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Back Pain Slowing You Down? Physical Therapy Can Help!

Health & Wellness Newsletter

Here's a fact about back pain that may bring you some comfort: it's one of the most common musculoskeletal complaints in the world. Around 80% of people will have back pain at least once. So, if you're suffering now, you probably aren't the only one!

Of course, that thought does little to help if your back pain keeps you from performing day-to-day activities — as it often does. Back pain is often accompanied by mobility restrictions that make walking, rising from sitting, or bending over difficult. And if left untreated, it can sometimes lead to long-term pain and dysfunction.

At Loudoun Physical Therapy, we know how debilitating back pain can be. Our team of dedicated physical therapists will help you understand the cause or causes of your back pain and work with you to develop a personalized treatment plan that will let you get back to the activities you love to do.

Call our clinic today to set up your initial consultation!

What Causes Back Pain?

One of the reasons that back pain is so common is that it's associated with several different injuries, underlying conditions, or lifestyle factors. That said, most back pain is non-specific, meaning it's not caused by a specific disease or specific structural problem, but caused by mechanical issues. Mechanical issues are difficult to pinpoint and may include multiple tissues in and around the spinal joints.

The first step in treating your back pain is understanding what's contributing to it. Our therapists will perform a comprehensive evaluation to help us learn as much as possible about your experience with back pain, including screening for any mobility limitations or weakness you're struggling with.

Here are some of the more common sources of back pain that we see at our clinic:

- **Strains and Sprains:** A strain occurs when you injure the muscles in your back. A sprain occurs when you injure the ligaments that link your spinal vertebrae. Both can cause pain and limited mobility, and they often result from lifting with improper form (such as twisting while lifting) or attempting to lift something too heavy.
- **Herniated Discs:** Soft, flexible discs separate and cushion your spinal vertebrae. If one of those discs herniates — that is protrudes out — and irritates a nearby nerve, it can lead to intense pain, feeling “stuck” in a stooped over position, and often pain down the leg known as sciatica.
- **Osteoarthritis:** Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis in the world, occurring when the cartilage and bone tissue in a joint degenerate and become inflamed. While we often associate it with the hips, knees, or hands, it can occur in the spine, too. Spinal osteoarthritis is sometimes called spondylosis.



Prevent Back Pain and Mobility Restriction Before It Starts!

Do any of these statements apply to you?

- I have a job that requires me to sit at a desk.
- I struggle to find time to exercise regularly.
- I never learned proper lifting techniques.
- People frequently tell me I slouch.

If so, you may be at a higher risk of developing back pain. Several lifestyle factors can increase the likelihood of an injury leading to back pain. Fortunately, physical therapy at Loudoun Physical Therapy is a great choice not only for resolving back pain but for stopping it before it even begins!

Three Simple Back Pain Prevention Tips

Tip 1: Exercise. Regular physical activity helps strengthen the muscles that support and stabilize your spine. Find something that suits your interests and ability level, such as daily walks, simple resistance exercises, or dance fitness classes.

Tip 2: Minimize Sitting. Prolonged sitting can have wide-ranging effects, including increased pressure on your spine. If you have a desk job, get up and move around every 30 minutes or so, even if it's just to stand up and stretch.

Tip 3: Ask for Help. When it comes to lifting heavy objects, don't get ambitious! Ask for help when lifting anything heavy or awkwardly shaped, and make sure you're using proper lifting techniques. Not sure what those are? Our therapists will happily show you how to lift without risking injury.

While these tips can get you started, the Loudoun Physical Therapy physical therapists can help you develop a customized back pain prevention plan. We'll help you identify any lifestyle factors that might put you at risk of developing back pain and then work with you to address them.



- **Lifestyle Factors:** Several factors can contribute to lower back pain, including improper posture, prolonged sitting, or weakness in the muscles that wrap and support your spine (your core muscles).

Why Physical Therapy at Loudoun Physical Therapy Is Your Back Pain Solution

While back pain often resolves on its own within 1-3 months, physical therapy is an excellent choice for people with particularly intense pain or extremely restrictive mobility. It's also useful for people with chronic back pain — defined as pain that lingers past that three-month mark.

We customize all our back pain treatment plans according to your specific needs: the location and severity of your back pain, any mobility restrictions, your ability level, and overall goals. We'll work to address the underlying issues causing your pain rather than simply masking the symptoms.

How will we do this? Through a blend of the following techniques:

- **Manual therapy** helps manage pain, promote blood circulation, and improve mobility.
- **A personalized therapeutic exercise plan** improves the strength, flexibility, and endurance of your back and core muscles. Muscle weakness significantly contributes to lower back pain, so exercise is a must.
- **Specialized training**, such as proper techniques and activities that simulate functional movements you'll need to perform (i.e., squats, lunges, lifting, etc.).
- **Prevention strategies** help reduce future back pain incidents. These strategies might include postural corrections or suggestions for at-home exercises, such as a walking program or regular strength and mobility practice.

Get Moving Again with Physical Therapy!

Back pain is more than just pain. It can severely restrict your mobility, leading to less exercise and movement, further contributing to pain and dysfunction. The Loudoun Physical Therapy team is here to help you break that cycle and find relief from back pain for good.

Call us today to schedule an appointment!

SEASONAL RECIPE

Eggplant Pizza Bites

INGREDIENTS

- Olive oil spray
- 1 large eggplant unpeeled (1 ¼ lbs.)
- ½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ cup marinara sauce
- ½ cup part-skim shredded Mozzarella



DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil and spray it with olive oil.

Slice the eggplant crosswise into ½-inch-thick rounds, yielding about 12 rounds. Place the eggplant rounds on the prepared baking sheet. Spray them with olive oil spray. Sprinkle with kosher salt, black pepper and garlic powder.

Bake the eggplant rounds for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, turn them over, spray with more olive oil, and bake for 10 more minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven but leave the oven on. With a spoon, spread marinara sauce on each eggplant round. Top with shredded cheese. You can add more toppings at this point, such as pepperoni or olives.

Return the pan to the oven. Bake just until the cheese is melted, about 5 minutes. Let rest 5 minutes before serving.



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