

Dr. Colin Gage

Nicola Valley Chiropractic
2076A Granite Ave.
P.O. Box 909
Merritt, BC
V1K 1B8

Ph: (250) 378-5456
Fax: (250) 378-8259
Email: info@merrittchiro.com
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

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

How To Prevent Back Pain

Many of the people that come to see me each day already have some form of low back pain. Once they have completed their chiropractic treatment program and their symptoms have disappeared, it is then that I often discuss how to prevent their previous problem from reoccurring.

To me, it is important that everyone may be able to avoid back pain by improving their physical condition and learning and practicing proper body mechanics. Read through the suggestions listed below and see how many of them you actually do consistently.

To keep your back healthy and strong:

- **Exercise.** Regular low-impact aerobic activities — those that don't strain or jolt your back — can increase strength and endurance in your back and allow your muscles to function better. Walking and swimming are good choices. Talk with your chiropractic doctor about which activities are best for you.
- **Build muscle strength and flexibility.** Abdominal and back muscle exercises (core-strengthening exercises) help condition these muscles so that they work together like a natural corset for your back. Flexibility in your hips and upper legs aligns your pelvic bones to improve how your back feels.
- **Quit smoking.** Smokers have diminished oxygen levels in their spinal tissues, which can hinder the healing process.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight puts strain on your back muscles. If you're overweight, trimming down can prevent back pain.
- **See your chiropractor regularly.** Your chiropractor is highly trained to identify and correct problems in your spine at the early stages, before they become severe.

Use proper body mechanics:

- **Stand smart.** Maintain a neutral pelvic position. If you must stand for long periods of time, alternate placing your feet on a low footstool to take some of the load off your lower back.
- **Sit smart.** Choose a seat with good lower back support, arm rests and a swivel base. Consider placing a pillow or rolled towel in the small of your back to maintain its normal curve. Keep your knees and hips level.

- **Lift smart.** Let your legs do the work. Move straight up and down. Keep your back straight and bend only at the knees. Hold the load close to your body. Avoid lifting and twisting simultaneously. Find a lifting partner if the object is heavy or awkward.
- **Sleep smart.** People with back pain have commonly been told to use a firm mattress, but recent studies indicate that a medium-firm mattress might be better. Use pillows for support, but don't use a pillow that forces your neck up at a severe angle.