

Tips, Strategies and News You Can Use To Achieve Optimum Health...For Life!

July 2006 Issue

The Nine Most Common Back Pain Myths

Have you ever experienced back pain? Most of us have, and it can be excruciating. It is estimated that 80% of all people will suffer from back pain at some point in their lives. And back pain is the most common cause of loss of activity in adults and costs the economy billions of dollars in lost productivity each year. Even worse, people who do have back pain have an almost 80 percent chance of reinjuring their back if they don't get proper care.

Chances are, you've either suffered from back pain in the past...or will in the future. So listen carefully - this article is written for you.



First I want to discuss what causes back pain and where it occurs most frequently.

The most common site of back pain is the **lumbar region** of the back. In layman's terms, the lower back. The reason back pain pops up here so frequently is because that area of your back - the lumbar spinal region - absorbs many types of forces every day. These forces include bending, sitting, coughing (believe it or not), stooping and lifting.

The cause of lower back pain is **degenerative changes over time to the lumbar discs**. Here's an easy way of visualizing what happens. Think of your spinal discs as jelly doughnuts. They have a soft, jellylike center as well as a firm fibrous outside covering that houses the jelly part of the disc.

The outside fibers are oriented around the nucleus of the disc (the jellylike part) and resist twisting movements of the spine. The center - or jellylike portion of the disc - is oriented vertically to resist compressive forces. Roughly 80 percent of your discs are composed of water which makes the center pliable and provides cushioning. However, as we age, that jellylike material dries out, shrinks, loses its elasticity and becomes more brittle. What happens next is a progressive weakening of the tissue and



Robert Inglis, MPT, CSCS

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Experts say 80% of us will experience back pain at some point in our lives. And when it strikes - it can be excruciating!

a slow break down. Then, through the stresses of everyday life - coughing, sitting improperly, etc. - your disc can bulge, and in some cases, actually *rupture* and spill some of the soft jellylike material into the surrounding space. Ouch!

Also, the fibrous outside covering of the disc can tear. If it tears, it creates inflammation around the disc. This swelling can irritate your nerve roots, nerve endings and the blood vessels around your disc and vertebrae. Numbness, tingling, muscle spasms and pain can be the result.

That's what happens over time. However, back pain can also be caused by a more traumatic event such as bending the wrong way, experiencing an auto accident or lifting improperly. If you've ever felt that type of sharp, instant-

aneous pain you'll never forget it. It's literally the straw that breaks the camel's back.

To avoid back pain before it happens - and treat the pain once it occurs - takes education and awareness. There is a whole variety of different back problems and treatment options that can be effective. In my opinion, however, the first step is clearing away a few myths and misconceptions regarding back pain. And that's exactly what I want to do in the next portion of this article. So let's go over the *Nine Most Common Back Pain Myths And The Truth About Back Pain*.

Myth #1: "It Won't Happen To Me"

Reality: The fact is, about eight out of 10 people will experience back pain at some point in their

lives. Back pain is the leading cause of disability in men over 40 years old. And it's the second most common reason for a visit to a primary care doctor. Back pain is also the third most common reason for surgery and fifth most common reason for hospitalization. So unfortunately, most people do experience back pain...or will at some point in our lives.

Myth #2: "I'm Physically Active, I Shouldn't Get Back Pain".

Reality: Being physically active is definitely a plus. And it's true that well-conditioned individuals are less likely to experience back pain than sedentary people. However, back pain **can affect all people regardless of their activity level**. In fact, runners are notorious for having back pain as a result of the forces and compression that take place during running. Golfers, people who play volleyball and people who engage in aerobics also experience back pain. So, whether you're active or not, chances are you're going to experience back pain at some point.

Myth #3: "The Pain Is So Bad There Must Be Ongoing Damage To My Back"

Reality: This is a tricky one. With **acute** pain, the level of pain usually correlates to the level of damage. In other words, the worse the pain, the worse the underlying damage. But you also have to take the *length* and the *duration* of your episode into account. For example, you may have severe back pain that subsides after a second or two. On the other hand, with chronic back pain (any back pain greater than 4 - 6 weeks) the damage can be more severe. In this case, the pain does **not** necessarily correlate to the level of damage. So, just because you have back pain, it does not necessarily mean you have ongoing

damage.

