

BACK PAIN & SCIATICA

SURVIVAL GUIDE

EASE PAIN WITHOUT PAINKILLERS,
INJECTIONS, OR SEEING YOUR
PHYSICIAN

Plus – Special BONUS Content

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rehabilitation

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Joel J. Digris received his Master of Science degree in Physical Therapy from Arcadia University in 1997. Joel was born and raised in Schuylkill County, and is blessed with a beautiful wife and four beautiful daughters. As a physical therapist, Joel and his team of caring therapists work with people to help them regain the joy in life that is missing due to pain, weakness, dizziness, or falls. “Our team is interested in helping as many people in need as we can.”

Thank you for reading our report. I sincerely hope this is a good start to bringing back the joy into your life. Developing trust with your healthcare team is important. Because of this, I want to continue to send you information that we feel can guide you to improved function as you go forward as you learn how a qualified physical therapist can help fast track that process. Please never hesitate to contact us.

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INTRODUCTION In this Special Report on Ending Sciatica, Back Pain, Aches and Tightness, I share with you 7 VERY important strategies and techniques you can use to improve your daily life.

Be sure to try everything you're comfortable with, some of these strategies work almost instantly, some over time. There's a great saying that goes: **"How do you eat an elephant? One small bite at a time"**. **Living with life altering back pain is a big challenge...break it down into small ideas and tips.** These easy to follow steps will lead to a better, stronger version of yourself.

However, without knowing your specific back pain or sciatica history, there is no telling which of these will work best for you. Not every strategy is appropriate for every user as well. But as an expert with years of experience, I have been able to take my extensive library of knowledge and narrow it down to these principles of what works and does not work when it comes to easing back pain and avoiding prescription drugs and surgery.

But imagine this...how great would it be if you try just one of these "tips" every day...with consistency over time you could have all of these incredibly powerful strategies working for you - giving you back the active and healthy lifestyle that you've lost, or are in danger of losing.

So, here's my challenge to you ...now that you have this knowledge in your hands, take time every day to try out at least one of these strategies.

It really won't take long and most of them won't cost you anything but few minutes of your time. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by how much better and healthier you will feel for doing so.

BACK PAIN & SCIATICA



Our **main goal** with this FREE content is to provide you a **wealth of knowledge that you can use immediately** to help you manage your back pain and help you get back to the activities that you are missing because **pain has paused your life.**

Section One talks about a few myths that prevent people from taking the correct path to relief. Page 5

Section Two talks about things that are not recommended for significant improvement in your back pain. Page 6

Section Three gives a few things that you can do right away or very soon to help you manage your pain. Pages 7 to 12

Every great journey starts with **ONE SMALL STEP**. We hope to be there with you as you continue to work toward the best solution for your problem. We hope this is the first step to getting you back to the activities that you are missing.



Here are 5 common myths associated with low back pain:

Myth 1: Spinal manipulation (cracking or popping the joints in the spine) is the best method for treating low back pain.

A study showed that exercise was proven to be more effective than manipulation (only 10% required manipulation).

Myth 2: Ultrasound and electrical stimulation are proven to aid recovery from low back pain / sciatica.

These types of passive treatments provide no long-term benefit, do not treat the underlying problem, and do not accelerate healing time.

Myth 3: Low back pain / Sciatica is caused by inflammation.

Inflammation does occur in certain conditions, and may be present when low back pain is acute; however, the majority of low back pain is mechanical and can respond positively to mechanical treatments (e.g., stretching, prescribed exercise, aerobic exercise, stabilization, posture education).

Myth 4: Low back pain is caused by arthritis.

While studies show that arthritis is present in over 90% of those between the ages 50-55, only 10% experience arthritis-related pain. [Arthritis](#) is associated with aging, but not always associated with pain.

Myth 5: You should rest and avoid or stop activity if you are experiencing low back pain / sciatica.

It is recommended to exercise and get active and mobile as soon as possible. Resting can actually make your pain much worse.



Now That We've Cleared Some of Those Things Up...

Here Are Some Things That Are **Rarely Recommended** for Back Pain Relief:

Opioids

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines recommend opioids for chronic pain only after lower risk treatments have been tried, and then only when dosed appropriately and combined with nonopioid treatments.

Heat

Some patients feel short-term relief, but there is limited evidence to suggest **significant long-term benefits**. We DO RECOMMEND this as an adjunct to physical therapy but not to expect it to fix the problem.

Spinal injections

Injections do not appear to provide long-term benefits or reduce the likelihood of surgery. Studies are now showing that they can actually be more damaging than beneficial.

