

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

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Information and instructions for people who suffer from back pain.

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D.I.Y. Guide For Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers

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Contents.

Introduction.	7
How does the body end up in Pain.	12
Why things you have tried didn't fix you.	16
What is SLM Yoga.	31
Assessing yourself for treatment.	35
The significance of Muscle imbalances.	38
Chronic versus Acute Pain.	48
What do you need to achieve to take away Pain.	50
Other influences that contribute to pain.	52
Posture	59
Diet	65
Acid/ Alkaline List	72
Weight Loss	73
Fixing pain in the body.	75
Fixing Back Pain, all types.	79
Muscle reference chart	127
SLM self help exercises.	128
What you can do beyond this manual.	157
Links	165

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INTRODUCTION.

This program, as it is titled, a self help guide designed to help you understand and treat your own sciatica or back pain either alone or preferably with the assistance of an accredited SLM therapist or other qualified practitioner if an SLM therapist is not available to you. It covers all the information you will need to know and things you will need to address to ensure your pain is taken away, for the large majority of sufferers.

This guide is not meant as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment from a qualified practitioner, but rather a means to assist you in understanding the problem you have in respect to its cause and the approach you need to take to find a solution.

To start with, it is important that you have a good understanding of the concept of what you are trying to achieve with this program. You are here to try and take away your pain and there are a number of things you have to understand and then carry out in order for that to happen.

The first thing I want you to know is how your body has ended up in pain. I will try to keep this explanation simple because that is the best way for you approach it when following this program.

Imagine your body just as a collection of muscles, around 640 in fact, that extend and contract as they are switched on and off, to control all your movements and provide support for your joints and skeletal framework. In the ideal situation these muscles keep that structure in balance in relation to the level ground we stand on and the weight of gravity acting down upon us at all times. It's the muscles working together, evenly, as opposing forces that gives us this balance. It is only whilst our structure is in balance that we have maximum strength and support for our joints.

In a perfect environment these muscles are kept healthy by being given the exact nutrients they require when they need them and

rested in a very balanced way, so they not only cope with what they have to do, but get stronger through doing it. In this perfect environment muscles never develop problems and so joints stay balanced and strong and the body very rarely feels pain.

Unfortunately for most people this perfect environment doesn't exist. The reality is that not only are your muscles inadequately fed but they are constantly being used in an unbalanced way due to a persons work, posture and leisure activities and of course the fact that you favour one side being right or left handed. The result is that certain muscles end up becoming overworked, unhealthy and tight and eventually responsible for imbalances that spread throughout the body.

Over time, these tight muscles suffer from a lack of circulation which causes them to become weaker and lose their elasticity or ability to contract and relax, leaving them stiff, inflexible and dysfunctional. This in turn causes other healthy muscles to develop problems as they try to compensate for the dysfunctional ones. The end result is imbalances that spread to the body's core setting up long term problems and pain because of twists or tilts that occur in the pelvis and spine and pressure on joints not designed to handle it.

The pressure that causes these problems comes because we are always the meat in the gravity sandwich as we stand on level ground and carry the weight of gravity around on our shoulders.

Presently, the accepted conventional way to deal with this situation is through treatments involving loosening up isolated areas using exercises or stretching, but the results show this approach doesn't work. Exercising over tight, contracted muscles just makes them tighter and stretching them makes no difference to their long term condition at all. (more on that later)

If you disagree with that assessment and want proof, just consider how much stretching and exercise has been used to treat back pain to date, through physiotherapy, Pilates, or a myriad of other

programs and yet back pain remains an epidemic that costs the world many billions of dollars in treatment and lost productivity every year.

The only way to successfully reverse these problems is through working to rebalance the body's muscle system and re-training the tight or weak muscles to be able to switch on and off again so they will work for you in situations where you require balanced strength and support.

The dry, hard and weak condition that problem muscles end up in can be reversed, (regardless of what you might have previously been told) providing you can get the nerves firing and circulation working through them again. The key is to work at making the changes persistently to the core muscles with the right exercises and self treatment techniques, in conjunction with any therapy you are doing, so the changes become permanent.

This is what I will endeavour to pass on to you here in this book and the accompanying DVD on SLM Yoga.

This program is structured to show you how to bring your body back to a condition where pain will disappear and your body will function in a much more normal way to what you may be experiencing at present. But don't expect an overnight miracle because the longer you have had your problem muscles the longer it will take to reverse them.

Also keep in mind that fixing your body is not an entirely painless experience. When you attempt to wake up muscles that are asleep, or stimulate the circulation and function back into tight muscles, they will react by either aching and shaking or going into cramp temporarily. They can be left sore for a few hours or even a day as they come to terms with what is going on, but be assured that this is not a bad thing, regardless of what you feel in the short term it is a step forward in the right direction in the long term.

Any bad reaction you might feel initially from the exercise or self treatment techniques shouldn't last or continue as the condition of the problem muscles improves. In fact, you should experience a lessening of your pain, or a longer time spent doing your activity before the pain comes on, as the muscle condition and balance in your body improves.

I might add here that you should start by taking things slowly and find a level you can work that would leave you sore for no more than 2 days. This is very important because if you are sore for longer than that it will indicate you are over working the tissue.

The SLM Yoga workout, which you should have on DVD, is a very important part of your rehabilitation and should give you a noticeable improvement at a rate that corresponds with how bad your problems were to start with. This means if you have had your pain for many years it may take some months before you will notice a lasting improvement in how you feel. For pain that hasn't been there very long the improvement should happen a lot faster.

It is important that your body has good basic health in order for the SLM Yoga and self treatment techniques to work effectively and for the improvements to hold for any length of time. That is why I start the program off with an isometric strengthening exercise on the legs.

The legs and lower body is the foundation or support for the upper body and most importantly the back. It is not until the leg muscles are strong, loose and balanced that the tightness in the upper body will respond to the release techniques. As most moving exercises will only irritate a persons pain and add to the imbalances contained in the legs and pelvis, an isometric exercise is used because it enables you to control the position of your pelvis and muscles and direct the pressure you generate to the muscles that are contracted or weak and not working properly.

Be sure to listen carefully to the instructions on the SLM Yoga DVD so you carry out the exercises correctly and understand what you are trying to feel and achieve along the way.

If you are reading this and suffer from a herniated or bulging disc, arthritis, scoliosis, Scheuermann's disease, spinal stenosis, facet joint syndrome, osteoarthritis, spondylolisthesis, or any other labelled condition not mentioned, you should still have no problem doing the SLM Yoga program and in time should feel a great benefit from it. I would refrain from doing the self help techniques with the rubber ball, that apply direct pressure to areas around where you have a problem if you have any concerns.

Be sure to read this manual thoroughly first off, so you will incorporate the correct exercises and self treatment techniques at the right time and ensure your progress away from pain is smooth and effective taking minimal time.

WHY DOES THE BODY END UP IN PAIN.

Pain is the end result of too much stress or pressure building up in a specific area of the body (usually a joint) that, with constant movement, causes irritation, inflammation and pain..

This pressure restricts the flow of blood and lymph to certain muscles causing their fibres to become dry and stiff and stick together from the lack of circulation. These muscles no longer work as a healthy muscle should and then other associated muscles are forced to compensate for them eventually causing the body to lose its symmetry and get out of balance.

To be able to treat the pain that has come as a result of this, you need to be able to find the problem muscles and correct them, remove the compensations from other areas and bring back the body's symmetry or balance. This will release the pressure from the inflamed painful area and allow the pain to disappear.

There are many ways of putting too much pressure on specific parts of the body causing this stress to build up, like over exercising in conjunction with poor nutrition, bad posture, an accident or injury, overuse or over loading muscles whilst working or exercising. It happens at different rates for different people depending on the fitness, health and strength of your body.

How quickly these things cause a problem are determined by things such as your job, diet, posture, exercise program or technique, emotional stress levels, (lifestyle) and genetic factors affecting your internal functions like digestion, assimilation and elimination.

The approach you need to take is to consider all of these things and work out which of them is involved in your particular case. Although that may not sound so simple, it is just a process to go through that when followed and combined with the powerful SLM yoga exercise and self therapy techniques, plus some treatment

from a skilled therapist, you should be able to give yourself a fast, effective and lasting result.

When you have pain but do not get the correct treatment, your pain can still eventually subside, but more due to the body's ability to compensate for the imbalances rather than the real cause of your problem being properly addressed. That's why you can be treating a current pain you have and in the process find the cause of a old past problem you had that has since settled down, buried below layers of compensations.

Often a secondary injury comes as a result of an original injury not being fixed properly because when a pain goes away due to time and compensations it leaves an area with poor circulation and a restricted range of movement that eventually becomes weak. This tension and weakness can spread, depending on your lifestyle, activities and 'stress' factors, and cause other areas to compensate become overloaded and get injured. This is the reason why sometimes, what appears on the surface as just a simple pain, is actually quite complicated and takes some time to come right.

By rebalancing the muscle system in your body and restoring circulation to any problem areas, you will help to restore your body's ability to reverse the tissue deterioration. It is this that allows you to rebalance your muscle system, remove your pain and restore your natural movement. Until your body is in this state you will not feel or function at your best, regardless of what else you do.

Treating Yourself.

After you do an SLM Yoga session or give yourself a thorough treatment with the self help techniques you should feel lighter, more energised and more balanced especially if you were out of balance to start with. You may also feel a little light headed and washed out and perhaps sore in some of the spots you had to work firmly, but that should only be for a short time or at worst up to two days on the weaker areas. It is possible that you could have a

worse reaction than that but only in extenuating circumstances such as if you are very weak or you really overwork an area by trying to do too much too quickly.

You can't accurately assess the results of a treatment on your body for a couple of days after it's finished and that's one of the reasons why you should not work on any one area with the rubber ball more often than every three or four days. Just once a week on any particular area is probably ideal unless it is a constant source of pain. If you suffer from self-induced pain within a day or two of you treating yourself you should just have a hot bath or apply heat and rest to give the treatment a chance to settle down and work for you. Don't do more work on the area trying to fix things.

Again there are exceptional circumstances with this but each case would need to be considered logically on its merits as there is no hard and fast rule. For example you may benefit from doing some pressure point work with a rubber or golf ball to a particularly tight or stubborn area in the days after a self-treatment. After you have treated yourself for a while and know your body well, you will be in a good position to work out what to do about any lingering pain.

It's important you pay extra attention to having good posture especially during the first two days after you do any work on yourself, but in reality you should try to have good posture all the time. Try to remember the following things as a general rule, as far as your self-treatments go.

- It's best to rest an area for at least 2 days after treatment. That means no vigorous exercise or long periods of standing.
- You may well be sore for a couple of days after you treat yourself and this is best handled with hot baths or heat packs and rest.
- Don't get any other form of therapy or bodywork for at least 2 days after you work on yourself unless you specifically ask for the area you already worked on to be treated very gently.
- Try and cut back on sugar and acid foods (especially alcohol)

while you are experiencing any pain.

- **Don't do hard exercise 2 days before you treat yourself with the ball unless you are very use to it and it doesn't make you sore.**
- **Try to think about posture all the time, analysing the way you are sitting and standing to be sure you are using your body in a balanced way.**
- **Anytime you do something that tightens or upsets the balance in your body, be sure to do an SLM Yoga workout before you go to sleep to correct it.**
- **When a problem has been in a muscle(s) for many years, the lack of blood supply will have made that muscle(s) very hard and stubborn and it will take some time to reverse that and make it soft and supple again. Be patient and don't put too much pressure on the muscle with exercise until you have worked on it for some time.**

An area or muscle that you treat and make feel better may become a problem again as soon as you use it too much because it has not had sufficient time to recover properly i.e. improve condition and gain strength. This is normal and will become less of a problem as time goes by.

WHY THINGS YOU HAVE TRIED DIDN'T FIX YOU.

If you are like most people you are probably perplexed as to why all the things you have tried so far and spent so much money on haven't already got rid of your pain or problem. Most people will seek out conventional treatments that purport to be able to fix back pain, like physio or physical therapy, chiropractic or osteopathic work, perhaps massage or even a sports doctor but that deliver very disappointing results. Some people will then, after becoming frustrated with the lack of results, move onto other credible alternative therapies like acupuncture, acupressure, reflexology and unique styles of massage like Shiatsu or Rolfing, but invariably the results are the same.

Although I am critical of the ability of many of these modalities to be able to fix most back pain, I want to make it clear that I believe there are always exceptions to the rule and the odd good therapist amongst the masses. My comments that follow are about the standard treatment and philosophy of the various modalities, but obviously won't apply to everyone.

The common weakness of all these approaches, as I see it, is that many of the practitioners think that you only need a physical approach to fix pain. Many also believe that by treating just the part of the body where you feel pain you will get a lasting result and I believe this is wrong. Not only do most people need a mix of treatments, such as bodywork, diet and exercise and even emotional support in some cases, but the whole muscle system needs to be addressed in order to eliminate the cause of a problem and the compensations and imbalances that flow from it.

Physical or Physio therapy generally fails because they target the area a person feels pain which is the weak area, strengthening it with exercise and trying to loosen it with stretching. This area is just where the pressure has built up from the real cause so although in some cases this gives a result due to the body compensating or strengthening against the weakness, it doesn't produce a worthwhile or lasting result because it doesn't address

the real cause of the problem, deterioration in critical muscles, general stress levels or the muscle imbalances.

Chiropractic is heavily promoted as the best solution for back pain but in my opinion this is very misleading. It mostly fails to deliver a lasting result because of the philosophy that by adjusting the joints, the muscles will release and the body will get balance. Logic suggests that it's the muscles that move the body and cause the joints to be out of alignment so without significant work done to restore problem muscles to a healthy supple and balanced condition, and reverse any long term deterioration, no work to balance the skeleton will hold.

Osteopaths are similar to chiropractors but differ in that they do pay a lot more attention to the muscles with their work and therefore from what I have seen, achieve marginally better results. The shortcoming I see with this treatment is that the muscle work is largely superficial and although has the ability to relax muscle tension it doesn't go far enough to properly rehabilitate muscles by restoring length and function to weak flaccid or chronically tight ones. This is in fact a common problem in the body of many chronic pain sufferers. Very often Osteopaths employ massage students to prepare the body's for adjustment and like chiropractors they also rarely put much emphasis on diet and corrective exercise as part of their treatments.

Massage is making a name for itself as a stand alone therapy that offers real value in the treatment of pain and dysfunction. It has finally moved away from being more associated with the sex industry than the medical field or seen as a mere pampering enjoyed by the rich and self indulgent. But massage still has a long way to go and there are very few schools employing truly skilful teachers who understand and can teach about the real cause of pain in the body and how massage can fix it. Generally massage is one dimensional and is focused on relaxing the muscles and taking away tension. To be more effective, it needs to be able to tackle many more of the problems that occur in muscles such as restoring length and function to badly deteriorated muscles which

are present in many cases of chronic pain. Massage also commonly falls into the trap of working on the area where a person feel tight or in pain and fails to appreciate the importance of treating the whole body and restoring the overall balance. As a modality though, massage has the potential to develop into the leading therapy for taking pain away leaving the rest in its wake.

Medical and Sports doctors. Unless you are looking for drug therapy or surgery which should be a last resort, they generally have no specific training that enables them to directly contribute to taking away pain using forms of bodywork. They have credibility because they are doctors but rarely back it up with results in cases of treating pain effectively. That may sound pretty harsh but I say it because they mostly treat chronic pain as though it is there to stay offering cortisone (a steroid that only blocks the pain message getting to the brain) and an assortment of other pain killers and anti inflammatory drugs along with pain management (learning to live with pain).

