



# TIPS TO HELP YOUR BACK PAIN NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

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ATTENTION:  
MEN AND WOMEN  
OF MID SUSSEX  
SPECIAL REPORT  
FROM BACK CARE  
EXPERT & OSTEOPATH  
& NATUROPATH  
CHRISTIAN BATES

## ***Dear Mid Sussex Resident,***

Thank you for downloading my back pain help e-book. I'm positive this e-book will give you some great ideas on how you can help yourself right now if you currently are suffering back pain. More importantly I would like the tips in here help you achieve pain prevention into the future too.

I have written tips that you can use right now and I have based them on my experience of treating 1000's of patients over the last 20 years.

I am a big fan of treating the CAUSE and not just the SYMPTOM and this is how all the osteopaths at The Perrymount Clinic in Haywards Heath work. Yes, you do need symptom relief and most patients visit us because of pain that they want gone as soon as possible. This pain is often preventing you from working or playing the sport you enjoy most in your spare time. And let's not forget the mum that can't function at peak performance rushing after children or carrying a newborn around!

Some of the tips in here you will see as common sense, others are equally common causes of back pain but you may not have thought of them before and yet others you may not have known about at all! For example, how what you eat can aggravate your back pain.

To your health,

# Christian

**Christian Bates**  
Osteopath & Naturopath

*P.S. This e-book is just one of many we have produced for our clients at The Perrymount Clinic. If you have any health related questions feel free to call us on 01444 410944 or email me on [christian@theperrymount.com](mailto:christian@theperrymount.com)*