Imaging scans (such as x-rays and MRIs)

Imaging is not recommended for routine treatment of low back pain or sciatica and often leads to unnecessary treatment. Up to 53% of adults between age 30 and 60 WITHOUT Back Pain show evidence on MRI of Disc Bulges. Essentially, you have people who are PAINLESS that show evidence of disc problems / abnormalities. Yet, we are trained to think that we need an MRI and if it shows "abnormal findings" that we need surgery. The people that promote the importance of MRIs for back pain or sciatica might just prefer us to think of them as necessary if you expect relief.



So..What Can You Do On Your Own To Help Yourself?

1. Limit Inactivity

Studies show that people with short-term low-back pain who rest feel more pain and have a harder time with daily tasks than those who stay active.

Far too many of us spend extensive hours sitting down with very little movement e.g. stuck at our desk, commuting to work, and while relaxing watching TV in the evening.

When sitting, there is up to 10x more pressure pushing down on your spine than when you are standing -- imagine that! And it's because most of us slouch, or flop when we do sit, meaning that the muscles in your spine (called your core muscles) that are designed to protect you, aren't as effective as they should be. This causes inevitable aches, pains and stiffness.

Movement is key remaining pain free.

One of my favorite sayings is "motion is the lotion", because movement stimulates the production of our body's own natural lubricant for our joints.

The best approach is to change position approximately every 20-30 minutes to avoid placing too much pressure on any one part of the spine or it's nerves. At work, take regular breaks, even if it is as simple as standing up and marching on the spot for 60 seconds and doing some stretches before sitting back down again



2. Move More - Keep Exercising

Exercising can improve problems such as decreased flexibility, loss of mobility, or weakness which contribute to your pain.

Exercising can decrease pain by inhibiting the transmission of pain impulses from your brain to the nerves in your back which can improve your sleep at night.

It also can prevent weight gain (which often occurs from inactivity) while limiting further weakness, immobility, and pain in other joints in the body. Studies have shown that losing just 1 pound of body weight can reduce pressure on your joints (knees, hips, ankles, etc.) by up to 5 pounds.

Imagine the positive effects of losing 5-10 pounds (or more) would have on your body!

There are many types of exercise that will promote movement and decrease your pain. This includes walking, cycling, elliptical, and aquatic exercise. Aquatic exercise performed in chest to neck depth water can decrease the effects of gravity on your muscles, bones, and joints by 75- 90% compared to land-based exercise.

Find an activity you enjoy and can tolerate and get moving, even if you can only tolerate 5-10 minutes of it. Exercise is cumulative, which means it adds up throughout the day. For example, you will receive the same benefits of exercise by walking 10 minutes, 3 times a day compared to one 30 minute walk.

Once you find your baseline, try to slowly increase your activity every day or week.



If you experience any sharp/shooting pain in your legs or any bowel/bladder changes, please stop and consult with your physician before continuing.

It is normal to experience some soreness following exercise. This is called delayed onset muscle soreness, or DOMS. This is due to the body performing an unfamiliar activity and usually peaks 1-2 days following exercise. The more you perform a specific exercise, the less effect DOMS will have on you.

So when should you stop exercising? I like to use a stoplight analogy. A green light means that you have no pain or problems while performing a certain exercise. You can continue at that intensity.

A yellow light means that you have some pain while performing a certain exercise, but it eases quickly upon resting. You may continue with caution while being aware of your form and posture. An acceptable level of pain to work through is less than 3/10 (0= no pain; 10= you should be at the emergency room).

A red light means that you have pain with a specific exercise and it lasts several hours or days. Or you may experience a sharp, shooting pain down the leg. If this occurs, stop the exercise and either return to the previous level of intensity or try again in a few days

It is common to think that pain is normal as we age. However, that is simply not true. Much like the check engine light in your car, pain is a signal that something is malfunctioning in your body. Most pain will go away on its own with rest and gentle stretching. When it lingers and you ignore it, and begin to think of it as normal, it can lead to a more significant problem similar to how your car might



3. Maintain Good Posture and Lift Correctly

The pain may have started after a long workout at the gym, but the strain that caused it has probably been building for years. Most people have poor posture when going about their daily activities, putting unnecessary strain on their backs.

Your spine consists of 4 levels: cervical (neck), thoracic (mid-back), lumbar (low back), and sacrum (tailbone). Your spine curves inward at the neck, outward at the mid-back, and inward again at the low back. It is important to maintain these natural curves in all positions (sitting, standing, lying down) and during transitional movements, such as getting in and out of a chair or your bed. The reason for this is to limit the amount of force on the joints in the back.