Many doctors are far too quick to suggest surgery as a solution because they haven't made themselves aware of the alternatives available that do help and refer people for them. For their limited advice they charge a premium fee that Medicare and health funds happily support and partially pay. To be more effective in this area they need to be more open to the alternatives available and not be afraid to look past surgery and drugs. They do themselves no favours by keeping people circling throughout the conventional medical merry go round seeing physiotherapists or surgeons for operations that are rarely necessary or recommended for a satisfactory long term fix.

I don't say this to be critical of these people as they do have important roles to play in medicine but just not with effectively treating most pain and injury.

In their defense I would suggest that for an inactive person who has never paid much mind to the food and drink they consume is overweight, out of condition and doesn't see the value of having a

healthy body, the surgery route is probably the only one that will give them any result.

Some of the alternative therapies will offer a level of relief but from my perspective the results mostly suffer from two main flaws. Firstly they focus on a part of the body rather than treating the body as a whole and secondly they rely of the one approach totally, rather than treating holistically and putting the diet, bodywork and right exercise combination together which is generally what is needed.

When someone consults a therapist for their pain they are looking for direction on how to best go about fixing their problem. Unfortunately for them, most practitioners try to do it all themselves rather than bring in specialists from other modalities to enhance what they are doing.

The only way I see of getting around this is for people to put the combination together for themselves and be seeing the 2 or 3 people they need to, at the same time. But be warned that this can create problems when the therapists are not coordinating things as the timing of each treatment in conjunction with the other can be very important. Hopefully with the help of this guide you will be able to work through this and better co-ordinate things for yourself.

Pain is a funny thing and it is true that no one approach provides a solution for everyone, and that includes the combination of bodywork, diet and exercise.

Some people have managed to get their body into such a bad state it can be very hard to get back to normal and pain free again. As a result some people spend years searching and spending a fortune without much joy. If this describes you I suggest you start by being very kind to your body and patient as the results will probably come in time but won't be rushed. Eat very well, sleep enough, be happy, resolve disputes and anger, practice relaxing and meditating and clear your head before seeking any treatment.

Try sitting down and doing a really thorough search of all of your therapy options, get a good understanding of what each of them does and think hard about whether it is something that sounds right for you. Sleep on it for a week or so if necessary and try to find the best practitioner available in the modality you choose, so you can judge it properly as to whether it really is what you need. Be prepared to spend the time and money necessary to reverse the state your body is in and if money is tight work hard at the principals and advice in this program and do as much for yourself as you can.

Why exercise hasn't worked.

The normal approach therapists take when trying to fix back pain is prescribe stretching and exercises. Following I will explain why I believe stretching doesn't work but first I want to go through some of the reasons why in my opinion exercises don't work as intended either.

Over the years there have been many programs designed with the aim of fixing back pain, but those of you who have tried them will surely agree that none have been successful at providing a permanent solution for your chronic back pain. They may give initial, temporary results but not to the point where you can stop doing the exercises and the pain will stay away. Why is this? I am sure it is a question many of you have asked.

Many of these programs provide relief because the underlying component in them is strengthening which helps protect the body from the pressure and irritation on a joint that causes inflammation and pain. But when you stop exercising the strength slowly drains away again and the cause of the pain re-surfaces, especially when its origins are located in the core muscles that you rely on in your everyday movements.

Those of you that have had success from doing exercise most likely started when your pain was settled because it is very hard to

exercise when pain is in an acute stage due to the irritation it can cause. Those people who are constantly bothered by their pain without respite are often unable to begin an exercise program without feeling worse and if they do start, the pain is usually enough of a reason for them not to continue.

The answer as to why the exercise programs hasn't helped you get that permanent fix is actually quite simple and logical as is most things to do with the body;

Chronic back pain is generally set up by imbalances in the muscles causing pressure to build up and irritate a joint. To explain further, an imbalance means the muscle on one side of the body is in a different condition to the equivalent muscle on the other side. One might normally be tighter and more contracted than the other. So when you exercise and strengthen both muscles together as part of an all over workout, they still maintain these differences and the imbalance. That is to say a tight contracted hamstring will still be tight and contracted (probably more so), albeit stronger, after a period of concentrated exercise.

This confirms to me that problem muscles do not respond to exercise by letting go. By problem, I mean the muscles are usually tight and often weak, have a poor blood supply and do not function to provide strength and support for the body the way they were meant to do. The nerves are not firing into the muscle the way they should due to the permanently contracted state they are in. Because of the poor blood supply, the exercise, (which actually requires an increase in the volume of circulation) overloads the muscle causing it to fatigue and tighten further. This is why after an exercise program a person with problem muscles will loose flexibility.

The reason the pain often goes away, along with the loss of flexibility, is because of the body's ability to compensate, making allowances for the imbalances which help straighten up the pelvis and take some pressure off the spine joint, especially with an exercise program that focuses on symmetry such as Pilates.

When this situation exists with a structural muscle, which is usually the case with chronic pain, it is more of a big deal and the body has little chance of compensating too much. The stretching that people add to try and regain the lost flexibility doesn't work or maybe just feels like it does temporarily because it stretches the connective tissue making the joint itself feel looser, see my thoughts on stretching in the next section.

Once you get into the swing of things, exercise will manage or stave off pain whilst you are doing your workout regularly but when you stop for a few weeks or longer, the lack of good circulation combined with the underlying tightness that was always present deep in the muscles causes the weakness and often pain to return. When a muscle is very important in the everyday movement of the body (such as the erectors or quadriceps) and in a poor condition, it doesn't really get to the point of improving with the exercise and these are the times when exercise irritates the pain and forces a person to stop.

The best way to deal with the problem muscles so they will respond to the exercise in a positive way, and actually rehabilitate during the process, is to get the circulation working through the muscle again and restore its correct function before you start and in the days between the workouts. The best way of doing this is by physically working on the muscles with bodywork in such a way that stimulates the nerve activity and breaks up any congestion and sticking together of the fibres. (It can also be done to some degree with the rubber ball techniques explained in the exercise section). Of course this is dependant on the body being in a condition that will allow this to happen, (treatability).

Some people have problems in their body waiting to cause them pain but they never experience it because they eat well, keep their stress levels low and never stop doing their workout. The exercise holds everything together and keeps forcing the circulation through the muscles so as a result they generally feel fine.

If you think about a pain you developed and were someone who regularly did some form of exercise chances are the pain came on after you had a break for some reason, even if just for a few weeks or so. By having the break you allowed the problem muscles, which were probably critical ones for your body's core strength or usual exercise/ movement, to shut down sufficiently and get into a permanently contracted state not responding when you went back to your exercise. OR if you are someone who doesn't train you may have decided to do something quite physical one day like start going to the gym, spend a day in the garden etc.

Another way you can cause this and bring on pain is by neglecting your diet as you keep the pressure on the muscles by continuing to train.

So if your exercise program is something that helps to keep your pain away then I suggest you don't ever stop doing it (or eating well) even for a few weeks whilst you are away on holidays or busy at work. At least keep doing the SLM Yoga workout to keep your body loose and balanced. Alternatively consult a therapist experienced enough to work the problems and imbalances out of your body, using deep tissue massage type work.

If on the other hand it is your exercise that causes your pain and when you are not exercising you feel ok then your form of exercise is putting too much pressure on muscles that are not in good enough condition to cope with the load. Your exercise is over extending or over loading critical muscles causing the irritation you are feeling. You need to find the problem muscles and fix them so that they cope with the pressure from your exercise.

Once your body has developed chronic pain, your problem muscle(s) have deteriorated to a point where they are too weak or dysfunctional to play the important role they need to. Alternatively your muscle imbalances are too great and carrying the weight of gravity around is too much for your joints to handle.

If your pain comes on later in the day get stronger, or if you wake up in pain fix your diet and eat better. The condition of your problem muscles in respect to the things you do in your day will determine the level of pain or discomfort you experience. For example, if your erector muscles are too tight and you sit for many hours during a day you are likely to get back pain as the day goes on and those muscle fatigue and fail.

You need to use controlled exercise to strengthen those muscles after you have worked to free them up from the permanently contracted state they are in. The self help exercises and SLM Bodywork are two ways you can get the circulation flowing and nerve impulse working again. Remember it can take some time if you have had the problems for years as some people have.

Why stretching hasn't worked.

For as long as I can remember people have been told to stretch as a warm up or warm down to prevent injuries and for just as long physiotherapists have been using stretching, along with exercises, as the basis for their treatment of most painful conditions. Everyone has jumped on the band wagon from doctors to personal trainers and most therapists and whenever someone complains of feeling tight or sore there are invariably asked 'have you been doing enough stretching' or 'I know a good stretch that will help you'.

But in saying that there are also varying opinions on the type of stretches that are good to do and which are bad or harmful and in fact whether any stretching does any good at all. Even some years ago research conducted by Army physiotherapist Rod Pope and his colleagues on 2600 Army recruits showed that stretching provided no benefit in preventing injuries. Surprisingly perhaps, his is not the only study that has reached this conclusion.

Now I'll grant you that stretching a tight area will provide some temporary relief but what is it actually doing to our body when used regularly over a long period of time?

Before I discuss that question I would like to take you back to where it all started with the exercise craze of the late 70's and early 80's. Back in those times people didn't go to gyms or do fitness classes like aerobics or pump and the topic of stretching was rarely raised because people hardly ever needed it. The only gyms that existed were for the serious sportspeople or trainers where you could use hand weights or punch a heavy bag in a dingy back room somewhere, run by an ex fighter or trainer. It wasn't the place the average person would go and most exercise was confined to organised sports such as tennis, basketball or touch football. Injuries that people sustained were seen to by your GP and treated with rest and anti inflammatory drugs and physiotherapists were mainly used for helping people rehabilitate after surgery or treating the elderly in nursing homes.

When the exercise craze finally did take off and gymnasiums as we now know them started to spring up everywhere, people started getting serious injuries. Doctors, although called on, were not equipped to deal with them either with expertise or experience and so Physiotherapists inherited the job, not because they had any expertise but because they were in the right place at the right time, and stretching became the new buzzword.

If you ask most people, they will tell you they imagine that muscles are like lengths of elastic that when pulled from both ends, stretch evenly just as elastic does. They are not aware that a muscle works more like a telescope where the filaments slide over one another requiring ample lubrication and a healthy function to be able to properly lengthen through its range of movement. Healthy function refers to the condition of the muscle generally, whereby the tissue needs to be supple and strong and responsive to the nerve stimulation orchestrated by our brain.

The reality of course is that perhaps 10% of people would fit into this category while the other 90% are dominated by muscle tissue that is damaged, stressed, congested, unhealthy or overworked. The result for this group is an inability for the muscles to respond to stretching exercises without putting most of the pressure on the origin and insertion points and connective tissue around the joints. So what does that do? And more importantly what proof is there that indeed this is in fact what happens?

If you develop a pain in the body where does it usually manifest? In the joint. Most pains that people experience are things like knee pain, back pain, shoulder pain, elbow, wrist or ankle pain etc. And most of these pains when checked, show that there is actually no damage to the structure of the joint.

According to medical diagnosis they mainly come under the heading of inflammation or tendonitis and are treated with rest, anti inflammatory drugs or cortisone injections. In fact most medical specialists will tell you they are not sure why a pain is felt in a joint that shows no signs of injury when scanned.

If it hangs around for too long, some people are told the pain is all in their head or others are operated on, given an arthroscopy so the specialist can ‘have a look’ because they can’t figure out what the problem is. But regardless of which category you might fit into everyone is told to “do more stretching.”

It may be found that the joint is tracking incorrectly or there is an irritated nerve, ligament or tendon and where some of these injuries respond to a bit of ice and ‘stretching’ most hang around and require constant ‘stretching’, strapping or strengthening before they eventually settle. The reason they eventually settle is the body compensates for the injured muscle(s) and adjusts to lessen the impact of the imbalance.

In fact what is really happening is there are problems with the muscles supporting that joint causing an imbalance or irritation.

The pain settles or recovers in direct relation to the improvement of that muscle problem.

In many instances that muscle doesn't recover fully and despite all the stretching, the pain or irritation becomes chronic until the body with long term rest slowly finds a way to compensate and settle the problem away by itself.

Eventually, as we get older and build up an accumulation of these problems, the body has no where else to compensate and the chronic pain stays with us, curtailing the activity that irritates the joint, tendon, ligament or nerve. On the other hand, if the problem muscle is able to be identified and its condition is restored, the pain can disappear and a person can go back to their activity without further problems.

Stretching doesn't achieve this goal evidenced by the fact that chronic pain, of all types, is an epidemic amongst the masses of people who exercise and stretch and stretch and stretch as advised by their doctor, physiotherapist, other therapist or trainer, with little or no result.

If you do some research into stretching you will see it gets quite complicated, there is dynamic, ballistic, active, passive, static, isometric and PNF stretching or proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation which is really a technique combining passive and isometric stretching. Even the process of what happens in the muscle when we stretch is quite scientific, enough to tell you that in a perfect world maybe but certainly not in this world of stress, junk food and toxins where muscles do not behave in the manner that they are suppose to, at least for the 90% majority anyway.

The complicated anatomy we have that facilitates a stretch, let alone the precise control and movements required that most people would have no idea about, should be enough to put doubt in anyone's mind that the effect of a stretch would come anywhere close to what is expected.

Which brings us back to our original question of what happens to the body when we do all this stretching over a long period of time, the answer is many things:

Firstly as the connective tissue at the joint seems to be the weakest point along the line we end up stretching the ligament, the small fibrous tissues that plays an important role in the support of the joint against dislocation and excessive movement. Over time this constant stretching of a ligament causes it to become loose and weakened, making the joint hyper mobile and changing the important relationship that ligament has with muscles as they work together to support that joint.

As we know from the science books a stretched loose ligament doesn't return to its original length even after a long time has passed, especially if it is continually being stretched.

As a result the person doing the stretching feels looser and they are, in the joint, but that only makes them more susceptible to injury's like dislocation or more serious joint or ligament damage. A hyper mobile joint might work well in ballet or for martial arts kicks but it is not a good thing for a person involved in sports such as basketball, soccer, football, netball, or any activity involving body contact or where they are changing direction quickly.

If the ligaments are not providing the support for a joint that they should be, it is left to the muscles to pick up the slack and that causes them to become overworked and react by becoming tighter.

When the muscles become tighter a person feels like they need to stretch even more and the situation is exacerbated until you have the loose hyper mobile joints and muscles that are contracted in the belly and won't let go. An experienced bodyworker will feel this condition quite easily when working on a person who has stretched consistently over a long period of time.

The body has the ability to know when a joint is weak or unstable and contacting the muscles is the way it protects itself and

strengthens against the joint being dislocated. Over time the constant state of contraction negatively affects the circulation and the healthy condition of the muscles and nerves. This in turn causes the muscle to become weaker and the chances of dislocation, ligament, tendon or joint damage even greater.

So as you can see if you think about it logically there is a valid reason why stretching is not as good for you as perhaps you have been led to believe and in fact long term stretching is very bad for the ligaments, muscles and joints in particular. How do I know this, well as a Myotherapist doing constant, daily deep tissue massage work since 1988, working on all types of body's, I have been able to feel it. The difference is very obvious, loose sloppy joints and contracted belly of the muscles that do not respond to the standard techniques I successfully use to release the everyday muscle contractions.

The chronic stretcher's don't have any fewer injuries than the non stretcher's in fact I'd say they have more, especially niggling injuries. When I get them to stop stretching, (which is like trying to get someone off a drug sometimes), the 'niggles' disappear and the injuries become less frequent, providing their body hasn't already changed too much.