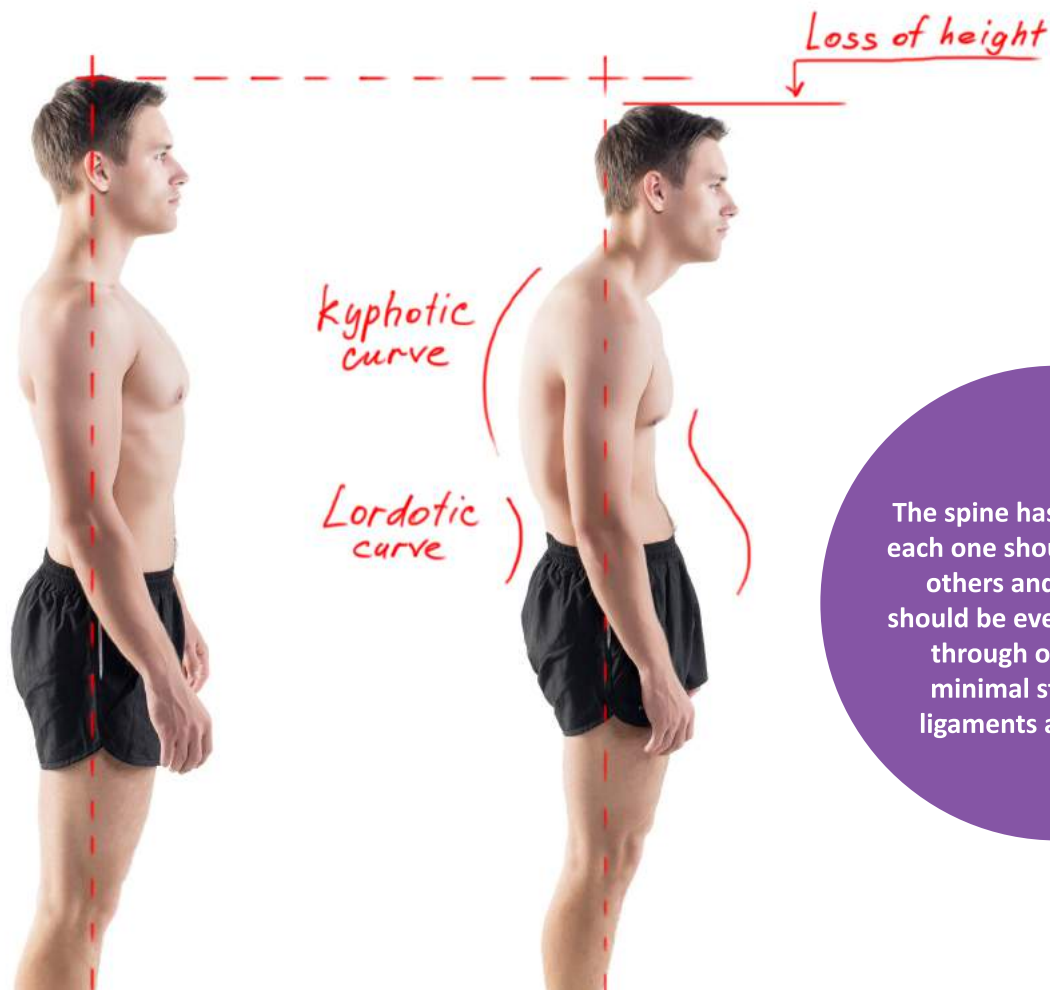


***“ Thank you to Christian for making my aches go away . Christian treats the whole family from cranial to lower back to pain in the foot reflected from the neck , to maintenance of our sporty son . Thank You ! ”***



## TIP #1

# FIX YOUR POSTURE, FIX YOUR LIFE!



The spine has 3 curves to it, each one should balance the others and our weight should be evenly distributed through our spine for minimal strain on the ligaments and muscles.

***Posture plays a role for everyone, we are affected by gravity and gravity is always there so you must take into consideration your own posture.***

You will need an osteopath to check this for you but with the correct treatment and perhaps re-education through exercises then you will be able to maintain the improvement yourself.

The spine has 3 curves to it, each one should balance the others and our weight should be evenly distributed through our spine for minimal strain on the ligaments and muscles. Compensations occur if the posture changes in one curve, adding strain to that curve and the others, eventually creating injuries. Take for example slouching over a PC, your head and neck is slumped forward and to compensate the low back curve flattens and this predisposes you to disc injuries and sciatica.

Obviously then you may start to take pain relief or even have surgery on your lower back. To a certain degree this is fine as you want pain relief, but you must realise that the initial cause is actually poor posture through your neck and shoulders! To get real long term relief you must address the issues here to help your lower back. Let me give you another example and this time instead of looking at our spine going forward and backward let's look at it going side to side. I'll use another cause that I see daily and that is a woman carrying a heavy handbag on one shoulder, a mother carrying a child on her hip on a man carrying a heavy laptop bag.

## TIP #1

# FIX YOUR POSTURE, FIX YOUR LIFE!



**This constant weight on one side builds the muscles on one side more than the other so again an imbalance occurs.**

Let's say you put a heavy bag on your right shoulder; that shoulder will tense up to hold the bag, if it didn't your bag would slide off your shoulder. This shoulder gets really really tight over time, but just a little bit each day. Then one day your body has had enough of this and "twang" something goes and you are in agony. Can you guess which side most often is the painful side? It's the left, the other side to the one you hold your bag on!

### Why is this?

It's because the tight side (on the right) has become so strong, too strong in fact and it has pulled and pulled and put strain on the joints on the other side (left) which eventually have said "I've had enough!" and then become strained, inflamed and injured.

### Here is the "secret"

from experience then, that the osteopath must treat both sides. The painful side to calm the agony and the other side to stop the pain happening again in the future. At The Perrymount Clinic we are always aiming to give you pain relief, then long term prevention and also education for you on how you can help yourself in the future.

These are just two basic posture patterns I see every day, there are many, many more, in fact there are as many postures as there are people! Every person is different and will require slightly different help for the best results.

### MY TOP TIP!

Make sure you have good posture, especially when sitting at a desk, driving your car, playing sport, watching TV, even lifting and carrying your baby around. If you aren't sure then let an expert have a look, osteopath's will quickly be able to tell you where the problem areas of your spine are and if it is possible to help you.

## TIP #2

## THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF INJURIES I SEE...



I hear this often when I'm treating clients at in The Perrymount Clinic. Patients realise that their sofa is set up at an angle to the TV. What happens is they sit squarely on the sofa and then have to twist to face the TV. If this is done for many hours throughout the week then it is a big torsion strain through the ligaments of the spine. Ligaments are incredibly strong but over time these persistent posture strains will gradually stretch and weaken them until an acute episode of pain occurs.

