



7 SECRETS TO HEAL YOUR BACK AND STAY PAIN FREE

WITHOUT EVER NEEDING
MEDICATIONS, SURGERIES,
OR INJECTIONS.



YELLOW BRICK

PHYSICAL THERAPY

DISCLAIMER

All the material contained in this book is provided for educational and informational purposes only. No responsibility can be taken for any results or outcomes resulting from the use of this material. While every attempt has been made to provide information that is both accurate and effective, the author does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or use/misuse of this information.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
DR. LARA JOHNSON

I'm Dr. Lara, and I love my job! Because I get to see people every day find hope again, and improvement in their body and their health! This brings me the greatest joy and satisfaction I could imagine! Better than winning races or completing graduate degrees- For Sure!!

Before I became a neuromuscular specialist, I studied Health and Exercise Science and I've always been an avid athlete. But in all of my running training, and despite incredible efforts with strengthening and rolling, nutrition and wellness, I kept having injury after injury. I remember one specific day when a physician that I worked with told me that I had a stress reaction and to keep cross training, and that injections and surgery were options to explore.

I felt discouraged. I wasn't satisfied with this rote answer! I wanted to know this: "Why did this happen in the first place? What caused it? What will really solve the problem? And how do I keep it from happening again?!" And then I realized, oh that's right. That's what I do!! And I've made it my mission to not follow the normal standards just because, but to quest for the truth, and give people the results they want and need. And the time and attention required to get there! It's how I would want to be treated, and that's the main standard I live and work by.

When I got fed up and decided to ditch quick fixes and short-term goals in favor of long-term results, I remembered that I care more about being mobile, healthy, and active till I'm 90 than I do about risking my health for short-term goals like a running race or a surgery that may not really totally solve the underlying root cause. Both are important at times, no doubt. But what I've learned over many years, both personally and professionally, has been the principle of balance for optimum health and longevity, and that quick fixes are usually exactly that- quick.

Long-term health and preventive medicine has been my passion from an early age. Concepts like posture, flexibility, strength, and power have double meanings when it comes to our physical bodies and our personal lives, and the two go hand-in-hand and cannot be separated. I love helping other people find the same realizations and discoveries that I have. So they can walk the path of transformation and live to their full potential, both inside and out!

INTRODUCTION

In this special report on the secrets to healing your back pain so you can return to living your life pain-free, I describe 7 key principles that I give to my patients to help them fully heal. Over the past 14 years, I've seen, practiced, and witnessed all types of therapies, and these are the principles I have found to bring the best results.

Without knowing your specific symptoms and history, I can't know exactly what will work best for you, or which specific strategies to recommend first, but it usually requires a combination. I do know this: that being armed with knowledge of how your body works and what to do to help it is the first step in taking control of your health, and the key to sustained health and wellness long-term.

Back pain is one of the leading causes of missed work, distress, large medical costs, and loss of freedom of movement. Over 80% of people in the United States will suffer some form of back pain at some point in their lifetime. For some, it appears gradually and may continue as a nagging pain, or may come and go over months or years. And for others it will be sharp, intense, have them on the ground, and seem like it came out of nowhere and like something very serious is happening. The good news is that it is usually caused by muscle spasm (which is caused by a nerve irritation) and the body's protective mechanisms.

Back problems include sciatica, disc herniations, disc ruptures, stenosis, nerve impingement, and general pain in the back muscles. So you may be feeling pain in your low back, or also a burning sensation in your legs, or pins and needles down one or both legs, or even hip pain, knee pain, or pain in your feet. Or you may simply feel pain in your low back. This simple pain is very important to pay attention to, and to begin to follow the principles outlined in this report, because even the slightest beginning of back pain can also lead to those other more serious diagnoses if left unaddressed.

All of these symptoms are created by compressive forces on your spine, and all can be relieved naturally and without the need for invasive or risky procedures. In the following pages, I outline the strategies that have helped all of my patients with back pain or these same symptoms or conditions. As well as explanation so that you can more fully understand why each principle works and how it makes sense.

The goal is to begin to form simple habits that will not only relieve your current pain but also sustain the health of your back and your body long-term. So you can stay healthy and active and keep moving in all the ways that you love.

I hope you find this information helpful!

