

Prevent Back Pain: *It's Time to Move!*



By Greg Synnestvedt
PT, DPT

“Motion is lotion” is an excellent maxim to remember. Moving your body not only nourishes the muscles and tissues in your joints, but it also exercises the nerve pathways and areas in your brain where these joints and muscles are represented and activated. This is why, for example, if you practice a particular movement hundreds of times, it is possible to get better at it!

If you’ve been sitting a lot, you probably need to get up and move more. Our bodies were made for movement—not for prolonged sitting. Sometimes, after sitting for a while, I feel a “twinge” in my low back when I go to get up. I think of this as my back’s way of asking me to please move more or to sit differently next time.

Some say that perfect posture is a myth and that “the best posture is the next one.” Any one posture or position held too long can be hard on your body. If you are going to sit for a while, try a little rolled up towel behind your low back. Adjust it and see how it feels.

While “back in the day” bed rest used to be recommended frequently in medicine, I rarely recommend it for acute low back pain. Even in the acute phases, it can be beneficial to do what movement you can, even if it is slow and gentle at first.

Often, if there is joint pain from stretching or sitting in one position, it can feel relieving to position or stretch the joint in the opposite direction. This is like keeping a set of scales balanced. For example, it is not inherently bad to sit slouched, but if you sit slouched for a few minutes, you will probably want to stretch the opposite way for a few moments too. This can be done by standing up and leaning back as far as you can go or by lying on your stomach and propping yourself

up on your forearms. The discs between your vertebrae bring fluid in and out by putting pressure on them, so it is healthy to apply this pressure in different ways rather than in one way for a prolonged period.

I have heard it said that you should take your joints through their full range of motion at least once a day,

pandemic, try looking for videos on YouTube. I recommend Yoga with Adriene for beginner yoga.

Or you can go to the WWSPT.com website or our YouTube Channel (WWS Physical Therapy and Vestibular Rehabilitation) to see videos of basic stretching programs, including part of a basic

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which seems like an excellent idea. Ideally, you can do this in ways that are interesting and enjoyable, rather than simply systematically moving each part of your body. Activities such as yoga, Tai Chi, and many sports put many joints in your body through good ranges of motion and use multiple muscle groups, which will help improve your strength and balance.

If you can’t do these classes right now because of the

lumbar extension program that we use for some patients with low back pain.

Whether your pain just started a week ago or you have been having pain for years, a physical therapist can help guide you through movements that will help decrease your pain and improve your function in a safe way.

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnrIre51hGs&feature=youtu.be>

If you’re like me, your back aches from time to time (and occasionally really lets you know it’s there, maybe with a vague pain in one of your legs to go along with it). Or maybe it feels like your back aches all the time.

Why does your back ache? Is it because you did too much?

Or is it because you didn’t do enough?

Whether it is because you did a lot or because you haven’t been doing enough, your back just wants to let you know it exists so you take care of it. The tissues in our bodies need to be used and stressed in order to maintain their strength, health, and properties of movement. Prolonged lack of use is not good for our bodies, but neither is a sudden, dramatic increase in use. Either one can cause injury and pain.

For example, many people develop low back pain just from sitting at work or sitting in their car on a long trip. Other people develop pain after lifting something awkwardly or repetitively. Either way, there are movements and exercises that you can do to improve the health and happiness of your body’s joints and muscles so that your back stops sounding the pain alarms in your brain.



Orthopedic and Sports Rehabilitation
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1456 Ferry Rd, Suite 601, Doylestown, PA 18901
 215 489 3234 • www.wwspt.com