This is the most common type of injury I see, not watching TV, but "the straw that broke the camel's back" type injury. This is where the acute pain was caused just by twisting to pick up a cup of tea or a pencil or something very light. It is rarely that someone says that they did the injury lifting something heavy like a washing machine. This is because if you are lifting something heavy you will be paying attention to your posture and lifting correctly. However, a simple twist to lift a cup of tea, that hits right on a weakened ligament will cause a severe strain. If this has happened to you keep reading for tips on what to do at times of acute pain.

### ***This is worth knowing too;***

each time you have an acute injury the injury area will unfortunately be slightly weaker and so the injury slightly worse. This means it will be more painful, take longer to heal, need more treatments, be more expensive and will happen again quicker!

**The solution** to this is to get osteopathic treatment quickly with each injury and then ideally regular osteopathic treatment to prevent the injury happening again in the first place. This will be better and cheaper for you in the long run, I promise you, as I see it virtually every day.

**Can you see the repetition here with my first tip on posture?**

**You must be aware of your posture at all times and it will go such a long way to preventing you having long term back pain with acute pain episodes.**

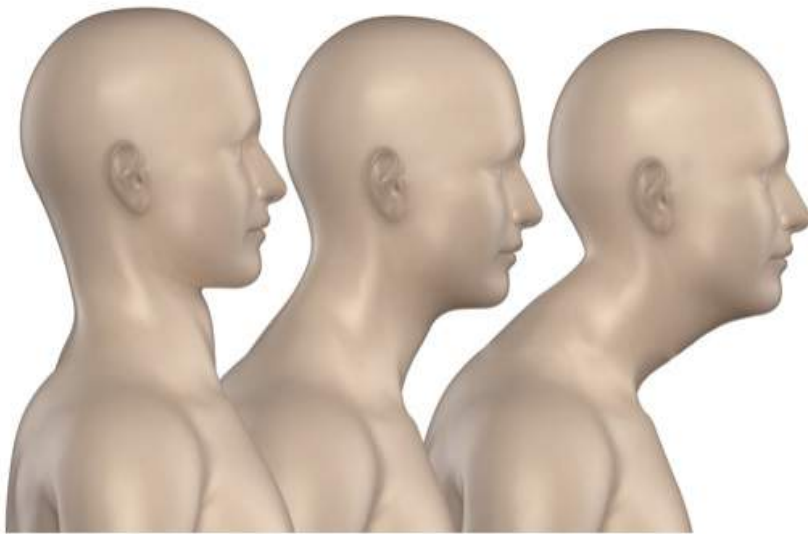
### ***This is a typical story I hear.***

**“ I first injured myself years ago and after a week the pain went away by itself. It happened a few more times over the coming years and again after a week each time went of its own accord, except I started to have to take time of work. This time however the pain won't go, I'm off work and the rest isn't working so I have had to come in for treatments. ”**

From this I can tell you that in my experience if this patient doesn't have regular treatments or look after themselves better they will need more and more treatments to get better each time.

## TIP #3

## STOP HUNCHING...



An extremely common pattern of poor posture that osteopaths see is called “upper crossed syndrome”.

Basically, to describe it simply it is a “slouch” in the upper spine and neck, like hunching over an iPad. This continuous hunch actually causes muscles, ligamentous, tendon and disc changes, some tightening and some over-stretching.

A sufferer of this will experience mainly neck and shoulder pain. This is the interesting part; the pain will be in the neck and shoulders which are actually being stretched, because the anterior or chest muscles have become so tight and shortened by the hunching forward that the back muscles cannot pull your posture back up straight. So treatment will involve both osteopathy to the back and neck and too the pectoral or chest muscles too so a balance is re-established.

This posture is a very common way for shoulder injuries to start too, particularly rotator cuff injuries like “supra-spinatus tendonitis”.

***This is my favourite exercise to help upper crossed syndrome because it is so simple; you only have to lay down!***

### Upper Crossed Syndrome Exercise

- 1** Lay on your back with a pillow supporting your head and neck
- 2** Place a rolled towel running lengthways down your spine
- 3** Lay your arms out to the side or place them behind your neck and relax over the rolled towel, lay like this for 10 minutes or so
- 4** This opens your chest and pectoral muscles and also helps flattened the exaggerated curve in the thoracic spine between the shoulder blades

## TIP #4

## IF YOU WORK IN AN OFFICE - FIX YOUR WORK STATION



***As a side note The Perrymount's trained ergonomic assessor, is often taking away many ergonomic gadgets like wrist supports that are just making the situation worse.***

Phone the clinic and we will be happy to chat to you about a consultation at your office. We are also available to take on large office assessments if you are an employer and want all workstations examined.

