

# Dr. Colin Gage

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

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## Does Back Pain Go Away on Its Own?

Eighty percent of people suffer from back pain at some point in their lives. Back pain is the second most common reason for visits to the doctor's office, outnumbered only by upper-respiratory infections. Fortunately, most cases of back pain are mechanical or non-organic, i.e., not caused by serious conditions, such as inflammatory arthritis, infection, fracture, or cancer.

So what causes back pain? The back is a complicated structure of bones, joints, ligaments, and muscles. You can sprain ligaments, strain muscles, rupture disks, and irritate joints, all of which can lead to back pain. While sports injuries or accidents can cause back pain, sometimes the simplest of movements—for example, picking up a pencil from the floor—can have painful results. In addition, arthritis, poor posture, obesity, lack of exercise, and psychological stress can cause or complicate back pain.

For some people, mild back injuries are a part of everyday life. In most of these mild cases, the spine is able to heal to its full potential. These very minor injuries usually heal within 1 or 2 days. Some pain, however, continues longer. What makes some pain last longer is not entirely understood. For me, I believe that the pain you feel during a low back injury is really just a symptom of a specific problem. Thus, if you just wait for the symptoms (pain) to disappear without actually treating the real cause, it is unlikely that you will be symptom-free over the long term. For example, a recent study showed that when back pain is not treated, it may go away temporarily but will most likely return. The study demonstrated that in more than 33% of the people who experience low-back pain, the pain lasts for more than 30 days. Only 9% of the people who had low-back pain for more than 30 days were pain free 5 years later.

As a chiropractor, it is my job to identify and correct the actual problem. Only then can the body actually heal itself and remain symptom-free over the long term. Whether it is to address an existing bout of back pain or on more of a preventative nature, it is healthy to have the joints of your back “adjusted” or “manipulated” by a chiropractor. It allows the joints to move freely, heal faster, or stay healthy longer.

If you have any further questions on how chiropractic treatment can improve your health, feel free to contact me directly.