Myth #4: "The Spine Is Fragile And Easily Damaged"

Reality: This is simply not true. Here's the reality: you have 66 muscles that connect your lumbar-sacral region. Combine that with the connecting tendons and ligaments and you have an incredibly strong and supportive structure for your spine. That entire "housing" is your primary support system for your entire body. It's an incredibly well-designed and resilient structure.

To help maintain your back and spine, you **do** need proper conditioning. This includes strength training, flexibility and aerobic conditioning (there are some exceptions to the rule, though. If you suffer from osteoporosis, have compression fractures or an unstable spinal fracture you should not engage in these activities). In general, however, your back typically does not need to be "overprotected" when recovering from an episode of back pain.

Myth #5: "Bed Rest Is The Secret To Recovering From Back Pain"

Reality: Actually, this is *partial* true. New studies reveal that it normally takes about three days of rest to recover from back pain. But 48 - 72 hours is all you need. Any more than that, and you're making the problem **worse**. Here's why: Too much rest can stiffen and weaken the muscles and joints..and in turn, increase the pain. If you read the April issue of this newsletter on Arthritis, you know that you should use your joints to reduce your pain and increase your mobility. It's the same with back pain - you need to move. By the way, there are two reasons bed rest is recommended for back pain. First, to **reduce the pressure** on the disc and spine. Second, to stop any

mechanical pressure that is irritating **pain receptors**. Any more than 48-72 hours can lead to more back pain in the long run.

Myth #6: "Heat And Massage Feel Good So They Must Be Helping Me"

Reality: Sorry. While these short-term remedies might feel good, they don't provide a long-term solution. Of course, we do try to manage pain during recovery to allow patients to heal and get back to life, but heat and massage do not address the underlying causes of back pain.

Myth #7: "There Is A Standard Cure For Most Causes Of Back Pain"

Reality: Surprisingly, there is no "magic bullet" when it comes to back pain. In fact, compared to other medical conditions, there are very few standardized approaches. That's why spine specialists such as physical therapists need to be consulted **first** - at the first sign of back pain. In addition, there are many different schools of thought in regards to treating back pain. Even different specialists within the *same discipline* may have different opinions. So, no, there really is no "standard cure". That's why it's so critically important to see a specialist like a physical therapist and seek an individualized approach to your problem.

Myth #8: "Back Pain Means I'll Need Surgery At Some Point".

Reality: Now here's some good news. Just because you have back pain now does NOT mean you'll need surgery in the future. Surgery is normally recommended when a diagnostic test reveals that the center of the disc -- the jelly part -- starts to rupture. Surgery is also required if you have an unstable



fracture of the vertebrae. But surgery is always a last resort. Typically, a doctor or orthopedic surgeon will refer you to a physical therapist to see if they can take care of some of those symptoms first before resorting to surgery. If you do have chronic back pain, it could be also be arthritis caused by wear, tear and repetitive motion. An exercise program designed for strength and flexibility can help to strengthen your back muscles and avoid pain in the future.

Myth #9 "My Doctor Said I Need Surgery For My Back. Isn't That Too Dangerous?"

Reality: Not true. People read things on the internet that cause them to forego surgery, or scare them into thinking that back surgery is incredibly painful. Again, assuming a test revealed no abnormalities, surgery is a last resort. However, surgery is only undertaken after physical therapy, rest and exercise is given ample time to work. Keep in mind that technology to predict and diagnose back problems is **highly accurate now**. Imaging systems such as CT scans and MRI scans create incredibly detailed pictures of your body which allows more precise methods of surgery. That means fewer complications than in the past, less risk and quicker recovery time.