The common fault at a workstation is having your PC set up at an angle to how you are sitting. When I assess a patients spine I can very often easily see which side they have everything set up on as their neck will be permanently rotated in that direction. This shows just how important and influential a poor workstation set up is, that working every day in a certain posture can actually fix your spine in that direction!

Now visualise a person's neck rotated to the left, they can't walk around like that all day as they'd end up walking around in circles! The body quite rightly compensates by rotating their low back to the right to keep them straight. It might be then that this person has low back pain because of a neck twist caused by poor workstation set up.

I would say 90% of injuries, as mentioned before, are due to this type of issue. A chronic, long term postural issue, very often from poor workstation set up. This is actually a massive topic in itself so the tip here is to simply check your seating position, have it assessed and be open to the fact it could be a major cause of any problems you have.

## TIP #4

## IF YOU WORK IN AN OFFICE - FIX YOUR WORK STATION



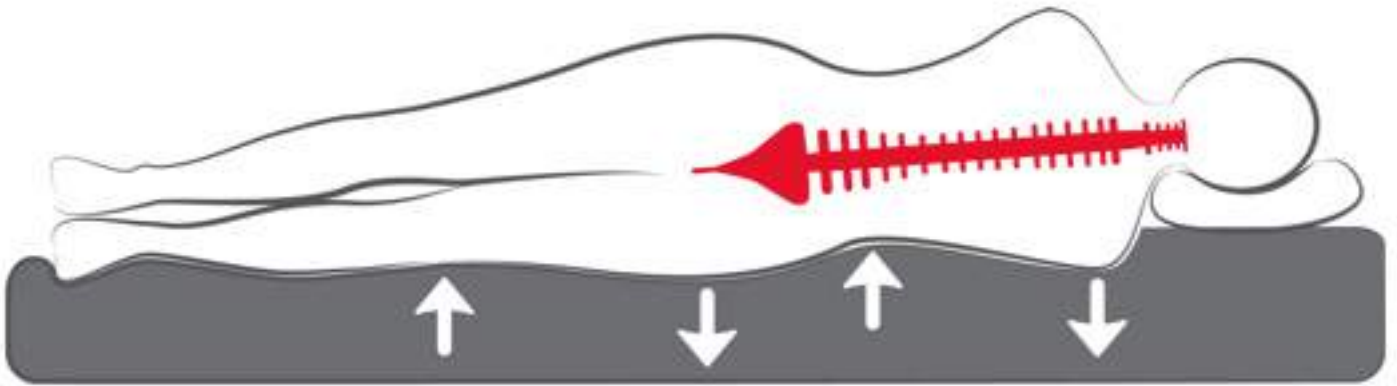
### Basic workstation set-up tips

- 1** Have your focus of attention for the day straight in front of you. This is usually your PC but could be paper work. Beware of this... having your PC straight in front of you but then spending the whole day twisted to the side reading papers or writing.
- 2** Have your back firmly pressed into the back of your chair for support and pull your chair in closer to the table
- 3** Make sure your hips are higher than your knees, this will maintain the curve in your low back. You can also use the lumbar support your chair may have or roll a thin towel and put that between your lower back and chair for added support.
- 4** Your eyes should be, if anything, looking more to the top of your monitor. This way you will have to look slightly down at the screen which is much better for your neck and eyes than looking up.
- 5** Make sure your arms, hands and wrists are nicely relaxed and not over reaching when using the mouse and typing to reduce the risk of repetitive strain injuries.



## TIP #5

## SLEEP TIGHT



How many pillows you sleep on can be directly related to neck pain and is important if you have neck pain already. What you want to achieve is good support for your neck and at the same time keeping your vertebrae in a straight line. So if you are of average shoulder width then you may need two pillows, if you are broader you may need 3 pillows. You will need to experiment because obviously there is such a variety of pillow types that they will squash down differently with the weight of your head.

