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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Will Getting Firewood Test Your Manlihood?

Over the past few years, people have been turning to other forms of fuel, such as wood, for heating their homes. But, in order to burn wood, one must go out and collect it. Surprisingly, this activity has caused a recent influx of low back injuries into my office. How might this occur you ask? Read on.....

Collecting firewood allows many a man to fulfill their primal urges of hunting and gathering. Like a caveman sharpening his spear, he sharpens his weapons (axe, chainsaw). This pre-hunt ritual occurs while the next generation of hunters, his son, watches in awe. After pleading ignorance about requiring a permit from the Ministry of Forests, he heads out looking for that perfect tree. Once found, the tree is butchered into pieces like a moose that was hunted and cut into quarters. While still under a natural adrenalin rush from the hunt, coupled with the need to demonstrate his Hercules-like strength to his son, he feels invincible. He proceeds to repetitively lift the massive pieces into his pick-up truck. The hunt proceeds just as planned, until....

I will use an example of a man who practically crawled into my office this month after attempting to collect some firewood. Just as he picked up the last piece, he felt a sharp pain in his lower back. It then shot from his back to his right hip and groin. While dropping to his hands and knees, the piece of wood he was holding fell and landed heavily on his big toe. Once the pain in the toe subsided, the pain from his right hip and groin began to spread into his right testicle and lower leg. Not only was his ability to hunt and gather suddenly disappearing before his eyes, but now his manlihood was also in jeopardy. Covered in sawdust and giving off a distinct odour of chainsaw oil with a hint of freshly cut pine, he crept into my office one hour later. He had sprained the joints in his lower back. The resulting inflammation then irritated the nerves that exit his spine and combine together to form the sciatic nerve. With chiropractic treatment and modifying his activities, he was back to normal within a week or two.

To prevent the rest of you men from having your hunting/gathering abilities decimated, as well as having your manlihood tested, I will review a few "back safety" tips when collecting firewood. First, find a tree that is accessible by your truck so that you will not have to carry the pieces over uneven ground. Second, cut the tree into shorter pieces. They will be lighter to lift and easier to split. When lifting each piece, keep your lower back straight and lift with your legs. Third, when tossing the pieces into

the truck, do not twist your back. Fourth, do not try to collect the entire winter's supply in one weekend. If you are like the average person, this is not an activity your body is used to doing. Last but not least, do not use an axe that is too heavy. You will not be able to control it properly that one time when your aim is a little off.

For free stretches that would help limber the muscles and joints of your back prior to attempting any physical activity, log onto our website: [www.merrittchiro.com](http://www.merrittchiro.com)