Feel free to email me with any questions you might have at mycorept@yahoo.com

-- Robert Inglis, MPT, CSCS

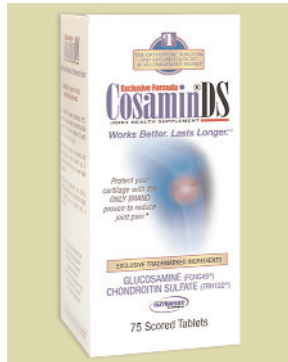
How To Avoid Cartilage Breakdown With A Little-Known Supplement Called Cosamin DS

There are many factors that lead to cartilage breakdown: age, inactivity, excess weight, over activity, injury, and genetics. Cartilage lacks a direct blood supply. It relies on nutrients found in the joint fluid to nourish cartilage cells and maintain its structure. When this process is affected by one or more of the factors mentioned above, cartilage can deteriorate to the point where it can no longer provide sufficient joint protection.

My recommendation is to use a supplement called "Cosamin DS". First of all, it's the only brand clinically proven to reduce joint pain. Secondly, it contains an ingredient called "chondroitin sulfate". This particular ingredient was selected by the National Institutes of Health for a major GAIT study.

What is Cosamin DS?

It is the #1 orthopedic surgeon and rheumatologist recommended brand of chondroitin sulfate/glucosamine. As a joint health supplement, CosaminDS helps reduce joint pain and stiffness by using ingredients that are safe, effective, and easily absorbed. CosaminDS is superior to all other brands and has been proven effective in published clinical studies.



The two ingredients in CosaminDS, TRH122 low molecular weight chondroitin sulfate and FCHG49 glucosamine hydrochloride stimulate the production of cartilage.

In younger, healthier individuals, cartilage cells would normally accomplish this task. However, as one ages, cartilage cells die off and are not replaced. This starts a cycle of destruction in the cartilage. Also, there are enzymes present that degrade cartilage over time.

Glucosamine hydrochloride **stimulates** cartilage production while chondroitin sulfate **inhibits** enzymes that break down cartilage. The low molecular weight chondroitin sulfate in Cosamin DS has been shown in clinical trials to **slow the progression of cartilage deterioration as well as reduce joint pain.**

Why is it the #1 recommended brand ?

Your doctor understands there are differences between glucosamine/chondroitin brands. CosaminDS is the only brand proven to reduce joint pain in controlled, published US studies.

Backed By Research

The chondroitin sulfate found only in CosaminDS was chosen by the National Institute of Health (NIH) for the GAIT study. Laboratory studies have shown that the exclusive combination of ingredients in CosaminDS work better together than glucosamine alone. Finally, published experimental trials indicate that CosaminDS can protect cartilage from breakdown. CosaminDS is supported by controlled, published US clinical studies. CosaminDS contains the highest quality ingredients. Also, CosaminDS is produced following manufacturing standards practiced by the pharmaceutical industry.

CosaminDS requires only 1 or 2 capsules daily for long term use. For more in-depth scientific information about CosaminDS, call 1-800-925-5187 or look up their website at

www.cosamin.com

Welcome To The Team!

Introducing Rodney Hawkins, MPT

I am pleased to introduce my new associate, Rodney Hawkins, MPT.

Rodney received his B.S. degree from Brigham Young University in 1997. While studying Sports Medicine at BYU, he had the opportunity to work with the men's tennis, wrestling and football teams. The program also allowed him to spend a year with local high schools, working with the women's soccer, volleyball and men's baseball teams. Rodney completed his Master of Physical Therapy degree at Western University of

Health Sciences in May 2001, where his clinical emphasis was in orthopedics and sports rehabilitation.

Rodney's career focus is orthopedics, and he is pursuing certification in manual therapy and orthopedics with the Institute of Physical Arts. He has taken continuing education courses for treatment of the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine, patellofemoral pain syndrome, common knee and shoulder pathologies, golf injuries and additional courses in principles of strength and conditioning.



Rodney Hawkins, MPT

Rodney brings a broad range of clinical skills and academic knowledge to Physical Therapy Specialists. He looks forward to meeting you and assisting you and your patients' needs.

Welcome aboard, Rodney!

Health Trivia - Test Your Health And Fitness Knowledge!