Commonly, when patients have neck pain they find that sleeping becomes difficult as it makes the pain worse or they wake more often with numbness or pins and needles in the arm. If you haven't normally experienced this then it probably isn't the fault of the pillows but more the fact you have the neck pain and simply need to get treatment to fix this first. What happens in this instance is that the neck injury causes stiffness which doesn't allow your neck to relax into normal positions at night when you are asleep. Instead the rigidity makes it easier for the nerves and blood supply to the arm to be irritated and induce pins and needles or numbness.

If you are broad and you use one pillow and lay on your right side your head will side-bend to the right side and may aggravate neck pain on that side by pinching or on the left side by over-stretching. On the other hand you could do the opposite, use too many pillows and make your head side-bend too far the other way.

### BASIC RULES

As a basic rule if you have had neck pain for a long time that is worse in the mornings then think about changing pillows and getting osteopathic treatment. If you have a new neck pain episode and have previously been fine on your pillows then go for osteopathic treatment before changing pillows, thus saving you money on new pillows.

Mattresses follow along the same lines as the pillow advice, your spine needs to stay straight as you sleep. If the mattress is old or too soft or hard for you it is more likely to cause low back or mid to low back pain rather than neck pain.

A clue that you might need to replace your mattress is if you go away on holiday and your back pain disappears when you sleep on a different mattress. Also if you look at your mattress and it has a permanent dip in it then it has definitely had it! Another good rule of thumb is if your mattress is over 8 - 10 years old then it probably needs replacing and when you do replace it with a new one you must regularly turn the mattress to preserve its supportive condition.

## TIP #6

# WHAT TO EAT, HOW MUCH TO DRINK AND THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR DIGESTION SYSTEM

### DID YOU KNOW:

by drinking adequate water you will be making it available for your discs to use, keeping maximum distance between the vertebrae and preventing pain.

## **A** Hydration

The whole body needs adequate hydration to function properly and the spinal discs (intervertebral discs) are no exception, needing water to stay “plump”. It is well known that we are taller in the morning and we shorten throughout the day as our discs are gradually squashed by gravity during the day. The reason we are taller in the morning is that overnight the discs have an automatic function of cleverly dragging fluid back into themselves. When the discs are nicely refilled and plump there is maximum space between the bony vertebrae. It is when this space narrows that problems occur like arthritis, as the joints are closer together, or nerves get trapped (sciatica) because the decreased space causes the nerve to be pinched. So by drinking adequate water you will be making it available for your discs to use, keeping maximum distance between the vertebrae and preventing pain.

Drink fluid to keep your spinal discs at maximum effectiveness

## TIP #6

# WHAT TO EAT, HOW MUCH TO DRINK AND THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR DIGESTION SYSTEM



## **B** Nutrition

**A nutritious diet will provide the correct building blocks for repair; vitamins, minerals, specific sugars, amino acids etc.**

Really the biggest question is; what is a healthy diet? If you are interested in finding out the specific diet that is healthy for YOU then I can highly recommend the individualised food plans that are found from Metabolic Typing®. This is just one of the many services we offer at The Perrymount clinic and can conveniently be done online via our webshop.

General rules to maintain a healthy spine with diet will be the same general rules as to be healthy in most other ways! They will include eating plenty of fruit and vegetables and balancing these out with protein and fats too. Pain is an indicator of inflammation so an anti-inflammatory focused diet will also be beneficial.

What you will need to do then is eat a balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates to provide the building blocks to repair your spine and provide an abundance of vitamins and minerals. Also avoid foods that cause inflammation and even add into your diet specific foods or supplements that are known to be anti-inflammatory.

### ***Foods that are known to cause inflammation and should be avoided:***

- 1** Wheat (pasta, bread, cakes, cereals, flours etc)
- 2** Sugar, sweets, artificial sweeteners, colourings and processed food from packets
- 3** The deadly nightshade family of foods can also be a trigger. These are: Potatoes (but not sweet potatoes) tomatoes, aubergine and peppers.

As a basic rule if you know you are **OVEREATING** any of these particular foods then cut them out your diet. I have seen absolutely fantastic results from all sorts of issues when patients cut out wheat from their diet so it really is worth trying a month wheat free to observe how you feel.