If you have imbalances and everyone does, there is nothing that pulls and irritates them more than a good stretch. How does the body compensate for that relentless attack? By giving way at the connective tissue and making up for the loose joint by tightening the supporting muscles.

What is the solution then?

Warm up and warm down very well before activity, using ROM exercises.

Eat a balanced healthy diet including supplements so your muscles and tissues are strong and will be supported for the activity you want to undertake. Any less will cause them to tighten.

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

Do SLM Yoga after workouts to rebalance and loosen your body without stretching.

Get full body deep tissue massage as regular maintenance for your muscles (say once a month) and when you feel the need to stretch, do so sparingly and seek out a treatment like SLM Bodywork that can restore length and function to your muscles by working on your full body in the one session.

WHAT IS SLM YOGA.

SLM Yoga is a workout designed both for the injured and healthy active person, as a way of loosening and rebalancing their body. It is done either as part of treating their pain or after a normal workout like running, weights, aerobics or sports. It forms the basis of this ‘do it yourself guide’ to help put strength and stability back into the core muscles of the body and restore function to injured areas.

Even fit healthy bodies can develop problems whereby tight, contracted muscles pull the body out of balance setting up problems that can lead to pain and injury. Although stretching is suppose to work to stop that happening, most people who currently use stretching have realised that it’s actually very ineffective at preventing injury and only provides short term benefits at best when it comes to taking away pain (scientific studies have proved this). Once a problem has developed, even constant stretching does very little to take it away.

The opposite is the case with SLM Yoga as it is a gentle form of meditative exercise that works to release shortened, contracted muscles and rebalance the body’s core muscles so that from one workout to the next the body’s balance and flexibility is maintained. Similar to what you get when you visit a therapist for an SLM Bodywork treatment but with SLM Yoga you do the job yourself, lying on the floor in the comfort of your own home. The program takes your body through a complete warm up and warm down or can just as easily be used as a thorough warm down after your workout or exercise or even a long day on your feet or at your desk.

Once you get familiar with the technique it is easy to remember the format and you can carry it out without needing to watch the DVD for guidance. When necessary, you can even use the sound only to guide you through the workout as you make steady progress correcting any pain and imbalances you have in your body.

SLM Yoga is best suited for bodies that are basically healthy and reasonably strong but does give effective, albeit slower, results for the others. However people who are very inflexible will need to work on improving that aspect through diet and exercise and massage before they will get full benefit from the routine.

For a healthy body, meaning someone that is committed to eating a good diet with balanced nutrition, the results are normally very fast as the muscles will be responsive and release during the workout. Having strong muscles is also important because the muscles are at a level where they can switch on when required and hold a contraction for at least a couple of minutes. For people who don't fit into these categories there is still hope, as the muscles can be brought up to this level with perseverance and the aid of SLM Bodywork, the self help techniques and exercises.

What does it involve?

The technique involves; first a warm up routine if not already coming off an exercise session, then lying on the floor in a meditative state adopting certain positions. You then 'switch on' different muscle groups with a gentle, balanced contraction that is held for the time it takes those muscles to start to rebalance and release. It could be up to a few minutes although it is done slightly faster during the DVD demonstration.

By working both sides of the body at the same time, you are able to feel the imbalances that already exist as well as feel the adjustment taking place as both sides slowly start to rebalance.

As is the philosophy underlying SLM Bodywork, the muscles in one area of the body anchor or brace against tight muscles in another, therefore the SLM Yoga routine involves a systematic workout moving from muscle group to muscle group around the body, so as an overall release is achieved throughout the 70 or so minute workout session.

The effects are an unlocking of the ‘web’ that holds the body into a twisted or rotated posture, allowing the restoration of movement and flexibility and the release of contracted muscles that may be the root cause of a pain or dysfunction a person is feeling. This means that not only is it a great way of maintaining the correct length, position and function of all the muscles, it also helps ensure pain doesn’t arise in the first place. It is a great way of working on a body that is suffering from an acute pain episode without irritating things.

SLM Yoga doesn’t replace normal exercise sessions, rather it enhances them by providing a workout that people can carry out after exercise sessions as a warm down to keep the body loose, balanced and pain free. Basically it stops your normal workout having a negative affect on your body that over time, could exaggerate your muscle imbalances and lead you to getting pain or an injury. It will help you become more aware of your body and the imbalances that are imbedded within it, which in turn will help you work your body the right way so as not to cause a future problem. Particularly stubborn areas you detect during an SLM yoga session can be worked on using the self help exercises covered in later chapters.

For people who are personal trainers or coaches, working with others to maintain a level of health and fitness, learning and understanding this routine will give you a great warm down to add to your exercise sessions. It will also enable you to keep a person active whilst assisting them to clear up any problem that may be interfering with their normal fitness or training routines.

SLM Yoga is different from other forms of Yoga in that it is carried out much more slowly and doesn’t revolve around stretching the muscles to get the body to loosen up. It is not focused on strengthening the whole body as many other forms of yoga do but rather to get tight, contacted muscles to release and open circulation pathways for the blood oxygen and chi energy to flow. It’s more of a relaxation and energising program than a strengthening one, with the exception of the legs which do get

strengthened considerably as part of building a strong stable foundation for the upper body.

As you carry out the SLM Yoga over the first few weeks or month the responsive muscles in your body will let go and you will start to uncover the problem muscles that are stubbornly contracted all the time. What you are then aiming to do is get to the point where you can switch those muscles on and get them to contract past the contraction they are already in. As you do this the muscle will normally start to cramp and this is a good thing. You bring the cramp on to a level you can cope with and hold it like that for as long as it takes for the cramp to start to fade away.

When you come back to it a second and third time you are doing the same thing but each time you should find you have to apply more pressure to the muscle to get it to cramp at the same level. Eventually the muscle will release and you won't be able to make it cramp and when that state is achieved on a consistent basis you will know that problem muscle is no longer bound up in contraction.

To get these problems muscles to contract past their already contracted state, you will need to apply quite a bit of strength. If you are not able to do that you should hold the contraction as strongly as you can and just wait. Often after a minute or so the muscle will start to cramp anyway and in time the release will start to happen.

When a muscle is too tight and you cannot switch it on using the SLM Yoga techniques you can work on it with the rubber ball and other self help exercises to improve its condition. Eventually you will be able to switch it on using the exercises and from there you can use the cramping technique to get it to properly release. Be sure you bring the cramp in slowly at first so you don't push a muscle too far and cause yourself too much pain but if that does happen you should just release the cramp by stretching the muscle and start again.

ASSESSING YOURSELF FOR TREATMENT.

The first thing you need to do before trying to self treat your pain is put your body into a category, so you are treating things in the right order. For example it is no good using a rubber ball trying to loosen a body that is stiff and stressed from poor nutrition, first you must change the tissue so that it is supple and responsive. The categories are important because the treatment varies depending on the underlying problem you have. You need to decide if your problem exists because your muscles are;

1. Strong, healthy but tight,
2. Strong, unhealthy and tight,
3. Healthy but weak,
4. Weak, Unhealthy and tight,
5. Unhealthy and weak,
6. Average, healthy but tight,
7. Average, unhealthy and tight.

If your body is strong and healthy, it is very unlikely you will have a chronic problem to worry about but any pain you are feeling responds well to the SLM yoga and the exercises without any other preparation work needed.

Strong muscles are the result of regular exercise over many years (includes a physical job) accompanied by a good diet and are more common in younger people under 40 years old, but not always.

Weak muscles are usually present in people who don't exercise or haven't done much over the past 5 years or so and have a sedentary job, especially if they have been in pain for some time or are over 40 years old. Also a person who doesn't eat a very healthy diet and doesn't have a physical job will often be weak. A good test is to ask yourself what you would feel like a couple of days after doing a reasonably vigorous exercise class for one hour. If the answer is you would be lucky to get through it or would probably not be able to walk properly then you could class yourself as weak. If you want to test your muscle strength get a

deep tissue massage for one hour and if you feel beat up and are very sore for two days or more afterwards your muscles are on the weak side. A person who is strong will cope with the massage and will hardly be sore at all. Work on this weakness with diet and exercise that doesn't irritate your pain such as the water exercise I go through and the SLM Yoga. If you are able to do other controlled exercise programs such as Pilates without irritating you pain do that as well.

Average would apply to people who have done some regular exercise over the past five or so years are fairly active in their life generally and also eat a good diet. You should respond well to the SLM Yoga and the self help exercises without the need to do any more than you have been doing.

Healthy applies to people who have eaten a good or excellent diet very low in fat, sugar, carbohydrates especially white flour like pasta and bread and fairly high in protein, over the past five or more years. This includes nutrition appropriate for the level of activity or training you have done. You should respond well to the SLM Yoga and self help exercises without doing anything extra on strength or diet.

Unhealthy would relate to people who have not eaten a good diet i.e. they have consumed a fair to moderate amount of fast food, high sugar foods, alcohol and fats on a fairly regular basis or have trained regularly without the addition of supplements or a good diet and are over 35. Major change in diet needed and gentle exercise like the water based one I go through and SLM yoga.

Tightness is very easy to assess because it relates to flexibility and everyone can tell if they are flexible or not. Increase your flexibility or reduce tightness by improving your diet especially cut out pasta and most bread especially white bread and all sugar. Do only gentle exercise until your flexibility slowly returns.

People who are in pain but also have fair to good muscle flexibility when they stretch are probably weak.

Bear in mind it is possible for someone to eat a good diet and exercise regularly to still be weak due to problems with digestion or absorption especially when over 40 years old but it is not very common.

Once you have classified yourself, you need to work towards being fairly flexible, 'healthy' and 'strong' to get the best results from your self treatment. To do this follow the diet and exercise tips listed in the chapter '*What do you need to achieve to take away Pain.*' If when trying to carry out the exercises and SLM yoga you feel too weak or too sore (it irritates your pain) keep working hard on your diet, do the water exercise I go through and begin the self treatment program very slowly.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSCLE IMBALANCES.

During our lifetime, accidents, injuries, poor posture and the like, affect our muscles leaving behind problems which spread to other muscles as they try to compensate. These compensations set up patterns of imbalance which affect our overall symmetry: causing areas of isolated tension or pressure to accumulate and restrict the proper movement of a joint. Once this pressure builds to a certain level it can cause irritation, inflammation and pain. Using the right approach you can reverse these patterns, by targeting the problem muscles and returning them to good health then removing the compensations and patterns of imbalance to release the pressure so that the pain disappears.

The information covered in this book is designed to help and guide you to restore the correct length, function and condition to all the muscles in your body because if every muscle is like that your body will be balanced, flexible and mostly pain free.

Each time you work on your body it's a continuation of the previous time until the body has changed to such an extent that the imbalances and the problems causing the pain are gone. Once these changes have occurred you should continue with regular maintenance to ensure new problems are not given the chance to build up.

As you will be out of pain before your body has reached its optimum condition, the maintenance work will keep pushing you in the right direction and your condition improves.

The first concept you need to understand with this self therapy program is that whenever you are upright, sitting or standing, you are carrying the weight of gravity down through your body. When your body is out of balance this weight ends up being slightly heavier on one side causing more of a load on certain muscles than others. This puts the weight bearing joints slightly out of

alignment which can lead to problem with those joints especially if you are running or jumping or similar.

Anytime your joints are not aligned properly as they are put under load, your muscles detect and react to this by tightening up. The body does this in an effort to provide more strength and support for the ‘unstable’ joints.

In this condition these tightened muscles are less efficient at providing a shock absorbing effect for the joint. This creates a jarring in the joint as the force generated by our movement meets the hard level ground we are exercising or running on. If the muscles determine there is an uneven force acting on a joint, especially the spine, hip, knee or ankle, the muscles supporting that joint will not only tighten but they’ll adjust their alignment slightly to try and compensate for the imbalance.

It’s this tightness and these changes to the muscles alignment which must be addressed; to remove the pressure that has already, or is in the process of building up in or around the joint causing pain or a slow deterioration of the joint structure.

If you imagine a person standing with a perfectly balanced skeletal system (SEE DIAGRAM 1 over the page) you can appreciate that the muscles will all be working in co-operation with each other with minimum effort, sharing the weight evenly and no one area will be under any more stress than another. Alternatively imagine the same person standing or running with an imbalance in their body, (SEE DIAGRAM 2) from a tilt or rotation in their pelvis and a curved spine. I’m sure you can appreciate that the muscle system in diagram 2 will be working quite differently, with some muscles overworking and others doing much less or very little, creating a deep seated imbalance, along with weak areas, that will cause a person to adopt a poor posture and end up in pain.

Because of this, it’s very important that whenever possible, the weight of gravity is distributed evenly through each side of the

body, especially the pelvis and legs, with the pelvis sitting level and balanced and the spine straight. By having good posture along with a balanced pelvis you will minimise the stress being applied to your joints and minimise stress and fatigue in the muscles.

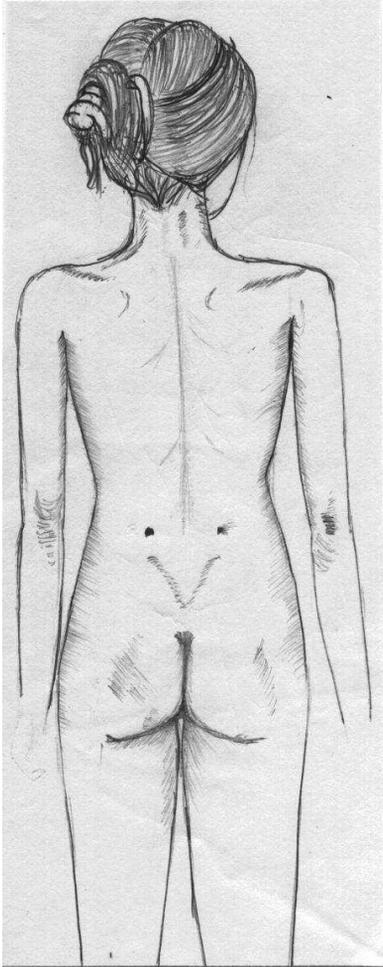


Diagram 1.

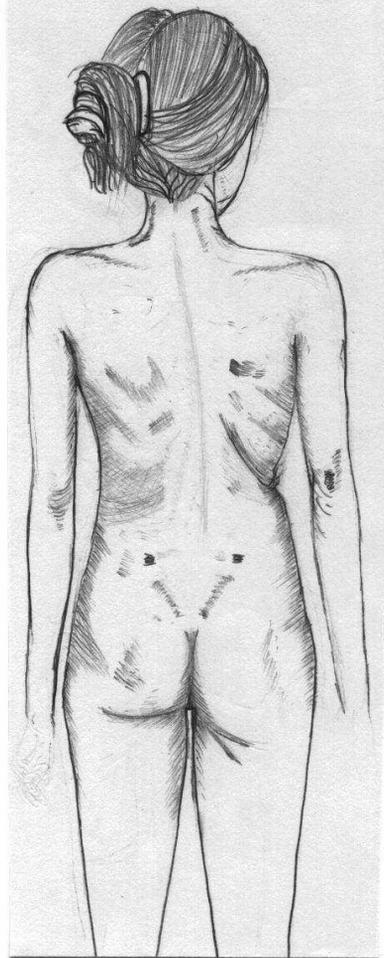


Diagram 2

Notice in diagram 2 the body shape differs from one side to the other. This person would be likely to have pain in the lower back, low energy and perhaps a tight sore right shoulder. They could also have knee pain or foot problems depending on what they do in their life.

When your muscular system is balanced you will feel well, pain free with good flexibility and energy levels and a feeling of lightness. In my experience, unless your body is in this condition it is not possible for you to feel or function at your best.