QUESTION #1: What is the poisonous, colorless, odorless gas that is found in cigarette smoke?

a.) Methane b.) Carbon Dioxide c.) Oxygen d.) Carbon Monoxide

QUESTION #2: What is the name of the bacterial disease that affects the lungs and other parts of the body?

a.) Tuberculosis b.) Lungitis c.) Athlete's Foot d.) Rubella

QUESTION #3: What is the condition in which bones become brittle and break easily due to loss of calci-

um?

a.) Osteoarthritis b.) Osteoporosis c.) Obesity d.) Diabetes

QUESTION #4: What is an organism that causes disease?

a.) Pathogen b.) Cootie c.) Carcinogen d.) Oxygen

QUESTION #5: What is the disease of the liver in which useless scar tissue replaces normal liver tissue?

a.) Liver Pox b.) Liverosis c.) Hepatitis d.) Cirrhosis

Answers: #1.) D #2.) A #3.) B #4.) A #5.) D

From Our Healthy Kitchen

Recipes To Kick Your Metabolism Into High Gear!



When it comes to boosting your metabolism, research has shown that eating more calories earlier in the day is more satiating than eating the same number of calories later in the day and reduces overall caloric consumption. Also, eating higher nutrient-dense foods such as whole foods, vegetables, fruits, whole grain, beans, nuts leads to an overall lower intake of calories.

If you eat more empty calories from refined foods (doughnuts and sweet rolls) and sugars, you will tend to eat more overall. Eating a good healthy breakfast containing protein, eggs, nut butters and whole grains or nuts will help curb excess craving throughout the day. Breakfast is often overlooked because most people don't have the time to prepare a whole meal. Here are a couple suggestions from the book *Ultrametabolism* by Dr. Mark Hyman: (P.S. I highly recommend you read this book!)

Yogurt Parfait

- 1 Organic plain, nonfat, or low fat yogurt
- 2 Fresh or frozen raspberries, blueberries
- 3 Milled flaxseed (Arrowhead Mills)
- 4 Chopped raw almonds, walnuts or pecans

Eggs Dijon

- 1 Hard-boiled Omega 3 eggs
- 2 Whole grain bread slices
- 3 Yogurt Dijon (two parts plain yogurt with one part Dijon mustard)
- 4 Fresh fruit in season

Banana Nut

- 1 Banana
- 2 Natural nut or seed butter (almond, macadamia, cashew, sunflower)
- 3 Raw wheat germ (Bob's Red mill or Arrowhead Mills)
- 4 Chopped nuts such as Brazil nuts or walnuts

Omega Morning

- 1 Sardines or wild salmon (Vital choice)
- 2 Red onion, tomato, fresh dill sprigs
- 3 Whole grain rye bread or crackers
- 4 Pink grapefruit

MONTHLY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Tai Chi Class Wednesday Nights 7 PM - 8 PM

T'ai Chi is a slow motion, moving, meditative exercise for relaxation, health and balance. Originally from China, T'ai Chi is now practiced regularly by millions of people throughout the United States and the rest of the world.

Specific slow moving forms are taught by Mark Talle, a licensed acupuncturist and certified T'ai Chi instructor. It is a one hour, 8 week course held on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM. Each week, the progression is advanced, until a series of movements are learned. The quality of movement is critical, including shifting of the weight, trunk rotation and taking steps. Benefits

include enhanced circulation, development of strength and improved balance and flexibility. Daily practice is an excellent way to balance modern life with our internal awareness, and allows cleansing of daily stress from our body, mind and spirit.

Stress Management Using Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a traditional Eastern therapy now used widely in the US to treat a variety of conditions that involve acute or chronic pain. It uses the application of hair-fine needles, energy and pressure to specific points on the body. Each point corresponds to specific functions in the body. Treatment is also aimed at regulating the free flow of vital

energy or "chi" to improve health and well being. Acupuncturists may also use electrical stimulation (through needles), acupuncture, oriental herbs, nutrition programs and exercises such as Qi Gong to facilitate healing and pain relief.

After a careful evaluation by a licensed acupuncturist, treatment is determined based on clinical symptoms. Patients are usually treated lying down, but can be treated in other positions if required. Insertion of the needles is generally painless and even unnoticeable by the patient. After insertion, the patients rest comfortably for 20-40 minutes, sometimes with the addition of infrared heat.