### ***Foods known to calm inflammation and should therefore be increased:***

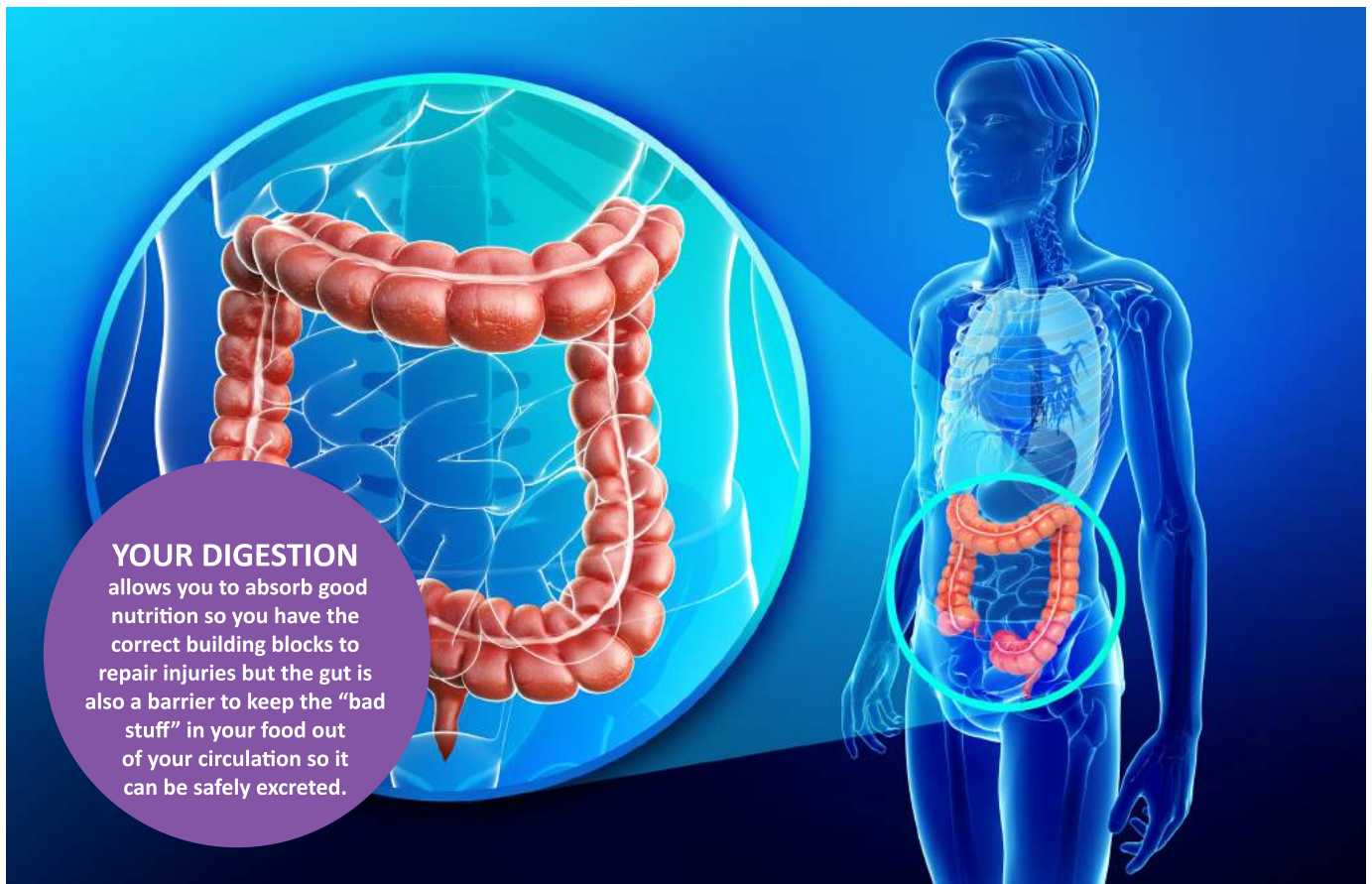
- 1** Vegetables
- 2** Fruits
- 3** Omega 3 oils from fish
- 4** Tumeric and ginger

These foods form a very basic list and really a full nutritional evaluation would be more of benefit if you know you don't eat well.