1 | KEEP MOVING, MINDFULLY

The most important thing you can do if you have back pain is to keep working and doing your normal daily activities, but do so mindfully. Over 80% of Americans suffer from back pain at some point in their life, and often the symptoms will resolve in a few months, but the underlying problem doesn't go away unless you retrain your posture and your lifestyle, even with simple movements. But it is important for both your physical and mental well-being to continue with your work and usual activities. And be sure to allow your exercise routine to be more gentle rather than intense, so that you can fully heal.

We know that exercise is beneficial to overall health and wellness, but not if it's hurting you. The body likes variety, so varying the ways you move is helpful, and not being in one static position for too long is as well.

Numerous research shows that exercise is incredibly beneficial for long-term health. We know that it keeps the brain healthy. It can slow down the progression of Alzheimer's Disease by increasing oxygen and neural pathways to the brain. We know that it keeps the heart healthy. In cardiac patients, or people with heart disease, exercise is important to strengthen the walls of the heart muscle and to promote blood flow through the arteries. And we know that strong muscles help support the body at any stage of life. Exercise helps with mental health, including anxiety and depression, allows people to enjoy social elements of being with friends and being outdoors in nature, and improves stress levels and stimulates endorphins.

Sitting is a large contributor to back pain. This is because every time you sit, whether at your computer, in your car, in front of the tv, at your dinner table, or even on a bicycle, the muscles attached to the front side of your spine shorten.

Over time, this shortening can accumulate and create a restricted pattern in your body's structure, therefore limiting your freedom of movement. This can happen in very subtle ways. And usually takes a lot of accumulation over time until symptoms, ie. pain, is felt. The pain usually appears as a compensation in your low back.

So keeping moving, and not sitting for too long at one time, will help keep your front side spinal stabilizer muscles from continuing to shorten and stiffen.

2 | LISTEN TO YOUR BODY AND MODIFY MOVEMENTS

When your body has an imbalance, pain is its signal. It's important to keep moving, but not in ways that are hurting you.

It's important to not ignore the pain. Continue to move and exercise if possible. But any time you feel pain, or you discover that the movement you did brought about pain during or after the activity, modify it, or when in doubt stop that particular exercise. Being more gentle with your movement is a good thing in order to allow your body to heal.

Repetitive exercise or static positions can exacerbate the problem, so continue to be mindful, modify, and gather information on what changed and what didn't. What worked and what did not.

Sometimes it is difficult to accept that there is a problem, but once you do you can allow your body to heal naturally and you can take control of the situation by doing what's necessary to fully heal so that you can return to living your life in a pain-free way.

Too often, people have a desire to keep pushing through exercise or activities that are hurting them, which keeps exacerbating the problem. Movement is important, but not if it's hurting you. When it's hurting you, the first order of business is to address the problem at its root cause.

One major key to sustained health and wellness long-term is becoming more in-tune with how your body moves. So let yourself become more mindful and aware of how you are moving, and how it feels. Your awareness will go a long way toward fully healing this, or any, problem.

3 | BEND BACKWARD TO BALANCE FORCES

Pain usually appears when there is an imbalance in the body. Which means there are more pressures in one area than another. With back pain, this happens when there are too many movements forward with not enough movements backward.

Your spine has a back side and a front side, with stabilizing muscles on both. However, most people only think about the back side because that's where the symptoms are. A very important difference is that the muscles attached to the spine vertebrae on the front (psoas and iliacus muscles) also attach to each leg. While the stabilizers on the back side (lumbar paraspinals) do not attach to each leg- they only attach to the spine and go from the tailbone up.

With any movement or position that bends you forward, bends the hip, slouches your torso, or lifts the leg, the muscles on the front side of your spine shorten, and then the muscles on the back side of your spine get overworked from trying to get you back upright all the time against that forward pull from the shortening. It's usually hard to notice that that is happening because you feel the pain only on the backside. This is where the symptoms are, but not where the source of the problem is. You don't feel the tightness on the front because your posture keeps slouching ever so subtly forward to put it on slack.

Bending backward is a simple way to off-load the overworked muscles on the back, and begin to lengthen the muscles on the front. You start to get more balance front to back, and it begins to re-train your posture to be relaxed and upright, which is the most efficient way to stand.

It's as simple as standing and leaning backward. Feel for pressure in your low back or tailbone and don't "push through", just keep it comfortable.

