of chiropractic, is a recommended option for back pain treatment.

Research has shown that manipulative therapy and spinal manipulation are not only safe and effective, but can

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Back Pain and Chiropractic Care

Tips for Back Pain Prevention

- Maintain a healthy diet and weight.
- Remain active, under the supervision of your chiropractic and medical doctors.
- Avoid prolonged inactivity or bed rest.
- Warm up or stretch before and after exercising or other physical activities, such as gardening.
- Maintain proper posture.
- Wear comfortable low-heeled shoes.
- Sleep on a mattress of medium to high firmness to minimize any curve in your spine.
- Lift with your knees, keeping the object close to your body. Do not twist when lifting.
- Quit smoking. Smoking impairs blood flow, resulting in oxygen and nutrient deprivation to spinal tissues.
- Work with your doctor of chiropractic to ensure that your workstation is ergonomically correct.

Chiropractic Treatment for Back Pain

If you experience back pain, consult your doctor of chiropractic. More than 30 million North Americans sought chiropractic care last year alone.

also cut costs and get workers back on the job faster than other treatments. A recent medical study in the July 2003 *Spine Journal* has also pointed out that manual manipulation offers better short-term relief of chronic back pain than medication.

Always consult your medical professional if the pain persists after chiropractic treatment. **W**

