

# Dr. Colin Gage

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

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## Firewood and Your Back

Although many of you have been collecting firewood every fall for numerous years, the work involved does not get any easier. In addition, you are not getting any younger. I'm not being nasty, I just want you to realize that as the average person gets older, the joints in his or her back do not become more mobile and the associated muscles do not become more flexible. Thus, even if one does the same amount of work, the back cannot tolerate it like it used to. This inevitable problem for the average person is compounded even more whenever one attempts this heavy physical work only on a seasonal basis.

The best way to prevent this from happening is to faithfully exercise one's back and see a chiropractor regularly. This is the best way to keep the joints moving freely and the muscles strong and flexible. When one is proactive with the health of his or her low back, the likelihood of an injury occurring is significantly less.

In addition to this, there are a few other things you can keep in mind when getting 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. Third, when lifting each piece, keep your lower back straight and lift with your legs. Fourth, when tossing the pieces into the truck, do not twist your back. Fifth, 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.

Finally, it is a good idea to go for a short walk and do a few simple low back stretches before heading out to get the firewood. Some simple stretches/exercises that would help improve the overall health of the muscles and joints of your back are available on our website: [www.merrittchiro.com](http://www.merrittchiro.com)