

9 QUICK &  
EASY WAYS  
TO  
RELIEVE  
BACK PAIN

\* Now \*  
and without  
taking  
painkillers!!!

# INTRODUCTION

**EVERY WEEK** *Return To Movement* practitioners consult with clients - just like you - people looking for answers to concerning questions about (and for fast relief of) their **BACK PAIN and STIFFNESS**.

In this special compilation, we share with you **9 POWERFUL PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIES and TIPS** that you can make happen **FOR YOU** - some over time and others almost instantly. They are in no particular order, but please read the entire document as they all do have one thing in common: **THEY ALL WORK**. There's a great saying that goes: "*Small hinges swing big doors.*" And it's often the simplest advice that wins in the end. The truth is, without knowing your back pain or your history intimately, we cannot tell you which of these will work best for you. And even if we did know the **ROOT CAUSE** of your back pain, there are no guarantees that any one single strategy will work. However over the last five years, we have been able to narrow down what really does and doesn't work when it comes to easing back pain. And this compilation - that you are about to read - includes just that. Imagine this... how great would it be if you tried just one of these "tips" every day... and within a few weeks you could have all 9 of these incredibly powerful strategies for easing back pain, "in play" and working for you - giving your back the active and healthy lifestyle that you've lost. Now that you have this knowledge in your hands, here's our challenge to you - **take time each day to try out at least one**. It really won't take long and most of them won't cost you anything but a few minutes of your time. We think you'll be pleasantly surprised by how much better and healthier you will feel by doing so.

## #1

**AVOID SITTING FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME** - You most probably heard this before, but may not know exactly *why*... We evolved to move. Look at kids - *THEY CAN'T SIT STILL!!! THIS IS COMPLETELY NATURAL*. Not until cultural influences pin them into a chair to do their homework or into the sofa to play video games / watch TV, do they begin to be motionless for longer periods of time. Nerves do not like static compression. They get starved of oxygen through lack of blood flow. Nerves are nourished by blood flow and **MOVEMENT** facilitates this. Take mini breaks every 20 minutes. Get up, stretch (like a cat) and move around. Find the positions that **FEEL GOOD** in the moment.

## #2

**AVOID STANDING FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME** - For the same reasons as #1, avoid standing in the same spot for long periods. The new rage is standing desks which *does* get you away from sitting, but standing while focusing at the computer can be just as static inducing as sitting. Again, take mini breaks every 20 minutes and move your whole body around (gently). Find the positions that feel good in the moment. Try ones that likely will be different than that static standing position like laying on your back with your knees bent or get into a crawl position and perform yoga "*cat / cow movements*". **THE KEY** here is to **NOURISH THOSE TISSUES** with nice warming blood flow through **MOVEMENT**.

### #3

#### **DEVELOP AND PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING -**

Diaphragmatic breathing (aka Yoga breath) is one of **THE BEST** methods for calming a sensitized nervous system **AND** for **SUPPORTING** the low back. To start, lie on your back with your hands on your abdomen. On the inhale the abdomen raises (belly expansion into the hands), on the exhale abdomen lowers (shrinks away from hands). Similarly, the sides of the abdomen and the tissues around towards the spine should expand as well. A nearly 360° expansion around your waist is the result you are hoping to get. This expansion **MASSAGES THE TISSUES** around the spine, as well as supports the spine itself. The practice may take a week or two of everyday practice to establish, so try it morning and night in the beginning. Then try to remember to do it throughout the day while in standing and sitting positions. This one is **GOLD!!!**

### #4

#### **FIND YOUR PATTERNS AND CHANGE THEM UP -**

Do you cross your legs when sitting? Break the habit and sit like a **1 YEAR OLD**. Perhaps you slouch while sitting at the computer. Or maybe you always lean on your elbow or forearm while at the desk.

**CHANGE THEM PATTERNS UP!!!** Picking objects off the floor? This is good for those with a flexion intolerant back - try a full or split-leg squat instead of a straight-leg forward bend. Do you carry a backpack or purse on one same-side shoulder? Change it up to the other shoulder or maybe even use it as it was designed with both

straps?!? **FINDING** and changing your habitual patterns requires your awareness and attentiveness, but it pays off... **BIG TIME!!!**

## #5

**CHANGE YOUR FOOTWEAR** - try to identify whether your footwear may be exacerbating your condition. If you have pain after you wear high heels, then **SWITCH** to your athletic shoes. Maybe your shoes have a narrow toe box (squeezing the toes and forefoot). Try some shoes designed with a **WIDE TOE BOX** like "Merrells" or "Altras".

## #6

**MODIFY YOUR SLEEP POSITIONS** - Changing sleep patterns is difficult, but simple modifications **can make a DIFFERENCE**. If you sleep on your side, try a pillow between your knees. Rest the "top" arm on your hip and try the bottom arm under your pillow. Stomach sleepers (or side sleepers for that matter) can try snuggling with a "buddy" pillow. These are the large body pillows that you can hook your arm and leg over which serves to get you into more a side sleeping position than a full stomach position.