In an exercise situation when there is a curve or twisting of the spine or a tilt or rotation in the pelvis, the muscles tighten up and become weaker and so even carrying the weight of gravity will cause the stress and tension to bring on muscle fatigue much faster than it would normally.

An unbalanced body is a common problem that many people are affected by to varying degrees. It's the weaker people who are the worst affected or those who combine it with a bad diet or poor posture that are more likely to suffer from chronic pain as a result. Until this imbalance is properly corrected or close to it and the strength built back into the muscles, your aches and pains will not stay away. But the catch is that until the condition of the muscles is corrected so that they are loose and able to carry a good circulation, it is difficult to build up the strength or take away the imbalances. This is a very important fact that many therapies miss when trying to take pain away.

The reason that so many people suffer from chronic pain and can't find a long term solution is because very few therapists are skilled at identifying and correcting the problem muscles and removing imbalances properly, from one end of the body to the other. Too many therapies rely on stretching and exercise to solve muscle problems and fix pain and it's clear from the results that this approach is clearly not effective.

Muscles that are contracted and dysfunctional do not respond to stretching and exercise because, for one, their fibres are not well lubricated which doesn't allow the muscles to work properly. In reality they get some short term improvement in some cases but as soon as the exercises and stretches are stopped they deteriorate again very quickly and the pain or problem returns.

How do you end up with a short leg.

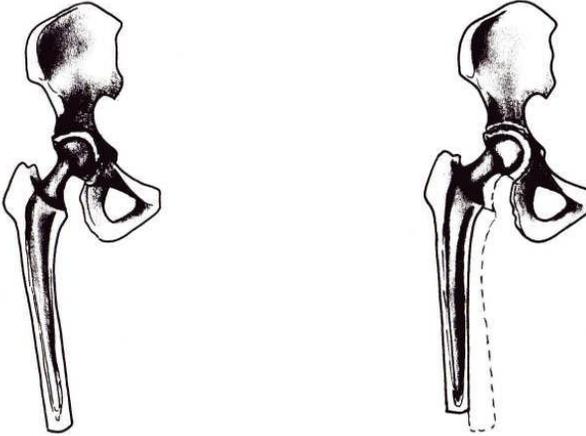
At this point you may be wondering how you get a short leg, which is really the manifestation of a muscle system that is out of balance.

A lifetime of using your body in an unbalanced way and the different stresses that accumulate in the body make it inevitable. A combination of poor posture, a build up of toxins and chemicals from your food, personal care products and environment, old injuries or years of exercise such as playing sport without proper maintenance on the body all tend to lead you in that direction. The result for 80% of people is the deterioration and shortening of some muscles in their body causing it to become unbalanced or twisted. When a body gets like this a person does not feel at their best. They usually feel tight, inflexible, often in pain and with low energy and any number of other symptoms often confused with medical conditions.

When a body is unbalanced it usually shows up as one leg shorter than the other. I have found that in the majority of cases (around 98%), this appearance is caused by shortened muscles not a shortening of the bone itself on one side. It happens because the muscles supporting the neck of the femur as it sits into the hip socket, tighten in such a way that they lift the whole leg on one side of the body slightly. See diagrams over the page.

It is a very easy thing for someone to develop as you can imagine, but fixing it can be difficult unless you are working with the right techniques and knowledge and most importantly, treating the whole body in each therapy session.

What I have endeavoured to do here with this self therapy manual is to show you how to permanently correct the imbalances in your body by working on the tight, shortened muscles allowing your skeletal system to go back into alignment and on a reasonably healthy body or better, it should be a lasting change.



Notice in the diagram on the right just a slight movement in the alignment of the femur due to muscle tensions, will cause the leg to lift up a few mm and the leg will be shorter.

Once you get a short leg, the alignment of the muscles throughout the whole body adjusts slightly and particular areas of muscle stress begin to develop. This stress gradually increases over time so the harder you physically push your body while in this condition the faster problems from the muscle stress develop. Of course the extent of the problems will be a direct result of your lifestyle and condition including your level of strength, health and fitness, dietary habits, exercise and posture, so everyone will be different.

For example an athlete whose body gets out of balance will suffer more pain and injuries than the average person because of all the jarring they subject their joints to through regular training and competing. Although it can be countered to some extent by their strength. They are more likely to experience load bearing joint related injuries or deterioration to their back, shoulder, hips, knees or ankles or groin because of the pressure their sport puts on these areas. For example a runner might be more likely to develop problems with their knees or ankles whereas a tennis player would be more likely to experience shoulder or back

problems. In time this sets up a cycle of chronic pain which can move around the body and is likely to continue until the imbalances are corrected and the old patterns of stress are removed. Alternatively the body finds a way to compensate so it can absorb those imbalances and spread the pressure out evenly throughout a number of areas so that no one area is effected too much. But flexibility is lost and the benefits of this are short lived.

To give you an example of what I mean by a area of stress, a person with a short right leg will develop a line of stressed muscle beside the spine up the left side of the back, down the outside of the right leg and on the inside of the left leg. This normally causes chronic conditions like lower back pain on the left side, hip pain on the left side, ITB syndrome to the right knee, groin pain or medial knee pain on the left side, right side neck or shoulder problems or ankle problems either leg. Other symptoms of a short leg include a loss of flexibility, stomach and digestive problems, headache, sciatica and low energy levels.

The amount of discrepancy in leg length can vary greatly from 1mm to 25mm and problems often escalate as this discrepancy gets more pronounced. Younger people (under 15 yrs) who have a short leg often have less or no physical pain because they have youth, elasticity, strength and flexibility on their side, but they can get other symptoms such as stomach problems, low energy and headaches because of the pressure that builds up on vulnerable parts of their spine. Even if they are not affected by a tilted or rotated pelvis initially, if it is left untreated for a number of years it will eventually begin to affect them in some way.

In my experience I have found that around 80% of people have a leg length discrepancy and get one or more symptoms as a result of this, so don't be surprised if you find your body is out of balance, especially if you suffer from chronic pain.

It is easy to check your leg length; whilst in a relaxed, straight position lying on your back have someone flex your feet and check the prominent bones on the inside of your ankle to see if they line

up. You can even see one leg looks visibly longer than the other when they line up your heels. Alternatively, if they finish at the same length, then the pelvis, indicated by prominent hip bones at the front, could look fixed, in a tilted (one side higher than the other) or rotated (one side more forward than the other) position.

Recognising there is a need to rebalance the muscular system to rid the body of pain is something some other therapists are aware of but they often don't have the techniques to do the job effectively.

Those that don't recognise the importance of getting a body back into balance as an important part of the process of taking away pain are not worth wasting your time and money with because they are unlikely to fix your pain with any lasting effects. The results they do get from removing the build up of pressure from a joint that is tight or in pain will not last long under the stress of physical activity. Once the pain comes back a second or third time it will be much more difficult or impossible to remove this way.

From my perspective the 'ultimate' physical body, is one that is supple and loose, with healthy soft tissue that is balanced and strong. A person's whose body is in this condition will rarely breakdown, will heal much faster than the average person, rarely get sick and will mostly enjoy a feeling of wellbeing with abundant energy. For the people who want to feel great and be pain free the challenge is getting your body as close to this state as possible.

At this point it's important to point out that balancing the body on a physical level is only one of the things you need to address to get yourself into the 'ultimate' physical condition and only possible when other factors are taken care of. That's why in this book we will cover all aspects of health when looking for the cause and cure for pain.

The key to taking away pain is minimising stress, because it's stress that tightens up the muscles and brings the imbalances into play leaving you much more vulnerable to injuring yourself whilst

you go about your every day activities. Basically it comes down to the level of physical, chemical and emotional stress that accumulates in your body as to the level of pain or discomfort you will be in.

The importance of the legs cannot be overstated when it comes to taking away back pain, because the legs are the foundation for the upper body. If the muscles in the legs are tight and unbalanced there is nothing you can do to the upper body that will take back pain away for any length of time. I find it amazing knowing this that so few therapists work on the legs when treating this condition. Most will do all their treatment on the upper body and never even touch the legs.

The reason why you should spend plenty of time on your legs is because the condition of the leg muscles will determine the position that the pelvis sits in, i.e. twisted (rotated) or tilted whether forward or back or side to side. For example if the quadriceps (thigh) muscles are tight and the hamstrings weak the pelvis tends to tilt forward which can set off bad sciatica after you walk any distance or stand for long periods, even when you lie on your back in bed.

It is very common for people with back pain to be over tight in the quadriceps muscles.

If one leg is shorter than the other then the pelvis will tilt down on that side and up on the other and cause a conflict at the point where the spine meets the pelvis (ilium) and this can be responsible for pain on one side of the lower back or hip area.

If the muscles in one leg are over tight causing the hip to rotate forward on that side it can set up pain in the sacroiliac joint right at the base of your lower back. Many of these conditions are scheduled for surgery which is explained by the fact that therapists don't treat the legs and so the problem seems unfixable.

When you are doing the self help exercises be sure not to miss out on the wall squat and ballet squat exercises covered in the SLM Yoga program and of course the healthy eating regime that is talked about.

If you make sure your leg muscles end up loose, strong and supple you will have a lot easier time taking away the pain in your back and keeping it away. The strength you get from the wall and ballet squats will make sure your legs can cope with what ever pressure you put on them in a day, without them tightening up under the strain.

CHRONIC VERSUS ACUTE PAIN.

The cause or reason for pain or injury in the body can be found in the soft tissue in the large majority of cases, even when it progresses to the point where it causes damage to the structure itself. What we will cover in this section is the difference between acute and chronic pain because they require a different approach and need to be considered differently when you are self treating them.

This book is primarily about treating chronic pain because acute pain will respond to most treatments and will often not be something you should be living with for a long time. If it ends up hanging around for a number of months, then it really comes under the heading of chronic pain anyway. No one can give you one simple answer that will suit everyone because every body is different in various ways and two people with the same complaint could easily require a different approach. My guidelines will point you in the right direction but you will also need to apply some logic to your situation after you read this book fully based on what you learn about the body and the way muscles react to the various stimulus.

When you find yourself in pain it will either be an acute condition, something that has happened recently and is still very sore and possibly inflamed, or a chronic condition being a pain that has been there for a number of weeks, months or even years. A chronic pain can also occasionally flare up into an acute condition. An acute condition will often settle with rest, with or without treatment but can in some cases turn into a chronic problem. When acute pain is a flare up of an existing chronic condition it should be treated as the chronic problem for the purpose of fixing it.

Your chronic pain probably didn't happen from a particular activity or incident and is more likely something that crept up on you whereby one day you woke up with a pain somewhere and that pain never went away.

When you are dealing with chronic pain you are dealing with changes that have taken place with the muscle tissue. That is why one or two treatments won't fix the problem or often the single bodywork approach alone is not sufficient to do the job. You need to reverse the changes that have gone on with the tissue over the months or years the problem has been building up in order to restore problem muscles to a supple and healthy state. This can be a fairly slow process that can take months in some cases. (Patience and persistence is the key.)

It is only in this healthy condition that muscles will be functional again and not pulling the body out of balance or irritating the connective tissue around the joint causing inflammation when you extend or overload them.

When a muscle or muscles develop problems in the first place the first thing that happens is the flow of lymph, oxygen and nutrients is restricted and the function and strength of the muscle starts to deteriorate. This deterioration progresses and the muscles stop working properly and it is this condition that creates dysfunction that leads to pain.

The process of taking away the chronic pain you might be feeling involves reversing this deterioration and this DIY guide is specifically focused on doing that. By following the dietary advice, doing the right self treatment on the problem areas and general SLM Yoga exercises plus applying the right bodywork when specified you should slowly see the deteriorated muscles return to a supple healthy state. Eventually there should be a consistency in the condition of all the muscles in the body.

I am not proposing that this will be a simple task on your part but with regularity and effort there is no reason why you cannot treat your own pain cheaper and more effectively than most therapists you could pay to do it. Even if you have a good therapist and are happy seeing them as well, which I would recommend, this book will speed up the healing process as you work with them and combine the techniques I go through here.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO ACHIEVE TO TAKE AWAY YOUR PAIN.

The first thing you need to do to take away your pain is understand what is causing it. A sprained or strained ligament or muscle is **NOT** the cause of a person's pain, it **IS** the pain. Any treatment that focuses on treating the actual injury or the inflammation that is present will at best provide temporary relief, with a good chance of irritating it further. For a permanent fix you need to address the underlying problem that caused the build up of pressure that led to the sprain, strain or inflammation to happen in the first place. Finding these underlying problem areas is a real skill beyond many therapists and is best done using the SLM Yoga.

The most important thing you need to do to get long term relief from your chronic pain is rebalance your body mechanically, specifically your muscle system, along with restoring the length and function of the muscles that were unbalancing it in the first place. Until that is done you will not be able to return to an active lifestyle without the risk of your current pain returning or a new one starting.

The SLM Yoga is specifically designed to help you achieve this but the self help exercises are equally important because they focus on the deeper problem areas in your body which you will become aware of whilst doing the SLM yoga. If you don't work on them they will hold you back because ultimately they are the source of your problems in the first place.

The general exercises you can still do without pain such as in water exercise or a program like Pilates are also important because they are the way for you to build the condition and strength back into the muscles that will hold you together once the healing work is done. They are also the best way to restore a healthy circulation system supplying the areas that are causing your problems and lacking that nourishment at the moment. It is

critical that you end up with strong healthy muscles if you are going to remain pain free and return to your chosen lifestyle. The more active your lifestyle the more strong and healthy your muscles need to be.

The things you learn as you undertake this self treatment program will take your pain away fairly quickly and keep you in good condition after the pain leaves but ultimately it is maintenance that will be the most important ongoing treatment that will ensure real positive changes are made to your body so that the pain doesn't return.

I suggest that whilst you are working on your pain you should try to do the day by day program set out later in this book, then fit your strengthening exercises in on top of that as often as possible. The important thing to remember is, don't do anything that irritates your pain. The SLM Yoga and individual strengthening exercises covered in this book should help you achieve that.

Basically, once you have assessed your condition and decided whether you are dealing with weak, unhealthy or just over tight areas you should do the self treatment exercises that suit your body then add the swimming or Pilates as soon as you can handle it without irritating your condition.

The techniques in the SLM Yoga program are designed to cover all areas of your body and as you work through them you should become aware of the particularly tight areas that are probably holding your body out of balance. Be sure to go back to the parts of the program that deal with those tight areas at least a few times each workout so they get extra attention. Then also treat those areas with the specific self help techniques that loosen them up or strengthen them, depending on what they need.

Ultimately don't lose sight of the fact that the first thing you need to do is get your body into a condition that will respond to the exercises covered here and to do that you will need to carefully read the sections in this book on diet.

OTHER THINGS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO PAIN.

There are other lifestyle factors that need to be considered when addressing your pain such as, diet, exercise, posture and even your emotional state. These come under the heading of ‘the cause of general stress levels’ and they help determine the state of the physical body you are attempting to change. A stressed body is one that is very tight and inflexible and is hard to work with, but does soften with the right attention, in most cases. If your body is in this condition due to high stress levels you would be advised to initially work on these other things before you start doing the SLM Yoga and self help exercises. If not, the results are likely to come very slowly and are less likely to be permanent when compared to working with a healthy body. Also you might be surprised how much those stress levels are actually contributing to your pain and the relief you will feel when you address these other things.