Avoid strengthening your core during this time. (Yes, you heard me right). This movement is a forward bend as explained above, and tends to feed into the problem not resolve it. Strengthening your core may buy you some time, and it may make you feel strong, but it will not solve the underlying problem. Those muscles are stiff and tight, and so working them won't really work that well.. Until you get full function. In order to get strength in a muscle, you must first have function- from the nerves to the muscles. Without that you will be working faulty muscles, even in your core, and likely irritating the nerves in the area too! Don't do it!

"I had been suffering from lower back pain for over ten years. This pain was becoming constant, especially during and after my favorite activities of soccer, skiing and biking. I tried chiropractic treatment, but stopped after realizing that the treatment only made me feel better for a few hours. I decided to take a different approach and started physical therapy with Dr. Lara Johnson. After reviewing my symptoms and history & analyzing my gait, Dr Lara quickly prescribed treatment which included weekly visits and at-home activities. I quickly found a lessening of my symptoms, and now experience pain-free activities and I can do the things I love completely pain free. Dr. Lara's unique approach was a life saver for me!"

- PAUL M. - 49 - BOULDER, CO

4 | ICE TO SOOTHE NERVE SWELLING

All of the muscles in your low back, core, and legs are controlled by nerves that branch out in your core/torso/abdomen region. These nerves go in and around and through muscles, right in this region where we bend forward, and so they can be easily affected.

Your nervous system is one of your 3 mechanical systems, along with your muscular system and your skeletal system. These all contribute to how freely you move and stand and sit, or how stiff you get, how muscles get weak, or how your posture becomes imbalanced.

From your brain and spinal cord, nerves carry electrical signals that allow muscles to function. Muscles need to be able to do 3 things: 1. contract and shorten, 2. contract and lengthen, and 3. relax and expand. Every muscle is attached to a bone at either end, usually crossing a joint (where 2 bones meet), and therefore affect the ability of a joint to move or become stiff.

In basic terms: A nerve tells a muscle to pull a bone. In that order. If you skip to massaging a muscle or mobilizing a joint you get short-term results. If you treat the problem with the nerve first, you get long-term healing.

Swelling or pressure on a nerve can close it inward, not allowing the electrical signals to fully get to the muscles that need to change and elongate in order to reduce your back pain and improve your posture.

Icing in a particular way, for nerves not muscles, is the most helpful way to reduce neurological inflammation so that your muscles can become workable (ie. functional) once again, allowing for balance in your joints and posture (ie. your structure).

Ice Protocol

Why: This reduces swelling on nerves so that the muscles can become workable again. Without the nerves, we can't get full muscle function in your psoas muscle in your spine OR down your legs to your foot and ankle, for example. The short duration keeps nerves from being irritated or muscles from stiffening. Then, more frequency is required to keep soothing the nerves.

How: Take two large ice packs, and place one on your front (abdomen) and one on your low back (lumbar). Lay down, sit, or wrap them on you. Ice for 5 minutes only! By this point you will likely feel cold and ready to take them off. Leave a thin layer between the ice packs and your skin, like a t-shirt or pillow case, to protect your skin. Leave at least 15-20min between icings otherwise you will stiffen up more. Perform this 5min icing front and back 6-10 times/day (more frequency the better) to reduce nerve irritation and swelling and allow muscles to become workable again.

"I went to see Lara Johnson because of nerve pain in my elbows, lower back, and right SI joint. I was skeptical at first that her ice regimen would help these things, but was very pleasantly surprised. The icing schedule, in conjunction with her techniques for helping my psoas muscle release, ended up largely taking care of all my symptoms. The procedure she used to release muscle fibers was occasionally painful but very effective. I found her treatment very successful and have recommended her to my friends who have problems with their lower backs and necks. Lara was also very good at explaining the theory behind why the various treatments work."

- LAINE GARRITSEN, BOULDER, CO

5 | CONSISTENCY IS KEY!

Forming habits is a key part of recovery from any pain or injury. The more you can become aware, and practice helpful habits throughout the day, the better your body will re-learn how to function and move and the closer you will be to long-term freedom of movement with a side bonus of pain relief!

The simplest things, if done repeatedly, can solve a problem and prevent future problems from happening.

Imagine if simply icing front and back for 5 minutes allowed you to feel better and ultimately get back to doing what you love to do. And without the fear of bigger problems in the future?!