Back sleepers try a lofty pillow under the knees. May you have **SWEET DREAMS!!!**

## #7

**CHANGE YOUR MATTRESS** - It may be time to replace your mattress. Springs get old, padding loses it's loft. Maybe you need a different style altogether. There is differing firmness in traditional spring style mattresses, as well as, memory foam and japanese futons. Find the most **COMFORTABLE** mattress for **YOU** by test driving different bed configurations.

## #8

**IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP HYGIENE** - Quality sleep is an important component to help your nervous system be at 100%. Poor sleep can possibly make pain feel worse the next day, which can then make sleep more challenging that night. And so a **VICIOUS CYCLE** is at play. Here are some things that can help: Set a realistic time to get to bed for adequate sleep **AND** make it consistent every day. Consistency is critical for sleep patterning which can take a couple of weeks to be established from a nervous system point of view. Avoid electronic devices and media at least 60 mins prior to

sleep time. Avoid stimulants late in the day that might disturb your sleep (like Chocolate, Caffeinated beverages, etc...) **PRACTICE "deep breathing"** in bed when you lie down and again when you awaken in the morning (**see tip #3**).

## #9

**GET PHYSICAL WITH MANUAL THERAPY and/or RESILIENCE TRAINING** - There isn't a **FASTER WAY to RELIEVE** non-yielding back pain than by going to see a hands-on therapist. Getting in to see a hands-on **OSTEOPATHIC MANUAL THERAPIST** or a **MOVEMENT SPECIALIST** means you're going to get very fast access to care that will soothe and relax those tight aching muscles, loosen and lubricate stiff, stuck and painful joints, and strengthen your body so that you can go back to doing the things that **YOU LOVE**.

You can often leave a therapist with concerns **EASED** and physical pain reduced, inside 60 minutes. Combine all of the "tips" in this compilation with a trip to for a 1-on-1 private session, and you will see a **DRAMATIC** drop in the back pain and stiffness from which you are currently suffering. (*Note: While managed health care systems - like Kaiser - try to balance efficiency, cost and standard of care, you have another choice with private fee-for-service options. If you have health insurance, by all means try to remedy your issue through that avenue first, but remember your other options.*)

## MORE BONUS TIPS >>>

**DO GENTLE SPECIFIC YOGA** - As described in #1 & #2, yoga gives the body's tissues the needed blood flow by it's own definition. It takes you through different postures and movements for well rounded bodily nourishment. Find a gentle yoga class to start and **REMEMBER** the class teacher doesn't know your body like you know your body. Explore the feeling of the movements slowly. Avoid the positions and movements that cause pain by taking breaks during those sections of the class repertoire. Make the class **YOURS**.

**DO "PRE" PILATES** - There is suite of exercises that were developed as "prerequisites" to the standard pilates exercises. Much like in college where you are supposed to have completed the prerequisites **PRIOR** to taking the advanced classes, Pilates exercise should be approached in **SIMILAR FASHION**. These "Pre Pilates" exercises are meant to prepare your body for more vigorous and demanding exercises. They are even great for those wishing to have a more capable yoga practice!!! So, if you are interested in Pilates, then find a teacher that is well versed the "Pre" exercises of Pilates. (*HINT: Our proficiency in "Pre Pilates" at Return To Movement is unparalleled!!!*)

**PROGRESS YOUR DAILY EXERCISE RITUAL** - Take all that you have discovered from these tips and **CREATE** a daily ritual of exercise that progresses in steps. As you become **MORE CAPABLE**, gently and slowly (over time) incorporate more demanding exercise until you have come to a place where you are able to accomplish all of your desired active daily living requirements (those things you want or need to do). Whatever those **TREASURED THINGS** may be.

## CONCLUSION

So, there you have it: **9 STRATEGIES (plus 3 BONUS TIPS)** that you can do **TODAY** to **IMPROVE YOUR WELL BEING**, in addition to easing Your Back Pain. There's so much that can be done! And we could get into much more detailed information to relieve back pain than what you have read here. These fundamentals, if you are disciplined and apply them rigorously, will make a **HUGE DIFFERENCE** to your quality of life by helping you get back to the things you enjoy.

It is our hope that *RETURN TO MOVEMENT* can become your leading edge source of health advice while making your life a **BETTER PLACE TO MOVE**.

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### **MEDICAL DISCLAIMER**

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the advice and prognosis communicated throughout this Guide.

However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our office. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, motivation to follow advice and various other physical factors.

It is impossible to give a complete accurate assessment and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed fully

accurate in the absence of this examination. We are able to offer you this service at a standard charge.

If you have ongoing persistent pain of significant duration, It is always good to rule out "red flags". Red flags are indicators of possible serious pathology such as inflammatory or neurological conditions, structural musculoskeletal damage or disorders, circulatory problems, suspected infections, tumors or systemic disease. Significant risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. See your primary medical doctor for further investigation.

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