Most insurance companies will cover a portion of acupuncture treatments and do not require a physicians referral.

Ask-An-Expert: Your Questions And Answers

Dear Reader and Patient:

I appreciate all the positive feedback about this newsletter! Please keep your comments coming and questions flowing. The idea is to write this newsletter based on your input. The first question is in response to the May Newsletter regarding arthritis:

Q: If you are experiencing arthritis, should you see a medical doctor first, or is that not necessary? Scott H.

A: There are 41 states in the U.S. that consider physical therapists direct access. California is one of those direct access states that have passed legislation allowing a patient to utilize physical therapy services without a prescription from a doctor.

The only catch is that most health insurance companies require a physicians prescription **before** paying a dime. So, because of that, it is always prudent to have a medical examination and diagnosis before you engage in any kind of treatment or remedy. Doctors are trained in differential diagnosis and screening for potential health hazards. Also, a physical therapist should refer the patient to the appropriate doctor for a medical examination before carrying out the treatment plan. So the bottom line

is this: the more information you have about your condition, the easier it will be to find the most effective solution.

Q: Which types of fish typically have large concentrations of mercury and other metals besides farm-raised salmon?

A: Great question. Nonorganically farmed fish and large predatory fish such as swordfish, shark, tilefish, king mackerel and fresh tuna will typically accumulate more mercury. Cold water wild fish including salmon, halibut, flounder, sole, sable, herring, sardines, blue crab, and fresh anchovies are all good sources of Omega 3 fatty acids and will have a lower concentration of mercury. Even canned wild salmon can be a great emergency source of Omega-3. To get updates on seafood safety go to www.ewg.org and www.oceansalive.org.

Q: What other brands of supplements do you recommend and where can I get more information?

A: There are all kinds of supplement information on the internet. However, like I said in my article, all supplements are not created equal. When choosing one, make sure you do your **research** and ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible adverse interactions with medica-



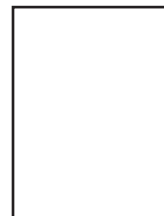
tion. Here is a partial list of what I recommend:

- 1.) **Joint mobility and health:** Cosamin DS www.cosamin.com
 - 2.) **Omega 3 fatty acids:** (Nordic Naturals, OmegaBrite, Metagenics, Wellness International Network) www.wellnesstherapyteam.com
 - 3.) **Multivitamin:** Phyto-Vite (Wellness International Network)
 - 4.) **Bone health:** Calcium Citrate, Natures Way, Calcitate ,magnesium amino acid chelate, Vitamin D3. NaturesWay.com
 - 5.) **Muscle and Joint Aches:** BioFreeze, Arnica Lotion or Gel. www.biofreeze.com
- Thanks for your great question!

HAVE A QUESTION?

About health, fitness, nutrition, rehabilitation or any other sports medicine topic? Drop us a line and we'll give your question to our panel of specialists. Contact us via email at mycorept@yahoo.com and we will feature it in the next newsletter! **Thanks for your input!**

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Referral Reward Program

I'd like to thank those of you who have participated in the **Patient Referral Program!** Marketing for new clients costs us tons of time, money and energy. Like any company, we need new patients to stay in business. Over the years we have found that looking for new patients takes away from the time we would rather be spending *with you and for you* and treating other patients!

If I've already helped you with physical therapy, nutrition advice, metabolic testing, etc., then you know how well I serve my patients. When you refer your friends and relatives to us, everybody benefits. We can serve you better. We send you a nice gift. And we assure that we'll take the very best care of any friends or family that you refer

our way! For more information about our referral reward program, just give us a call at: **714-528-9400**. It's a great program where, as our way of saying "thanks", we send you a token of our appreciation for recommending our services!

Also: If you would like any of your friends, coworkers, relatives, business acquaintances, etc. to receive a FREE subscription to this newsletter, please call me at the same number: 714-528-9400. We'll also send them a note with their first issue telling them that you suggested they receive this newsletter, and to contact us if they would like it to stop at any time. *If you enjoy this newsletter, share it with people you know, with no hassle for you!*