Eating a healthy diet leads directly to the next topic of looking after your digestion.

## TIP #7

## LOOK AFTER YOUR DIGESTION



### YOUR DIGESTION

allows you to absorb good nutrition so you have the correct building blocks to repair injuries but the gut is also a barrier to keep the “bad stuff” in your food out of your circulation so it can be safely excreted.

“Bad stuff” includes additives, colourings, artificial sweeteners, pesticides, chemicals, parasites, fungus, bacteria, viruses, mycoplasma’s and other causes of inflammation. These can all be linked to food allergies, toxicity and many chronic diseases as well as creating inflammation which will trigger back and other joint pain.

There is also a direct link between the nerves of your digestion and your spine. The nerves that supply your intestines and bowel come from your lower back area. They also have nerve branches that supply the muscles in your back, the ligaments and the joints, in fact they even have branches that supply your abdominal muscles. So what we have here is a communication system between your bowel and your spine. This means that if your bowel has problems, such as IBS, colitis, diverticulitis, constipation etc. then these conditions will be irritating the nervous system and sending these irritated messages back to the spinal cord and irritating the spine and its muscle and ligament system. By the way, this system works in reverse too, a spinal problem will irritate the internal organs, so low back pain or dysfunction will worsen IBS or menstrual problems.

The bowel could be irritated if it has been invaded by pathogens like candida, bacteria, fungus, parasites or other problem bugs.

### ***So what else can irritate the gut?***

Food of course! Let’s take a very common irritant, grains - particularly wheat. It has been shown that amino acids in grains irritate and destroy the lining of the gut, the tiny, delicate finger- like projections that absorb the nutrients from the food. This sets up an inflammatory reaction and the same process as described above occurs and the nerves send signals of irritation and pain the spine.

***Now let's go a step further,***

another reason to look after your diet is if you have spine pain. I mentioned that nerves from the spine also supply the abdominal muscles. These abdominal muscles basically form the "front of your back" and provide the stability for your low back to be strong and they support the correct formation of the spinal curvatures. For example, if your low back arch is too deep you will be predisposed to joint arthritis in the spine, if the curve is too shallow or flat then you are more likely to have a disc bulge and sciatica. So it is very important to have good "core strength" in the abdomen to maintain a correct low back curve.

So how is food related to this? Well let's look at a scenario. You eat a poor choice of meal, full of grains and sugar which moves down the bowel irritating and inflaming the lining, this in itself gets into the blood stream and into the joints of the spine and causes inflammation and pain, but it also irritates the nerves to the spine and creates tightening of the muscles in the spine, also causing pain. What I haven't mentioned yet is that these signals are known to inhibit, or switch off, the nerves that supply the abdominal wall muscles. If these muscles are switched off you have weakened your "core" predisposing you to having an injury easier or directly causing some low back pain.

***It is actually common for people with low back pain, especially when acute to feel bloated because their "core" has weakened.***

***So a poor diet:***

- 1** Increases inflammatory chemicals in your blood which get into your spinal joints

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- 2** Irritates the nerves to your spine by irritating your bowel

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- 3** Inhibits the nerves to your abdominal wall de-stabilising your spine

*Eat a healthy diet to reduce inflammation in your spine and to stop your abdomen muscles weakening and de-stabilising your spine*

## TIP #8

## BONUS ROUND

If you are ever in acute pain where it is difficult to even move around then the best advice is to get into

*The Perrymount Clinic and have osteopathic treatment as soon as possible.*

I have seen far better results when treatment has been performed on the same day or the day following the injury than waiting for days or weeks. In the meantime though what follows is the advice that I would give you over the phone if you called me whilst lying on the floor!



The  
Perrymount Clinic  
2 Clair Road  
Haywards Heath  
West Sussex  
RH16 3DP

### Cold Packs

Cold packs take inflammation down and can be soothing. Use a specially designed cold pack or bag of peas or ice wrapped in a tea towel. You want it cold but not painfully so. Apply to the painful area, only for about 5 minutes, or until the area is nice and cold. Then remove the pack and allow the area to warm up, it should flush with blood and will actually feel quite warm. What has happened is the cold has pushed the inflammation away and then fresh blood has rushed into the area to speed healing. Repeat this process in 30 minutes or so to get the blood exchange happening again. You can do this 3-4 times throughout the day.