Most people think that stress is a purely mental or emotional thing and are surprised to know that stress can come from three main sources, it can be *physical*, *chemical* or *emotional* and although this program will help show you how to remove a lot of it, what doesn’t move probably needs to be tackled using other supportive changes, such as adjusting your life to be less stressful generally or even more simple things like getting extra sleep, drinking more pure water or taking more leisure time for yourself.

In my experience probably the most common cause of *physical stress* in the body comes from a diet that doesn’t include adequate nutrition, especially for active people. Some people are feeling good because they are motivated enough to get out and do regular exercise but in reality they are making their body more tight and stressed because they are not supporting the exercise with the right nutrition. If you ask them they will say “yes I eat very well”, but often they are unknowingly eating the wrong balance of foods for their needs, and the result is a stressed body. If you read the sports nutrition books, such as *Ultimate Sports Nutrition* by Fredrick C Hatfield Ph.D. he says ‘a physically active person

needs from 1 to 2 grams of protein per kilo of body weight **every day** depending on the activity level', and when you analyse it that is quite a lot of protein. That means a fit, relatively active person of say 80 kilograms needs around 120 grams of useable protein each day.

Let's look at that: A 120gram piece of meat is the equivalent of approximately 35 grams of protein. (You need to eat 150 grams of fish to get the same 35 grams.)

200g of boiled or fresh kidney beans will give you 26 grams.

One slice of cheese will give you 5 grams.

One medium egg will give you 6 grams.

A glass of milk around 9 or 10 grams and a tub of yoghurt will provide around 10 grams.

If you take a 90 kilo athlete training 5 or 6 days a week they will need up to 180 grams of protein a day, every day, to be getting enough. If they eat a 250 gram steak at dinner, two cheese salad sandwiches for lunch, and a glass of milk and tub of yoghurt at breakfast they have got around 110 grams of protein still 70 short of what they need for that day. Think about the days they eat a bowl of pasta for dinner (which you should never do by the way) or no cheese for lunch and they have only got 30 grams that day.

As you can see it is near impossible for an active person, even one who trains fairly hard, say 3 days a week, to consistently get the right amount of protein to support the exercise they do without a protein supplement. Someone who doesn't get enough protein has a stiff body that is very slow to respond to treatment and often carries a lot of aches and pains. I have found a lot of people who exercise fall into that category. Most of them are focusing more on eating pasta and bread for energy, at the expense of protein. I am forever getting people to cut those foods from their diet and get their carbohydrates from vegetables and eat more protein with excellent results. The big pasta and bread eaters are usually very tight and sore when I work on them with quite unresponsive bodies.

As a side note here, eat spelt pasta instead of the normal pasta and you won't have the same problems and rye bread or wholemeal on occasions and stay right away from white flour products entirely. The spelt pasta is delicious and contains high quantities of protein and fibre so unlike normal pasta you can eat it for dinner and it will keep your bowel healthy rather than block it up.

It gets easier for the less active person that doesn't 'train' their muscles but as you can see it would still require a fairly conscious effort even to be getting even ½ a gram of protein per kilo of bodyweight everyday.

When it's *emotional stress* that is the underlying cause of the pain, the body feels stiff and tight and doesn't want to loosen up regardless of what you do. When you finish any self treatment or workout, you feel like everything is exactly the same as when you started, plus sore. A person can be holding onto something emotionally and whilst they do that, the pain they are experiencing is held in their body. To better illustrate this I will give you a couple of examples from my experience.

One man came in with one of my students who had worked on him for 8 weeks (8 treatments) for a frozen shoulder with no result whatsoever. He was a courier driver and around 55 years old with a hard, fairly lean body of average strength. His muscle in the upper back, arm and shoulder area were sinewy and tight, some of them flaccid (wasted) and blocked (congested), and difficult to loosen sufficiently to allow much movement in the shoulder joint. We worked on him for an hour or so using lots of heat, putting an interferential machine on the arm to slowly exercise and loosen the muscle and then did quite a bit of hands on work with no change or improvement at all. He could still only just get his arm up to right angles with the body and any effort to go further was painful and obviously not going to happen.

At that point I started speaking to him along the lines of "There is a belief in some areas of healing that if you have emotional issues going on in your life that are not being resolved they can cause an

injury like frozen shoulder that comes out of the blue for no obvious reason and usually leaves the same way some weeks or months later when the 'issue' is resolved." "I asked him if he could relate to this and whether there was anything in his life that may possibly be affecting him in this way." He thought for a moment and said that there were in fact two things that were causing him concern at that time and he wasn't sure how long it would be before they were resolved." He went through them but it's a long story that doesn't affect the message I learnt so suffice to say they were issues that had a process to go through and eventually would be resolved but there was nothing he could do to speed up the result so was just doing what he could and waiting. He was very anxious to get his way on both the issues and I explained that he should try to resolve them for his mind sake by looking at the alternatives that were available to him. Like, if things don't go my way then I will do this, and if they do go my way, then well and good. Work out his best course of action if things don't go his way and after doing this you should be a lot more contented waiting for the verdict, knowing he had all the options covered. In other words let go of any apprehension, anxiety or uncertainty with what was going on and see what effect that had on his shoulder. He agreed and went home. The next morning he rang my student first thing to say he woke up without the frozen shoulder, had full movement back and no pain! Strange but true.

Another time, a lady was coming to see me for her monthly treatment as normal, she used to tighten up everywhere over the month because of a permanent short left leg and the exercise she did and would come in to have her body loosened up again. This time she came in and said that her left shoulder was particularly sore and had been so for a week or more. I started working as usual but felt something different about her body that month. After working for a while I realised that nothing was letting go as it normally did, even when I tried a bit harder it just rebounded back to the way it was. I didn't say anything right away thinking I would just persevere and see if things would change by the end of the treatment. When I finished working on her in the prone

position nothing had changed and as she turned over she asked casually, “so have you fixed my shoulder for me”? I told her I hadn’t because her tension today was a result of some emotional stress not the normal physical stress and asked if she could relate to that. She replied she could and I asked her what was happening. The story was basically a problem with her teenage daughter who wasn’t living with her and wouldn’t speak to her. She had to write letters to her to communicate. This was a source of great stress to her as she had a problem she wanted to sort out with her but couldn’t. I told her she would have to sort things out with her daughter for her shoulder pain to go. She confirmed she felt no better when she got up and soon after, when she did in fact sort the problem out with her daughter, her shoulder pain disappeared.

This sort of thing has happened a number of times over the years, not often enough to make me feel the need to study counselling or anything, but something I always keep in mind as a reference with unresponsive cases.

This sort of stress is different, and has a different effect on the body than the stress of having too much on your mind or too much to do. It starts to affect the body once it gets to the point of causing a feeling of hopelessness or the inability to cope or control the situation. It is important to think about your own life objectively and if there are any issues you believe might be causing your body to be stressed look at ways of dealing with them so that they don’t hold you back in your effort to get rid of your pain. If you are unable to work things out for yourself then I suggest you seek help from some form of counsellor.

Chemical stress is caused when you consume certain food, drink (especially alcohol, sugar or processed carbohydrates) or other chemicals (like you do when you apply most of the personal care products to your skin or work as a painter or printer or take drugs) that accumulate in your body and react with your nervous system. If you do this for long enough your body ends up being very hard and tight and difficult to fix. Especially if you end up

with chronic pain or if you also want to be active in sports or exercise. You can deal with chemicals in the work place by changing jobs or from your diet by cutting back on the amount of alcohol and processed foods you consume. You can use certified organic personal care products like shampoos, deodorants or moisturisers. It all just takes awareness and effort

The bowel function is another important consideration when it comes to a persons physical stress levels and deserves special mention here because if it is a problem for you it needs to be addressed as part of taking away your pain.

The colon is our body's sewerage system. If this sewage system is clogged up with a collection of waste, then the very best of diets can be no better than the very worst. The body will absorb unnecessary toxins and the nutritional value obtained from the food we eat will be greatly diminished.

To this end we are unable to feel at our best. We may feel tired, washed out or have trouble getting going in the morning. This is one particular problem with nutrition, diet and the elimination system which is generally overlooked.

It is impossible, when we eat two, three or more meals a day, not to have residue accumulating in the colon in the form of undigested food particles as well as the end product from food which has undergone the process of digestion. Imagine how much can be present after years and thousands of meals!

Furthermore, not only does food-waste accumulate in the colon, but so does the millions of cells and tissues which have served their purpose and been replaced in the process of regeneration. These cells and tissues are dead proteins and are of a highly toxic nature if allowed to ferment and putrefy. You have no doubt experienced the offensive aroma emanating from the body of an animal which has died and whose carcass has begun to decompose. The cells and tissues in the body undergo the same decomposition under favourable conditions. Conditions are favourable when waste is allowed to remain in the colon longer than is necessary.

The very purpose of our sewerage system, the colon, as an organ of elimination, is to collect all fermentative and putrefied toxic waste from every part of the anatomy, and by the peristaltic waves of the muscles of the colon remove all solid and semi-solid waste from the body. Nature's laws of preservation and hygiene require and insist that this sewage system be cleansed regularly. Innumerable ailments, sickness and diseases follow if waste is allowed to accumulate.

Not to cleanse the colon is like having the entire garbage collection staff in your city go on strike for days on end. The accumulation of garbage in the streets creates putrid odoriferous unhealthy gases which are dispersed into the atmosphere. The fermentation and putrefaction of accumulated waste and corruption in the colon creates equally noxious gases which are not always expelled as they should be.

“Every pouch or sacculation of the colon is equipped with nerve terminals originating in every part of the anatomy, with definite and specific relation to the nerves of every unit of the glandular system.” Walker, N.W. (1971), Diet and Salad, Norwalk Press, Arizona.

An unclean and blocked colon can cause an unnecessary build up of toxins in the body, which can be absorbed right through the body affecting every organ. In turn the build up of such toxins limits the responsiveness of a person's tissue to your attempt to get results with this program. It often means that a person does not feel energised after exercise or self treatment rather they may feel washed out as the stimulation stirs up toxins in their tissue and deposits them in the blood stream. Under these circumstances taking a suitable supplement along with dietary changes would be of great benefit. InLiven the probiotic super food is one that works very well and is excellent value. Find it at www.backpain.com.au/zen It has the added side effect of boosting your immune system so you will resist and fight illness much better than you would have previously.

It can take many, many months or good eating, colonics and a probiotic to restore an unhealthy bowel to a condition that enables the body to loosen up and chronic pain to go away, especially in older people who have been alive longer.

Getting a good detox program is a great start to a new healthier eating regime. Following that with a product like food grade Diatomaceous Earth for 3 months will alkaline your body quickly which will greatly assist its responsiveness to the bodywork.

It is not uncommon for people with chronic pain to be dragged into other bad habits because of their lack of motivation and ability to do the things they want to or pursue the life they would choose if they didn't have pain. As much as I would like to tell you it is just a simple process of the bodywork that can fix you, the truth is bodywork can only take you so far if you are one of those people who have other bad habits to deal with. Any bodywork or other therapist that tells you they can fix you with their method alone is missing the big picture and is really not worth wasting your time and money on.

The other main considerations for you, on top of what I have already been through are posture and diet;

Posture.

One very important thing to address as far as back pain is concerned is posture, how you hold yourself as you go about your day. This is something all therapists should address with you whenever they are giving you treatment for back pain because it has such a huge bearing on the amount of stress that is placed onto your muscles as you do the things you do, all day every day.

By now you are probably sick of hearing me talk about a short leg and how it causes undue stress on the joints and can cause a person to feel pain. The reason I go on about it so much is because it often has so much to do with why you have pain in the first place and bad posture is one fast way to give yourself a short leg.

I often hear of doctors and therapists who tell their patients that everyone has a short leg and it has little bearing on pain, but I can assure you that this is not the case. They say the body is strong enough to withstand the pressure it causes and whereas for some people this may be true, for the large majority it is not, especially after a long period of time has passed. This is because the tightness a short leg causes restricts circulation which in turn weakens the muscles that are the strength against the short leg in the first place.

When the treatment given for back pain is strengthening exercises and they work, it demonstrates that strength and compensation is a great counter for imbalance, but strengthening exercises can also irritate pain in many cases. To benefit from a strengthening program a person will rarely be suffering from acute pain and they will need to have healthy responsive muscles which can cope with the exercise(s). In today's society there are many things about our lifestyle that make muscles unhealthy and unresponsive for many people. Things like; poor diet or a diet full of process 'dead' food, a lack of regular exercise, too much stress, carrying an imbalance in the muscles for a long time, or very importantly poor posture which has the effect of over loading certain muscles physically, causing them to get fatigued and tight which then affects circulation to them and their ability to maintain their strength.

The people who do tend to respond best to exercise programs for their pain are younger people who are naturally stronger and suppler and whose muscles haven't deteriorated too far, generally because of a lack of time passing in their life. But this is also the time a lot of people begin to develop bad posture habits because they don't feel the effects straight away and by the time they do the damage has been done.

When you use an exercise program to strengthen against your pain the benefits can be very short term if you are not also focusing on your posture. Both exercise and any treatment you get are generally only happening for a few hours a week, but your

posture on the other hand is affecting you every moment you are sitting or standing and that can amount to 16 or so hours a day. Even your posture in your sleep is important. I have treated back pain sufferers who caused their problem by their sleeping position and their pain wouldn't go away until they changed it. Sleeping on your stomach with one leg bent and your knee up towards your chest is a classic example. You should always sleep in a position where all of your muscles can relax.

If you focus on good posture especially holding the symmetry in your body you will help to keep your spine straight and your pelvis balanced and this has a profound effect on minimising your pain. It is the least stressful position for your muscles. It is also hard work physically when your body is out of balance. By holding a good posture you can also more easily become aware of the areas of your body that are tight and blocked and then you can work on these areas with the self help exercises in this guide to make improvements. Slowly but surely you eliminate these blocked areas until your body is more supple and balanced and good posture is easy to maintain, added to your strengthening work, you will get a longer lasting effect.

The erector spinae muscles are very important when it comes to posture as they are the muscles (running along both sides of your spine from your lower back to your neck) that allow you to stand tall and straight. When they are tight and contracted it is harder to stand upright and you tend to slump forward with rounded shoulders. If these muscles are tight and you purposely stand straight with your shoulders back you will feel the muscles are tight and they will tire fairly quickly.

That is why I place a lot of importance on these muscles with my self help exercises in particular one with the rubber ball to work on unlocking them. It is also the area I focus on with the Sportsmed TENS/ EMS machine which I recommend, because it is so helpful at loosening deteriorated erectors and returning them to supple. Having loose balanced erector spinae muscles makes it easier for you to stand tall and enjoy high energy levels plus maintain a better posture.

There are various things you can do to improve your posture besides thinking about how you position yourself when you are standing and sitting. Try rolling up a towel and putting it lengthways along your spine as you lie on your back on it on the floor. This will hyper-extend your back and help you counter a rounding of the upper back. Do it for 30 minutes when you get home from work or before bed as you concentrate on relaxing and letting all the tension you have built up in your back during the day.

When you are sitting in a chair, position yourself with your sacrum firmly into the back of the chair, a straight back and your feet flat on the floor in front of you. Sit deliberately into your hip and glute muscles switching them on by pushing your pelvis down into the seat of the chair, so you are not slumping with your lower back and pelvis.

Be sure to use the muscles evenly on both sides and just hold the pressure in the muscles for as long as possible. This engages the muscles and takes the pressure off your lower back but also shows you how strong or weak these muscles are from one side to the other. The longer you try to leave them switched on you will feel it get harder and harder to keep going. Just this deliberate sitting position is a great way of exercising balance and strength into your hips and pelvis.

