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

A Few Ways to Protect Your Back

Back pain and back injuries are very common in our society. In fact, approximately 60 to 90 percent of all Canadians will experience at least one back injury in their lives. Half of these people will experience multiple episodes of back problems. Many will undergo surgical procedures, and roughly 10 percent will see their condition become chronic. The ultimate cost to society in lost productivity and health-care resources totals in the billions of dollars. An even higher price, however, is paid by the people who have lost the ability to participate in the activities they most enjoy. Back problems can make fishing, golfing, or even just playing with children and grandchildren a painful experience. In the worst cases, a back problem can interfere with even the ability to get dressed.

Despite all this, people still take their backs for granted, not realizing the dangerous positions they put their backs in every day. Almost everything you do requires the use of your back, and back problems are rarely the result of a single activity or accident. Most injuries occur over a period of years or even decades, as a result of various factors -- how you sleep or sit, what you eat, or how you deal with the emotional stresses at home and work. In this article, I will tell you how to perform those tasks, and more, without injuring your back.

Protecting Your Back in Bed

You'd think it would be difficult to injure your back while sleeping. While unconscious your muscles are relaxed and you're not lifting or carrying anything. But the truth is, if you have a bed that does not offer your back enough support, it could be part of the reason why you wake up with back stiffness. Also, if you are in a position that is bad for your back, such as sleeping on your stomach, and you stay that way for eight hours while you sleep, you could be irritating your back without knowing it.

Protecting your Back in the Morning

When you're getting ready in the morning to start your day there are a host of bad habits that could put stress on your back. For instance, when you stand at the sink, brushing your teeth, do you keep your back straight when bending over? The same applies when putting on your socks, pants, or shoes. Bend at your hips and knees, not at your low back.

Protecting Your Back in the Car

Many of us spend a significant portion of our days in the car. Strangely, little thought is given to how comfortable we are in our cars, or how our car seats could be irritating our backs. When getting in or out of your car, put your butt on the seat with your feet still on the ground. Then, simply turn your hips and upper body at the same time to bring your feet and legs into the vehicle and facing forward. Also, do not have your seat in a reclined position. You should be sitting up straight as if you were in a good quality desk chair, not a lazy boy recliner!

Protecting Your Back While Exercising

It's a vicious cycle. If your back hurts, you will probably stop exercising. But if you stop exercising, you are more likely to injure your back more. Even if your back is bothering you, it is important to get at least a little exercise. Movement keeps the joints in your back lubricated and loose. If you combine even mild exercise with chiropractic care, your recovery will be that much faster and long term.

Protecting Your Back While Lifting

Most people who injure their back do so by attempting to lift an object incorrectly. Lifting puts more stress on your back than any other activity. Make sure you lift with your knees and hips, not your low back. When carrying something and turning, turn your whole body rather than twisting at the low back. If you can master lifting correctly, you have made a major stride in protecting your back.