### Warm Packs

Sometimes warm packs are better. Try running a flannel under hot water and then placing on the area. A warm pack can be left on the area for as long as it stays warm. When it has cooled you can just repeat it again. Warm is a bit more soothing but I usually just go for cold first for its anti-inflammatory properties, so try cold first and if it doesn't work for you then use warm.

***DON'T BURN YOURSELF! I HAVE SEEN MANY BLISTERS ON PEOPLES BACKS FROM GOING TOO HOT!***

### Hard Chairs no Sofa's

Stick to sitting on harder chairs, like dining or kitchen chairs. Soft furnishing like the sofa will cause slouching and will definitely aggravate an acute low back injury especially a ligament strain or disc bulge / sciatica.



***Put Your Feet Up***

Most low back pain injuries will prefer you having your knees up. You can lay on your back on the floor with your bottom close to the sofa and have your knees bent and legs up so your lower legs rest on the sofa or an exercise ball. In this position very gently rock your knees side to side, only by an inch or so either way. This will just gently get the circulation moving in your spine. If your injury is a disc bulge, and you have pain radiating down the back of your leg this position may not ease it.



*If this is the case it is best to phone the clinic for advice on 01444 410944*

***Rest but not too much!***

Rest will be important and rushing around or sports will probably aggravate the injury more, you may even need to get some time off work. Whilst resting is good it is also beneficial to gently walk around and move the injured area if possible, without causing pain. This will keep it from stiffening up too much and again move the inflammation out of the area.

***Ok, there you have it. That is my “Tips to help your back pain now and into the future” report, I hope you enjoyed it.***

***But what now...***

My suggestion for you now is to put in practice some of these tips to help you in your daily life. On top of that consider having one of the osteopaths at The Perrymount give you professional spinal assessment and treatment.

We will then be able to give you personalised advice on pain prevention too, which may include specific exercises. At The Perrymount we can also help you with a nutritional consultation if you felt that might be playing a role in your pain. Diet has a particularly strong affect on inflammatory pain such as in arthritic conditions.

I have also included a £10 voucher below which you can cut out and redeem off an osteopathy treatment, just bring it along with you to your appointment. To book your osteopathy or nutritional consultation please call 01444 410944 or email me your best number and I will have reception call you: [christian@theperrymount.com](mailto:christian@theperrymount.com)

*Please hand these*

"Perrymount Pounds" to friends, family and work colleagues. Once they activate this, they will receive £10.00 off their first treatment and as a thank you for referring to The Perrymount you will also receive £10.00 off your next treatment too

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*“ I just wanted to say Thank you so much for frankly - improving my life!! It may sound over-dramatic but having been diagnosed with SPD at 17 weeks pregnant I was in a tremendous amount of pain and was being told to prepare myself for crutches if not worse. At a stage (19 weeks) where I could hardly walk on some occasions, a colleague of mine recommended the services at Perrymount as she had also suffered with SPD in pregnancy and making an appointment was the best thing I ever did. Within 10 days and 3 appointments I am now climbing stairs, walking across town and more importantly - doing this without loads of pain.*

*“ When I returned to my computer-based job after a hysterectomy operation, I found that my shoulders were stiff and painful on a daily basis, often resulting in headaches and migraines. I found that previous remedies afforded little comfort, so I turned to the Perrymount Clinic for help.*

*Interestingly for me, the muscles targeted were not just around the neck and shoulders, but included my abdominals, pelvic floor hamstrings and glutes, addressing my postural and movement deficiencies as a whole.*

*The initial feeling of relief as I was able to manage my symptoms in the short term was tremendous. Since then, the feelings of growing strength and confidence has become addictive. I have a hunger to learn more about how my body works and what I can do to support it and I revel in the knowledge that I am improving each and every session.*

*I am particularly grateful to the Perrymount Clinic for their willingness to explain things to me; understanding how it feels to do things 'right' and then experiencing that feeling as I perform the movements at home is extremely motivating for me. I am also thankful for their patience as I attempt to unlearn the bad habits of a lifetime!! ”*



# OTHER EBOOKS AVAILABLE



We look forward to meeting you and helping you get the results you want and deserve!