As you feel these muscles tire and it becomes difficult to keep them switched on, get up and walk around so as to give them a rest for a few minutes before sitting back down and doing it again. Eventually they will get stronger and stronger and you will be able to sit for longer without slumping and getting a sore back.

If when you are doing this exercise you feel any of the muscles start to cramp just brace against the cramp and wait until it passes and the muscle releases. This will help to put balance into the pelvis. The more imbalanced your pelvis the more difficult you will find the exercise to do. It is a great one to do whilst you are sitting at your desk. Another is the wall sit exercise I have shown

you which is a good way of strengthening your body for this sitting position.

As the muscles around your pelvis and hips start to tire, you will feel the erectors in your back start to tighten up and compensate for them. When this happens stand up and do 3 minutes of the gentle arm swinging to release the tension from your back.

You will probably find you can only do this simple sitting exercise for up to 30 minutes a day before your muscles get very tired so imagine what sitting in a job for 8 hours a day is doing to your muscles.

The SLM Yoga exercise program is designed to loosen and balance your body by doing a very relaxed meditative form of exercise at the end of a day or exercise session. It replaces stretching and will go hand in hand with helping you maintain a good posture.

Finally a very important part of posture is your body position when you sleep. I have found a number of people who have come to see me over the years have their back pain as a direct result of their sleeping position. The first very important thing to remember, is do not sleep on your stomach because when you do a few bad things happen to your body.

Firstly you are lying with a straight spine and then putting a twist in it around your neck by turning your head to one side. Even worse if you also use a pillow because that doubles the pressure by straining the vertebrae in your neck further as it holds your head up.

Secondly, as you turn your head to one side you are slightly pushing one shoulder and hip down into the bed and slightly lifting the other shoulder and hip. This sets up a rotation in your pelvis... another of the causes of back pain.

Thirdly, when you lie on your stomach your spine sags in your lower back region which can really stiffen up the muscles there. If

you are lying on your back your spine is supported by the mattress but on your stomach the space between you spine and the mattress causes the sagging. Even worse some people have told me they lie on their stomach with one knee cocked up around their chest. That puts a lot of pressure on the sacrum and lower back and causes a twisted posture that stays with you along with bad back pain.

Basically if you sleep on your stomach at all, stop right now as nothing you do to relieve your back pain, or the headaches stomach sleeping also causes, will work whilst you continue to do it.

A good tip for getting out of the habit is to tie a football sock around your waist at night with a tennis ball in it so if you roll onto your stomach there will be a subconscious trigger to get you to roll back off it again.

A good way of assessing the pressure that stomach sleeping causes you is to lie in the position you usually sleep in and just scan the muscles in your body and feel the pressure they are under. Then try to relax them one by one and feel the pressure that puts onto your joints around the neck and lower back. Staying in a stressful position for 7 or 8 hours a night is enough to set up serious back problems.

Finally whilst on the subject of posture, avoid sleeping on soft beds as these have the effect of stiffening up the erector muscles in your back, another cause of back pain. Always sleep on a firm bed and turn your mattress around often to wear it evenly. Replace your bed after 8 to 10 years or sooner for a big heavy person. When buying a bed always go for quality, even for your kids.

Speak to the people at bedworks.com.au in Australia for great advice and service on the right bed for you. If overseas look for a firm dense foam mattress with a layer of memory foam on top. This will provide a quality nights sleep.

Diet.

You have already heard how back pain is largely a result of stress that builds in the body bringing physical imbalances into play causing irritation to nerves, joints, muscles or ligaments and stress can be physical, chemical and emotional. So a poor diet which upsets the chemical balance has the potential to cause or heighten a person's back pain.

A healthy, balanced diet will help release stress because it provides all the necessary ingredients for a body to recover and regenerate and most importantly relax. When good nutrition is combined with a balanced physical body a person will feel and perform at their best, have good energy levels and be in the best condition to fight off or recover from injury or illness.

When your body is well balanced, chemically, nutritionally and physically, your nervous system benefits so you mostly feel relaxed and calm, with very little aggression, anxiety or pain. A balanced, healthy diet will also ensure you don't suffer from cravings because your nutritional needs are being met and more importantly you will be in the low risk group for suffering back pain in the first place.

The reality is that the large majority of people eat a typical diet, high in processed and packaged foods giving them much less potential to cope with a stressful, active lifestyle and therefore more likelihood they will suffer from chronic pain.

It's a fact of life that food manufacturers are very good at making products that are bad for you, look and taste really good. Also, marketing people are very skilled at making you believe it's ok to eat them. But the reality is more often than not, the information we are being given is false and we are often, sometimes unwittingly, eating food that is detrimental to our future health. It's been left up to us to work out the difference between what is

fact and what's just marketing and most people are not trained to do that.

Barring a law being put in place to ban the sale of foods that don't contribute positively to our health, it's up to everyone as individuals to take the responsibility for looking after themselves. Don't be tempted by foods that do little but make huge profits for the manufacturer at the expense of our health. Foods that are pre-cooked, packaged, processed or fast foods serve only to take up space in your stomach and give you high doses of fats, salt, chemicals and additives, not to mention future illnesses. They do very little towards satisfying your nutritional needs, fuel your muscles or assist in your growth and recovery after exercise. They may take away your hunger temporarily but do not satisfy the needs of your body so your hunger will return before you burn up the high number of calories they contain.

Fresh, raw, healthy foods won't make you fat, give you bad skin or any number of the diseases that are becoming all too common in today's world so that must tell you something. Eating these foods only occasionally, won't counter the harm the wrong foods are doing to your body either. It's not about the balance of good food to bad food that you eat, all the bad food you eat will be detrimental to your long term health.

Think of your body as your temple and treat it with the respect it deserves and it will pay you back with a level of energy and radiance that most people envy. Look after it by not eating processed, pre packaged or pre cooked foods and it will look after you. Refined foods not only rob you of your energy but they don't properly metabolise and will therefore create metabolic waste and toxins that will be left in your system. This compromises bodily functions and creates additional burdens that add to existing problems and eventually may manifest as new health problems.

Refined foods include all the foods that contain “white” flour, salt or sugar. Avoid all refined carbohydrates including cold breakfast cereals, white rice, pasta, breads and pastries. Also avoid

stimulants and chemicals in your food and water supply and in your environment. From my experience probably the worst irritants for pain are foods high in sugar like chocolate, lollies (sweets) and especially alcohol, bottled fruit juices and soft drinks.

Use only unrefined oils. Because saturated and hydrogenated fats are transformed into a hormone-like compound, prostaglandin, which promotes inflammation and pain you may need to reduce your meat consumption. But first and foremost, eliminate margarine, shortening and any food containing hydrogenated fat.

There probably has never been a truer saying than '*you are what you eat*'. Over about a twelve month period every one of the billions of cells that make up your body die off and are discarded then regenerated from the foods you eat. It's only logical that if you eat second rate foods you will end up with a second rate body and second rate health, not overnight, slowly but surely. As a consequence, your body will become weak and you will feel your back pain more intensely, sooner and take longer to recover than someone who eats a healthy balanced diet.

If you want to minimise your potential to feel back pain it's obvious that you should try to eat a good variety of mostly fresh foods with an emphasis on fruit, vegetables, nuts and grains with lots of fish and some lean meats. As a guide the acid/ alkaline food list at the end of this section will assist you with your choices. You should aim to eat 75 to 80% of your foods from the alkaline list for the best results. If the ph level of your blood is right your physical body will feel much more supple and relaxed and you will have more energy.

Too much acid in the body heightens nerve sensitivity and increases stress in the body's soft tissue making it harder to work on and get a result. Why fight your tissue and ultimately get nowhere when a change in eating habits will make it so much easier. The long term effects of acidic blood is gout, arthritis, weight gain and much higher than normal general pain levels.

When eating foods to help your pain level it is important to realise that not all healthy foods are good for you and conversely some are extra good for you and should be increased in your diet. For example chlorophyll reduces inflammation and so adding a generous serving of leafy green vegetables with each meal is helpful. You may wish to supplement with the superior chlorophyll sources like spirulina, chlorella, blue green algae, sprouts, wheat-grass and barley grass juice which are also excellent chlorophyll sources. Or you might want to simplify things somewhat such as by taking a natural daily supplement like In Liven.

Both cherries and pineapple reduce inflammation. Pineapple contains the anti-inflammatory enzyme, Bromelain. This protein-digesting enzyme literally consumes foreign microbes and diseased cells in your system. So next time you're fruit and vegetable shopping and smell a sweet ripe pineapple, buy it. Don't get green pineapples, they have no aroma (especially at their base) and will never ripen.

The spice, turmeric, increases ligament flexibility and so is especially useful in the case of stiffness. Additional foods and culinary herbs that reduce inflammation and support healing of muscles, ligaments and tendons include the onion family, flax oil, burdock, ginger, yam, winter squash, sweet rice, millet and chamomile.

In terms of your overall diet, favor easy to digest, whole foods that are freshly prepared, organic if you can get them. They have the necessary nutrients to cleanse, build and maintain your whole body. Not only will your body function at its best but you will have extra energy to repair the inflamed and damaged muscles and ligaments.

Not only can some food help you fight your pain, other perfectly healthy food (and those not so healthy) can make it worse. A first step is to determine if you've any food sensitivities through allergy testing and, should you do so, avoid those foods. A common group

of foods that intensify pain, even in people who otherwise do not have food sensitivities, are the nightshade vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and egg plant).

If you find it difficult to discipline yourself to eat well, try breaking it down by working on one meal at a time. Start with breakfast by limiting your selection to fruit, oats, muesli, grains and some tea and toast. Don't skip breakfast. Wait until you are happy and used to eating a good breakfast before working on your lunch time meal and the same before you attempt to change your dinner menu.

Make sure your day is busy enough that you don't think about, or have time to, eat between meals and if you suffer from cravings for sweets or chocolate and the like, look toward vitamin and mineral supplements to take the cravings away rather than give into them. The important thing is, don't beat yourself up or give up if you don't find the changes easy to implement straight away, be patient and take the necessary time to adjust slowly to the changes and before you know it you will be where you want to be.

The condition of your physical body can also affect your diet. Over the years I've seen people with a tight and twisted spine, due to a mechanical imbalance in the body, get cravings for sweets or sugar during active times because of the low energy caused by the condition of their back. These cravings then disappear when the twist is removed and the suppleness is restored.

You are probably aware there has been much debate about whether you can obtain all your nutritional requirements from diet alone, or whether you should take vitamin, mineral and protein supplements.

Many so called experts differ in their opinion but to me the answer is simple, it depends on the amount of stress or physical pressure you are putting on your body. I would say that most people today, especially those who are physically active, would need supplements as a way of supporting their high stress levels.

Very rarely do I see a patient come into my clinic who doesn't have tissue stress in their body and usually the more exercise they do the more stress they have.

After introducing them to a good diet/ supplement program I've noticed a steady improvement in their stress level and a lessening of their pain. To me this is a sure indication that no matter what the 'experts' are saying, good whole food supplements are of benefit for many people. After all, I can't think of a better indication of a body's needs than how it feels to the touch, especially when you can feel the difference between muscle tissue that is stressed and unhealthy and tissue that isn't.

Another consideration is that the food people are eating is becoming more 'manufactured' rather than in their 'natural' form and so many of the natural forms of vitamins, minerals and proteins are missing. Even fruits and vegetables are subjected to chemicals and pesticides and are picked and stored before they ripen, not to mention the soils they are grown in can be lacking essential minerals.

The average person doesn't eat huge amounts of food in a day so it's important that when you do eat, it is quality nutrition. Also when you do take supplements it is better to take ones that are in their natural form as organic whole foods, so they will assimilate into and work with your body better.

Muscle fibres are lubricated with the lymph, the same lymph that contains the waste products of exercise and the chemicals and toxins from our food and lifestyle. It's only common sense that if the lymph is full of wastes from a poor diet they will eventually end up in the muscles making them stiff and unhealthy, being easy to injure and hard to fix. For this reason alone it is important that your diet is healthy but even more so if you want to lead a busy active lifestyle.

With diet there is a lot to learn and I have found that even what some people believe are healthy foods, can be causing them

problems. I would recommend a couple of good books for you to get that cover pretty much everything you need to know about food and the body: The X Factor Diet by Leslie Kenton, Eat Right for Your Type by Dr Peter J D'Adamo and the Liver Cleansing Diet by Dr Sandra Cabot. Each of these books will result in weight loss (without starving yourself) which will always help when trying to get rid of chronic pain.

One thing I want to point out with regards to diets and it is a conclusion I have come to after all my years of working in the health field, is that there is no one answer for everyone and what works for some people doesn't work for others. So while there are many choices around for dealing with excess weight and the physical stress from diet, you may have to try different things until you find the one that works for you. These books however, would be a great starting point.

As mentioned earlier the fastest way I have found to alkalise your body is using food grade Diatomaceous Earth by taking a tablespoon morning and night in water for 2 or 3 months.

ACID/ ALKALINE LIST try to eat 80% alkaline foods and 20% acid

ALKALINE FRUITS apples, apricots, avocados, bananas (speckled), breadfruit, cactus, cantaloupe, carob(pod only) cherries, currants, dates, figs, grapes, grapefruit, guavas, kumquats, lemons (ripe), limes, loquats, Mangoes melons (all), nectarines, olives(sun dried), oranges, papayas, passionfruit, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple (fresh if ripe), pomegranates, quince, raisins, tamarind, tangerine, tomatoes.

ALKALINE VEGETABLES cabbage red and white, carrots, celery, cauliflower, chard, chicory, chives, artichokes, asparagus (ripe), bamboo shoots, beans green lima and sprouts, beets and tops, broccoli, collards, cowslip, cucumber, dandelion greens, dill, dock green, dulse (sea lettuce), egg plant, endive, garlic, horseradish (fresh), Jerusalem artichoke, kale, leek, legumes (except peanuts), lettuce, okra, onions, oyster plant, parsley, parsnip, peppers (green/ red), all potatoes, pumpkin, radish, rhubarb (oxalic acid) sauerkraut sorrel, soy bean extract, spinach, squash, taro (baked), turnips and tops, watercress, water chestnut.

ALKALINE DAIRY acidophilus, buttermilk, milk raw (human, cow, goat), whey, yoghurt

ALKALINE FLESH FOODS none.

ALKALINE CEREALS millet, buckwheat, corn (green first 24 hrs)

ALKALINE NUTS almonds, roasted chestnuts, fresh coconut.

ALKALINE MISCELLANEOUS agar, alfalfa products, coffee substitutes, ginger (dried unsweetened), honey, kelp, tea, unsweetened, all yeast cakes

ACID VEGETABLES artichokes, asparagus tips white, beans all dried, brussel sprouts, garbanzos, lentils, rhubarb. **SLIGHTLY ACID** mushrooms (most varieties), soy beans.

ACID DAIRY PRODUCTS butter, cheese, cottage cheese, cream, ice cream, custards, milk, boiled, cooked, pasteurised, malted, dried or canned.

ACID FLESH FOODS all meat, fowl and fish, beef, shellfish,

ACID CEREALS all flour products, barley, breads, cakes, corn, cornmeal, cornflour, gelatine gravies, starch, hominy, crackers (all) doughnuts, dumplings, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, oatmeal, rice, rye crisp,

ACID FRUITS all preserved or jellied, canned, sugared, glazed, dried, sulphured, raw with sugar, bananas if green, pickled olives.

SLIGHTLY ACID cranberries, plums, prunes and juice.

ACID MISC. all alcoholic drinks, candy and confectionary, coffee and tea, brine, smoke, overwork, worry, tapioca, sodawater, tobacco, sago (starch), drugs and aspirin, eggs esp the whites, preserved ginger jams and jellies, flavourings, marmalade, mayonnaise, preservatives-benzoate, sulphur, vinegar, lack of sleep, salt,

Weight loss.