When you bend forward at your back, there is approximately a 150% increase in pressure on the joints at your lower back. This increases even more when you lift anything of weight. For comparison, standing or walking causes an increase in pressure of just 15% on the back. To counteract these forces, the proper lifting technique is to bend at the waist (not the back) and lift with your knees.

Also, you want to keep the object close to your body to decrease the lever arm. When lifting with the proper technique, you can reduce these forces on your spine by more than 50%.

Know the object weight before lifting. Ask for help with heavy loads. Use a wide stance for balance. Bend at your hips. Lift with your legs. Keep object close to you. Look UP as you lift. The following link is a simple YouTube video that is great to demonstrate these principles.

<https://youtu.be/z4epelusue0>



4. Consider Your Sleeping Position

This tip typically gets the QUICKEST results. We spend anywhere from 6-8 hours in bed every night. It's important to keep your spine supported to decrease stress and pain. The best way to support your back while sleeping is by using pillows. If you are a BACK SLEEPER: add a pillow under your knees. If you are a SIDE SLEEPER: add pillows between knees AND ankles.

This position will wreak havoc on your spine and shoulders. It puts all of the joints in poor positions! Even if this position doesn't hurt now, you are setting yourself up for pain and spinal deterioration in the future.

5. Avoid Carrying Things On One Side of Your Body

When carrying a work bag or a handbag, first of all make sure that it's not too heavy.

Secondly, avoid carrying it on one side as doing so means that the weight of the bag is not evenly distributed and you will end up with one side of your body under more pressure than the other. If possible, try to use a bag with two straps that you can place across your two shoulders!

This advice is relevant when carrying babies and toddlers too! Try to avoid carrying your baby in their car seat. When carrying a baby or toddler try to carry them on your front or back in an appropriate carrier. When carrying them short distances, alternate the side that you hold them on so as not to overload one side.



6. Apply Ice and Heat

Heating pads and cold packs can comfort tender trunks. It is difficult to say if ice or heat is more beneficial. I recommend that patients use whichever they find comforting as long as their skin is protected. A Physical Therapist specializing in back pain can guide you on how and when to use these. Heat is used well in combination with other treatments and will help open up tight muscles to calm spasm and tightness, but will not provide long term results as noted earlier in this report. Ice will temporarily numb discomfort. I lean much more towards heat than ice overall.

7. See a Specialist Physical Therapist

There isn't a better way to END low back pain or sciatica than by seeing a physical therapist. Medication masks the pain and does not treat the underlying problem. Surgery and injections should only be considered when all else has failed.

For the vast majority of back pain, and sciatica sufferers, physical therapy is the perfect solution that naturally restores spinal health. Getting a thorough, one-on-one assessment and treatment is a proven strategy to END back pain or sciatica. Combine all the “tips” in this Special Report with physical therapy, and you will see a dramatic drop in the back pain and stiffness you are currently suffering from.

“I cannot say enough about Achieva Rehabilitation. After being told my husband would never walk again and months and months of therapy in 2 different states, Achieva took him on as a patient and I am very happy to say he is now walking after more than 2 ½ years in a wheelchair. We cannot thank Joel and Marisa enough for giving my husband a new life.”

“I told my orthopedic surgeon that I have 100% trust in my therapists with Achieva Rehab. You were the only ones who really cared about getting me through this difficult time. I will never go to traditional outpatient PT after the progress that I’ve made in such a short time.”



Conclusion

So, there you have it: Tons of things that you can do TODAY to keep active, improve your mobility, your posture, your pain, and your general health, as well as live with LESS worry over what's actually going wrong.

In the weeks ahead I'll be sending you even more tips and advice on how to restore your active and healthy lifestyle - and will share with you how Physical Therapy could possibly make a huge difference to your life.

I hope this is the beginning of a great, long-term relationship where myself and my team at Achieva Rehab will become the source of leading-edge health advice for you (and your family) and make a real difference to the quality and enjoyment of your life.

If you have any questions in the coming weeks about how to successfully implement these tips, please feel free to call me, text me, or send an email.

Finally, we would like to set up a FREE Discovery Session...either by phone or by video conferencing to learn more about you and to give you a great opportunity to ask questions to see if we are a match to help you even more than with this guide. Go to this link to sign up:

<https://www.achievarhab.com/dvbook>

Or Just Call Us...Whatever Is Easiest!

Dedicated to Restoring Your Health,

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Achieva Rehabilitation's Advice Series

BACK PAIN & SCIATICA



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