So find out for yourself how well these habits work. And give them a fair chance in order to find out.

6 | HELP YOUR MUSCLES LET GO.

Nerves can get trapped in tight muscle or soft tissue in various areas. For example, with sciatica the Sciatic Nerve gets pressed and creates painful sensations down the back of the leg.

With the use of a ball, you can begin to release tight or tender soft tissues and start to help them relax and reorganize. You can use a tennis ball, lacrosse ball, a dog toy, or any type of ball that has some stiffness to it but also a bit of give is helpful. You can even ball up a pair of socks, which will be softer but can still be effective.

Find a tight or tender point in a muscle and allow your body to relax as much as possible into the ball, so that you are not having to hold or engage any muscles. Allow 3 to 5 minutes in one place so that depth of tissue can be reached and to allow time for release to occur. Rolling back and forth in the area is not advised.

Helpful areas to begin to release are in the low back and hip.

7 | SEE A SPECIALIST PT

If you've tried everything and you are still having pain, or if you have doubt, other concerns, questions about your specific condition, you feel like something isn't right, or you just want to get better right away without wasting time, see a physical therapist today!

Please keep in mind that your physical therapist should evaluate your whole body and help you understand what's really going on. Your visit should include at least 30-45 minutes of 1-on-1 attention with the Doctor of Physical Therapy directly, and include postural and movement assessment, hands-on assessment, attention to the front side of your spine, and attention to the neurological aspect of the dysfunction. Without the treatment of the nerves, results will likely be short-term. This is an important part of what I do with clients that leads to the best results and sustained freedom of movement and pain relief long-term.

Remember, treatment of symptoms may or may not help relieve pain, but treatment of the root cause will promote long-term freedom of movement WITH a huge side bonus of pain-relief. PLUS preventing larger pressures to accumulate in your spine leading to more serious back problems down the road.

Physical therapy is the most effective, most conservative, most cost efficient treatment and best 1st choice for back pain without side effects. You DO NOT need a referral from a doctor or a physician to get seen by a physical therapist at my clinic. And you don't even need to talk to your insurance either. You can be seen now, without waiting weeks for an appointment with your physician to obtain a referral or prescription. Please call today at (720) 583-5580 for a "NO pre-authorization needed" FREE CONSULTATION with me to discuss your best options to end back pain.

"Lara is by no means your average physical therapist. Her approach is to treat from an entire muscular/nervous system perspective and not focus on treating just the symptom.

I was originally sent to Lara because I was experiencing pain in my hip. I had already seen a more traditional physical therapist who did manual therapy and gave me exercises. After six weeks, this approach had a yo-yo effect on the pain - it would get better then get worse. My first visit with Lara, she was not convinced that my hip pain was due to some form of injury to my hip but she used her knowledge to execute her own approach and by the end of my first visit my hip felt less painful and I definitely didn't limp as much as I had. Lara recommended multiple short duration icing to help reduce nerve inflammation and as much as I did not like doing it (especially when it's really cold in the winter), it helped. It took a few weeks but the hip pain eventually went away but since Lara looks at the entire muscular system we discovered the hip pain was compensatory and caused by other issues which Lara dutifully treated as well.

Along the way, Lara has gone on a journey with me through many different muscle/nerve pains: hip pain, back pain, neck pain, residual pain from surgery/broken bones, compensatory pain from dental work, and a sprained ankle. Through it all, she has treated each issue from a systematic approach and worked to make my entire muscular/nervous system function such that my system gets healthy and stronger. Lara's approach gave me the results I wasn't getting from traditional cookie cutter physical therapy and I would highly recommend her to anyone who may be experiencing a similar situation."

- LESLIE B., 38, BOULDER, CO

A PERSONAL MESSAGE
FROM DR. LARA JOHNSON

Thank you very much for reading this report.

Back pain is the #1 reason people miss work and over 80% of people in the United States experience back pain that disrupts their work or activities at some point in their lives. Almost all of my patients have experienced back pain at some point and yet so many of them do not fully understand what is going on and what they can do about it.

There is a lot of misinformation and I truly hope this report helps you understand what to do to ease your pain and symptoms. My goal is to help you feel better, remain active, get the results you deserve and to make the right decisions regarding your back pain.

Sincerely,

LARA JOHNSON PT, DPT, MS, CES, CYI



YELLOW BRICK
PHYSICAL THERAPY