If you need to lose weight for the sake of your back pain you should attempt to do that without trying to just cut back on the calories you are eating. Rather take a more sensible approach such as is covered in the books mentioned above. For example in Leslie Kenton's book, she covers a diet approach for people needing to lose weight she calls Ketogenics. Basically the idea is you eliminate both refined and high glycaemic index carbohydrates including flour, starchy vegetables like potatoes, white rice sugar and other sweeteners. The rules are,

- Choose natural fresh, organic, unprocessed foods.
- Eat many of your fruits and vegetables raw.
- Make non-starchy vegetables your primary source of carbohydrates.
- Steer clear of soft drinks, fruit juices, alcohol and other highly processed drinks.

- **Eliminate vegetable oils rich in omega 6 fatty acids from your diet. Use cold pressed, extra virgin olive oil instead.**
- **Enrich your diet with omega 3 fatty acids from fish and flaxseed oils.**
- **Refuse all trans fats, which are found in deep fried foods, margarines and food that contain partially hydrogenated oils.**
- **Eat protein foods at every meal and snack,**
- **Eliminate coffee.**
- **Stay away from commercial foods.**
- **Gradually determine your own best level of carbohydrate for weight loss and maintenance and stick to it.**
- **Take a multi vitamin plus plant factor antioxidant such as In liven regularly.**
- **Do some form of strength training 4 days a week for 30 minutes to strengthen your lean body mass.**
- **Walk briskly for 15 to 30 minutes each day to counter insulin resistance, enhance energy, improve your body's uptake of glycogen and maintain good emotional balance.**

Sandra Cabot's book concentrates on a diet that rehabilitates your liver cleansing it of the accumulated fats and toxins so it functions the way it is supposed to. The result can be dramatic weight loss plus an increase in energy and vitality.

Peter D'Adamo's book talks about the different blood types and how everyone should be eating a diet that suits their particular blood type. If you get this right your weight will normalise and you will be energised and stress free. For example whereas a 'A' type person is best suited to being a vegetarian, a "O" type is better off consuming a diet high in protein.

All of them agree that weight loss is not about starving yourself but more about eating the right balance of foods and foods that work to keep you healthy and slim. When you are eating the right foods you can eat until you feel satisfied.

FIXING BACK PAIN IN THE BODY.

This program combines the SLM Yoga meditative exercise with self treatment techniques and all the other things that need your consideration in order to fix your pain. If you were consulting an SLM therapist they should be going through all the same things with you and as there are very few of them about (as I'm sure you have already found out) you can use this program either alone or along with the therapist of your choice to fix your back pain, so long as you are diligent and persistent with everything covered.

The SLM Yoga should be done regularly to keep loosening your body and coaxing it back into balance whilst the self treatment techniques will focus on the stubborn problems that are holding your body out of balance. As you do the SLM Yoga you should be able to determine where any tight or weak unresponsive areas needing extra attention are and these will be the muscles you direct either your loosening up or strengthening self treatment techniques to.

For example if when trying to contract your hamstring muscles you find them unresponsive you will need to do a focused strengthening exercise on them until you are able to feel them switch on during the SLM Yoga. Once they are working for you again the strength based work like the Pilates or water based exercises I go through will build them up in line with the rest of your body so that they are no longer a problem.

As you continue to work on this process you should find the SLM Yoga becomes easier and more effective and the tight, blocked unresponsive areas should slowly disappear along with your pain. The general strengthening exercises you do will bring it all together as will any SLM Bodywork or deep tissue massage you can get to your whole body along the way.

The following sections will go through the specific pain you might suffer from and list the muscles that are most likely to be causing

your problems, plus outline a day by day set of exercises and self treatment techniques that should work best with them. If you are unable to follow the day by day program rigidly don't worry too much as anything you do will be a positive step forward. The important thing is that you try to do something every day other wise you will find it difficult to make progress.

If when you start doing the exercises you find it stirs up your problem don't get too discouraged. It is just an indication that the muscles you are trying to rehabilitate are in a poor condition and will need some patience and perseverance before progress is made. The best way to deal with an area you stir up is keep doing the exercises daily and use plenty of heat to help settle things down again. Alternatively start with the exercise in the water I go through. If after a week or so you are not getting any relief discuss it at www.backpain.com.au/forum/index.php and get some more specific direction.

When you first start doing the SLM Yoga don't be discouraged if you find it difficult to distinguish between the muscle groups or find it hard to isolate the various muscles, it may just be that your body is tight for any number of the reasons discussed or because of the deterioration that has taken place throughout your body due to the length of time you have had your problem building up.

You should find that once you start eating well and doing all the things covered in this program for your particular pain, you will start to feel the changes taking place even if initially they only hold for a short period of time.

Most mainstream therapies over complicate the treatment for back pain by not giving the body enough credit for being able to do a lot of the healing itself. Unless a structure has been broken or torn all you need to do is strengthen and balance your body physically and chemically, improve the circulation of blood and lymph to the muscles and stimulate the body's own healing energy to see pains and injuries disappear as quickly as they came.

There is no magic pill or set of exercises that can fix chronic back pain for the large majority of people. Pain develops over many months or years because of deterioration and that deterioration needs to be reversed for effective long term relief to be felt. If you address all of the issues raised in this book and work patiently through your exercises and self treatment techniques most people will get a good result and be able to get back to doing what they want to do rather than have their life run by their pain and how they feel on any given day.

Before going any further I want to point out a very important fact that you should always remember now that you are focused on getting rid of your back pain. *For every physical pain in your body there will be a muscle, or group of muscles, that will provide the key for fixing it.* That is, there will always be a trigger to take away the tightness or irritation that's causing the pain somewhere in the body's soft tissue and it won't be where the pain is felt so never forget that. Don't waste your time with treatments that focus on the site of your pain or therapists who tell you your problem is especially difficult and can't be fixed. The detail I provide in the following chapters for the various pains will give you the answers you need for most problems, but either way, if you carry out the SLM yoga program regularly and identify the tight areas in your body as you go, you will have areas you can target with the self help techniques and deep tissue massage that will ultimately lead to your balancing your body and taking away your pain.

Don't be influenced by back pain that has had a label put on it, like spinal stenosis, Scheuermann's disease or spondylolysis, just treat it like any other pain caused by pressure on a structural area of the spine. By building strength and balance around the damaged, deformed or inflamed area you will take the pressure off, allow the circulation to get in and the body to heal. This should take away or greatly reduce the pain you are feeling.

As you work to treat your problems you should notice the area where you feel pain reducing slowly to a smaller area until it disappears completely. Even when the damage is such that

the pain will never go away, which will happen in rare cases, I'm sure the approach this program takes will give you more relief than anything else available.

The pains or injuries the medical profession puts labels on like facet joint syndrome or disc protrusion are no different to any other problem in the body and as a result can be treated and fixed in most cases, remember that and don't let those labels get you down.

Another thing: It is important that as soon as you are able, you add the general exercise to your program to ensure your body strengthens again in a balanced way. This is because the tightness in various areas that have set up your pain will have created weaknesses and therefore imbalances that need removing so that your pain goes away and doesn't come back.

Getting SLM bodywork or good deep tissue massage for your whole body will also be an important part of your recovery program (www.learnmassage.com.au/directory -is where you will see the list of accredited therapists) and if there are no accredited SLM practitioners available in your area you need to search out a good deep tissue massage therapist who can work on your whole body in each session. I will make further mention of this in the following sections for the various problems and the diagrams following show which areas you particularly need to have that massage work focus on.

FIXING BACK PAIN, ALL TYPES.

It is worth pointing out here that scientific studies have been done, such as the 1990 study by Scott D. Boden at the George Washington Hospital Medical Centre, showing that according to MRI and CAT scans, there are people walking around with age related degeneration of the disc or disc bulges and even herniations, yet they have never suffered from any back pain. If you have this sort of problem, don't be put off carrying out the self help exercises and treatment as outlined here because in most cases you should still have no problem taking away your pain, especially if you have fairly healthy muscle tissue to work with. If it is the disease or condition of the structure that is causing your pain, this treatment will not hurt you or cause further damage providing you don't apply pressure to the specific area with the rubber ball. You have nothing to lose by trying it for a while and chances are you will get some if not a large degree of relief.

The back is a fairly broad structure so I have gone through the more specific areas where back pain occurs giving you a description of the pain along with the contributing factors and important points about each. Following that, I have outlined a day by day program over one week that you can follow, to work on your particular condition. But first there is some general information about back pain that needs to be discussed.

I have seen back pain described by an orthopedic specialist giving advice on a medical web site as 'a strain or sprain to the ligaments or spine.' This is a very common diagnosis where the painful area of the back, whether it's a ligament, a muscle, a disc or a pinched nerve is identified as the cause of a persons back pain. In reality this is the pain but not the cause. The cause is invariably the muscular imbalance, the tilted or rotated pelvis or the shortened muscles that, due to the body's stress levels building up, are causing pressure to build up on the muscles, ligament, disc, joint or nerve and irritate it. This real cause is never given much consideration by the majority of therapists treating the condition

and this is why you have been struggling to get good results when trying to treat your back pain. I have found in most cases that I haven't had to do very much at all to the actual injured area to fix a persons pain past what the SLM Yoga will do.

You will never find a ligament, muscle or nerve that will become injured in isolation to the rest of the body, unless caused by a blow or trauma directly to it, a scenario that would only account for a fraction of cases I have come across. Other than that, you will ALWAYS find the cause of your back pain comes from another area, away from where the pain strikes or where the irritation to a nerve, ligament or joint such as a vertebrae is being felt. Treating the site of the pain will do very little to give any lasting relief.

It's little wonder that back pain is considered an epidemic in this world when the 'specialists', who are considered to be the experts on the subject, are getting it so wrong. But on the positive side it offers great hope if you have had a discouraging diagnosis from one of these specialists in the past. It's important you realise that in most of these cases it's the diagnosis or treatment approach that is wrong, not that yours is a particularly difficult problem to fix.

These specialist's apply the same 'look where it hurts' philosophy to most pain, which is why people continue to suffer unnecessarily for month's even years, until they become so doped up on pain killers or disillusioned with their lack of progress that they agree to have an operation or give up searching for a solution, or both.

The first thing to do when treating your back pain is to stabilise your pelvis, so it no longer has a twist or tilt as this in itself will take a lot of pressure away from key areas of the spine. You will most probably find it difficult to be totally pain free until your pelvis is balanced, and even if you rest and the pain settles down, it will usually return at some point if your pelvis is left tilted or rotated. As long as your pelvis is unbalanced like this there will be a lot of pressure on the spine and you will be greatly restricted as to the activities and exercise you can do if you are to remain pain free.

If you are unable to take the tilt or rotation out of your pelvis you will only achieve moderate success using the rest of the self help techniques, especially if you want to be physically active like doing regular exercise. But carrying out the SLM Yoga regularly will be the best way of you getting balance and stability into your pelvis or maintaining a pain free lifestyle should that not work.

For a tilted pelvis that doesn't respond to anything else, putting a heel lift into the shoe on the side you have a short leg to help prop up the pelvis on that side can also help as a last resort. It can be a soft pad that goes into the heel of the shoe or sometimes just adding an extra innersole in the shoe of the short leg makes enough of a difference to help the not too active person live with very little pain and discomfort. But don't choose this option too quickly because with perseverance and time you should be able to get the pelvis to balance. Note I underlined the comment on the same side you have the short leg because I have actually had a surprising number of people come in after being told to put the lift in the wrong shoe. I imagine it has been wrongly prescribed for the shoe when the hip on that side is higher in the standing position but in reality that happens because the hip on the short leg side is pulled down in the standing position. Best to determine which is your short leg when you are in the supine position, lying flat on your back.

It is worth noting here that when a short leg defies all efforts to correct it including the SLM Yoga, you should look at the vastus lateralis muscle on the short leg side. That is the outer quadriceps muscle. Invariable that muscle becomes permanently contracted and draws the leg on that side up into the hip causing it to shorten. Specific work needs to be done to that muscle to get that contraction out and the leg to come down. The portable TENS/interferential machine can be useful for that.

In conjunction with eating a very good diet, having good core strength through the stomach and lower back area can help you stabilise your pelvis and be pain free most of the time, even with the short leg, but it will take constant effort. Once you are able to

stabilise your pelvis in this way or balance the leg length with your detailed muscle work, the muscles and ligaments in the lower back that were over active or in spasm, will be able to release and you should feel much more comfortable.

When there is instability or weakness in that area the muscles are never able to switch off or, in some cases, switch on to provide strength and support. After a while the fatigue or weakness will make you feel stiff and sore, especially when you ask those muscle to work extra hard such as with a long day on your feet or with doing exercise or sports that involve running or jumping.

If you have a tilted or rotated pelvis but you cannot feel any problems in the leg muscles that could be causing it, your concentration should be on your erector spinae muscles, especially the shoulders and as part of that, the arms.

This program covers various techniques and exercises that can be used to loosen and rehabilitate these muscles, which is critical if the problem is to stay away once it's treated. To be in a healthy condition the erector spinae muscles should be able to contract and extend as they support the full movement of your body in a variety of positions and still be able to return to being loose and supple after a good night's sleep or some gentle exercise. It is very rare that someone will have loose, supple and balanced erector spinae muscles, largely because of the long hours people spend sitting at a desk and the high stress lifestyles that are now the norm for the majority of people. Working towards this should be a priority whatever pain you are treating in your body. The condition of the erectors will also affect your general health and energy levels and so the better their condition, the better you will feel and perform generally.

Other problems or symptoms that can come from muscles around the spine, in the back or neck, that are too tight include, tingling in the legs or arms, night cramps in the legs or waking up with numbness in the arms, headaches including migraines, digestive or energy problems, weakness in the arms or legs, tight breathing,

inability to shake coughs and colds, chest pain or rib pain and probably a few more I haven't mentioned.

When you work on your erector spinae muscles you are trying to get them to react by contracting as you put pressure on them and holding that contraction so that they release and relax when you stop. If you cause them to switch on and off regularly as you do gentle exercise, they will eventually start to function correctly again and slowly regain the condition required to carry the circulation they need to function normally all the time. To get them to stay in this condition you also need to maintain a good posture, diet and exercise regime after your pain has gone. When your erector muscles are just tight hard bands they won't do this. They are always stiff, have no potential to extend in movement or carry a load (including holding you upright) for any length of time and therefore never far from going into spasm and causing an acute flare up of your back pain with one wrong move.

In most cases you will find that you will not have any structural damage to the ligaments, muscles, nerves or discs in your back when you first start to experience pain and even for some months after that, so there is an opportunity for you to fix your problem before any structural problems start to develop. If however you keep irritating the area for a long time, especially if you persevere with a medium to high level of physical activity, the risk of doing structural damage to the area and the chances of making it a much more serious back problem is greatly increased. Not necessarily to the point where you cannot be fixed but after you release and stabilise any imbalances you have, it may take some time before you are out of pain completely.

As with any pain whether chronic or acute you need to find and fix the cause of why the painful area is becoming irritated or inflamed. Once to do that, which should start to happen after doing the SLM Yoga a number of times, there should be a dramatic improvement in how you feel and the rest of the rehabilitation progress should be able to be carried out whilst you are comfortable and not in any great pain.

It is worth noting at this point that if you have a tilted or rotated pelvis it does not necessarily mean you will have back pain. The build up of pressure which causes irritation and pain can go to a number of places like the back, the neck, the hip, the knee, the ankle or the shoulder. It can move around the body from one place to another. It tends to go to the weakest joint or often the joint you put the most pressure on with your sport or job, i.e. a tennis player is more likely to get a sore shoulder whereas a runner will often feel the problem in their knees or ankles. It doesn't really matter where it ends up as long as you are able to recognise the problem muscles in the body and do what is needed to take the imbalance and pain away.

There may be an activity you do which contributes to your back pain, that you don't think is relevant, but could explain why the pain keeps coming back. It could be an activity at work, around the home or even a position you regularly put yourself in on the couch in front of television which causes your body to twist a certain way irritating your back and causing pain. It could easily come from something as simple as sleeping on your stomach.

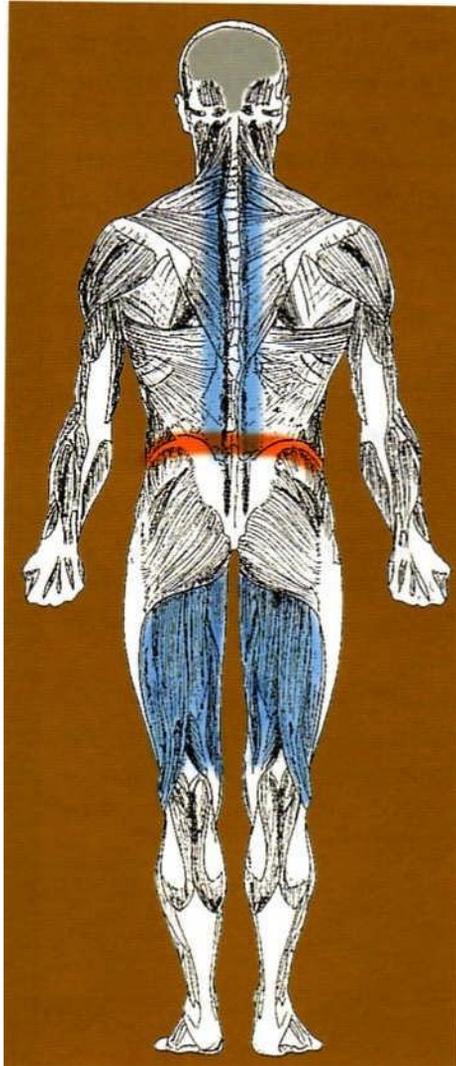
If a problem keeps coming back even though you are sure you have cleared it, start analysing every aspect of your day and even your sleeping habits looking for a clue.

I travelled with a boxer once and we were staying in an expensive hotel in the US and every morning he would wake up with terrible back pain. After the first couple of days of it and my daily treatments he started to complain I wasn't fixing him even though for the two days prior I was sure I had cleared any imbalances and tightness in his muscles that could have been causing it. After each treatment he had felt great with no residue pain. On the third day when he complained again I had him accompany me to his hotel room and took the quilt off his bed to find one bed leg broken and the bed collapsing on that corner. That's why he woke up with the back pain, it had nothing to do with any problem in his body. I knew it had to be his bed because it would come on during the night and I was very confident that he no longer had a problem after I treated him during the day. Sure enough when they fixed his bed he had no

more problems. So think hard about every aspect of your day (or night) if you have a recurring back pain in case there is something you are doing that is the problem.

In the diagrams describing the various back pains below, the area marked in red indicates where you feel the pain and the blue areas are the muscles that are most likely to be a problem and the cause.

LOWER BACK PAIN.



LOWER BACK PAIN.

Your pain is across the beltline, both sides: (Just above the pelvis). This is the classic lower back pain that hurts when you bend or stand for long period or when you go to get out of a chair. The pain or tightness can spread right across the lower back area. When it flares up and becomes acute it can affect the sciatic nerve for a period of time. It results in a constant lack of flexibility in both the back and hamstrings and no matter how much stretching you do it doesn't change.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **Contracted or shortened Erector Spinae muscles (the muscles that run from your neck to your lower back on either side of your spine) are usually the underlying cause. The best way to treat these is with the compression work along the erectors exercise and the shoulder swinging exercise. Check the day by day program below**
- **Bound up muscles around the shoulders and upper back. If you have fairly good range or movement with the shoulders the fast way to loosen them up is with the shoulder swinging exercise but if you find you are too stiff to do this one start with the contracting the erectors and arm swinging, done in conjunction with the SLM Yoga every day. These will fix your ROM and get you into a position where you can do the shoulder swinging exercise.**
- **When it starts on one side and progresses to being right across your lower back it can also involve a pelvis that is tilted forward or down on one side. The release work through the hips using the rubber ball and the SLM Yoga program with the quad strengthening and stretches is the best way of dealing with this.**

IMPORTANT POINTS.

It is important to think about how the pain started. This will help you locate the cause of the problem.

Whether it began on one side first and then spread across to the other or if it was all the way across the beltline from the beginning. If it started on one side, concentrate on the information and exercises for lower back on one side that follows this one. As you do the SLM Yoga you are always trying to determine which areas are the problems but if you are not able to work that out straight away just keep persevering and it will become obvious in time.

Sometimes the tension in the erector and the way it distorts the vertebrae or builds up pressure, can cause the nerves in the lower back to become involved and the pain can progress to sciatic pain down the leg. This usually happens when the stress levels build up due to lifestyle so the more stress your body is under the more important it is to finish each day with the SLM Yoga or self treatment on your erector muscles.

There is a good exercise for people to start doing after you have stabilised things as a means of strengthening the area to protect against future episodes. Do it first thing in the morning every day. Check the section on Exercises for the hamstring and glute strengthening exercise. This exercise will help build strength and support around the hamstrings, lower back and hip area. If you are already fit and strong do the exercise as a full hyper extension. It is very hard to get good exercise to strengthen these areas in a normal day unless you are a sprinter, climb ladders or walk uphill a lot. The only other way is through specific exercises like this one.

These exercises can also be used regularly, as long as they don't cause you pain, as a way of helping loosen up the erectors, hamstrings and glutes. If you hold the single leg lift exercise until fatigue you can compare one side to the other for their strength, then any obvious weakness can be corrected with the same exercise. Be sure you switch on your hamstring when doing this exercise rather than using your back to lift the legs.

If at any point you are confused where your strengths, weakness or imbalances are do the full hyper extension. By holding the

posture you can compare muscle on one side to the other whilst as you hold it for 30 seconds or more. Initially whilst you are in pain this might be a difficult exercise to do, but as you relieve your pain you should try again.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, Compressions along the erectors then SLM Yoga . Intensive heat treatment to the whole back and shoulders.

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 minutes on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit then self massage on the hips and pelvis.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 minutes on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing that with 3 mins of arm swinging. Hold off on shoulder swinging if it irritates your pain.

Day 3 pm, Compressions along the erectors then SLM Yoga. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back and shoulders.

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with the arm swinging for 3 mins.

Day 4 pm, Wall sit then release the hamstrings with the ball technique.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and arm swinging for 3 mins to finish.

Day 5 pm, Compressions along the erectors ~~from~~ SLM Yoga. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and 3 mins arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, Wall sit and self massage on the hips and pelvis.

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and 3 mins of arm swinging.

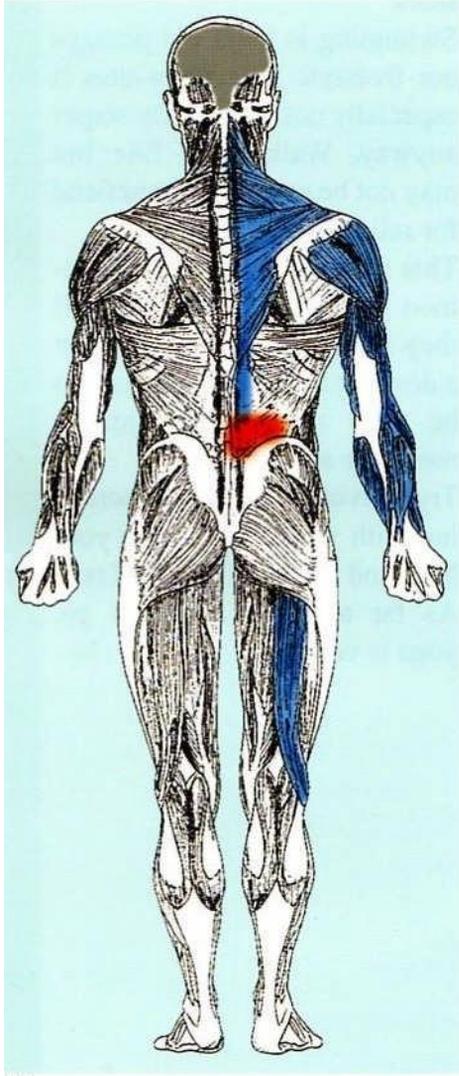
Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free. Obviously there is a fair commitment to time here, especially at night and some nights you may not have time to do it. If that happens, just skip that night's exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long.

If your pain is acute you can do the water workout each day to get past that and leave out the wall sit but do the SLM Yoga floor exercises.

If the shoulder swinging exercise is too difficult at first, leave it out and try it again after some weeks of doing the SLM Yoga.

BACK PAIN ON ONE-SIDE.



BACK PAIN ON ONE-SIDE,

This includes the case when pain has started on one side and moves to somewhere else. It is important to determine where it started as the cure for the original pain is usually what needs to be addressed. The pain can be just above the beltline or extend down into the buttock and hip. Sometimes the nerve becomes involved, when the pressure builds up sufficiently and pain will be felt down the leg.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **The shoulder can be tight or even just weak. This causes overuse of the muscle in the shoulder and upper back and sets up a blockage to the energy flow through the shoulder. That whole side of the body doesn't support itself, dumping all the weight on the lower back on the same side. The best way to address this is to do the shoulder swinging exercise. If this is too painful or your range of motion doesn't allow you to do it in the early stages use the contracting the erectors exercise and SLM Yoga workout focusing on the upper back, shoulder area and arms to get the shoulder to a stage whereby you can do the shoulder swinging exercise without any restriction.**
- **Erector Spinae, muscles contracted/ shortened. Release them using the compression along the spine with the rubber ball exercise but be sure to take your time and work deeply, doing this exercise every three or four days so you make good progress. Do the side of the back pain twice as often as the other side.**
- **From the hip as a result of a tilted or rotated pelvis. Dealing with a tilted or rotated pelvis is a tricky thing for the layman to do. I usually advise people to combine the various loosening and strengthening exercises that work on the legs with the SLM Yoga workout to be very thorough. The legs are very important. This can be quite time consuming but necessary to properly set up a strong**

balanced foundation for your back which realistically is the only way you are going to get rid of your back pain long term. Try and mix the various leg muscle release and strengthening techniques and spend the majority of your time on the lower body, especially in the early stages.

- **Stomach/ rectus abdominis. It is important you are strong in these muscles as they require strength to balance the tightness and support the lower back.**
- **Tight and contracted or weak hamstring muscles. Problems with the hamstring muscles is quite common with back pain sufferers and if after assessing them with the leg lifting strengthening exercise you find them weak or tight, give the relevant exercises and SLM Yoga priority until your hamstrings are strong and loose.**

IMPORTANT POINTS.

Working on the core strength is probably the key to fixing lower back pain generally but not just with strengthening exercises as they must be loosened and the circulation improved first.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then Compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit and self massage on the hips and pelvis.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm

swinging from side to side followed by shoulder swinging exercise then 3 mins of arm swinging again.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise then 3 mins of arm swinging again.

Day 4 pm, Wall sit then release the hamstrings technique.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise then 3 mins of arm swinging again.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise then 3 mins of arm swinging again.

Day 6 pm, Wall sit and self massage on the hips and pelvis.

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side followed by shoulder swinging exercise then 3 mins of arm swinging again.

Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free. Obviously there is a fair commitment to time

here, especially at night and some nights you may not have time to do it. If that happens, just skip that night's exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long.

If your pain is acute focus on the water workout and the SLM Yoga without the wall sit and ballet squat and don't do any of the exercises that irritate you until you can.

Once you are pain free work on strengthening your body with your normal exercise programs or an endurance type workout like swimming, Pilates or circuit classes.

Don't lose sight of the lifestyle factors that can influence your stress levels so that on an ongoing basis you are keeping those stress levels low and working towards having healthy supple tissue that will be much less likely to end up in pain and more responsive should you need to work on it I future to deal with any pain issues that come up.

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

PAIN BELOW THE BELTLINE IN THE HIP.



PAIN BELOW THE BELTLINE OR HIP PAIN.

This can be one or both sides but is most commonly one side. Some might refer to it as hip pain – high in glute (buttocks) area.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **Short leg on the opposite side to where you feel your pain. All muscles are important but especially the adductors and vastus lateralis. The best way to treat these muscles is by doing the ballet squat, which is also part of the SLM Yoga program. The reason the pain goes to the hip on the opposite side to the short leg is because on the short leg side the pelvis is pulled down so that on the opposite side the pelvis is pushed up. The leg on the opposite side however stays down because the foot is planted on the ground so the hip joint where the femur joins the hip socket is stretched open causing irritation and pain. To take this pain away you need to remove this irritation which is done by balancing the pelvis again thereby correcting the length of the short leg on the non painful side.**
- **Erector Spinae muscles contracted on one or both sides. If this is not the underlying cause of the problem it is brought about by having a pelvis that tilts down on one side anyway. This is a critical correction to make so that you can maintain the balance in a re-aligned pelvis. The side that has the shortened erector is normally the side you feel the pain because the muscle doesn't give when you are in a position that stretches this muscle, such as sitting. When you go to stand up you feel pain from the irritation that has taken place. It can also be painful when standing for long periods as this muscle, in its contracted and weakened state, doesn't erect the spine and support the upper body the way it should so the hip/ lower back ends up carrying the weight of the upper body on that side.**
- **Hip/ gluteal/ hamstring weakness. Work on strengthening**

using the strength exercise for these muscles every day as stipulated in the daily routine. Do the single leg lift when face down exercise to determine if your hamstrings/ glutes are weak or over tight.

- Release tightness from the hamstrings and glutes using a rubber ball or tennis ball by following the release the hamstrings exercises later in this guide.
- Can involve the muscles where the nerve exits at T11 as this refers pain to the hip but is best dealt with by freeing up tension and creating movement in the erector spinae muscles generally. (this will only be the problem in rare cases)

IMPORTANT POINTS.

Usually I go by the rule that if the pain starts below the beltline then the problem is coming from the legs so pain around the hip/ glute area is normally coming from a problem in one or both legs. Look to spend plenty of time on the leg exercises like the wall sit and ballet squat as part of the SLM Yoga and working on the glutes/ buttocks using the rubber ball. There is no hard and fast rule though so you shouldn't discount a pain below the beltline coming from the upper back even though it will only happen on rare occasions.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking.

Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then releasing the hamstrings exercise to both sides and Intensive heat treatment to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain and on the adductor on the painful side.

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit and ballet squat then compressions along the erectors and self massage on the hips and pelvis, especially the side not in pain. Follow up with Intensive heat treatment to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain and on the adductor on the painful side.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with another 3 min arm swinging.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga then compression work on the erector muscles, followed by intensive heat treatment to the whole back and to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain and on the adductor on the painful side..

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with another 3 min arm swinging.

Day 4 pm, Wall sit and ballet squat then self massage on the hips/ glutes with the rubber ball. Intensive heat treatment to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain and adductor on the side with the pain.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with another 3 min arm swinging.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then. Releasing the hamstrings exercise to both sides and Intensive heat treatment to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain.

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with another 3 min arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, Wall sit and ballet squat and compression work on the erectors followed by intensive heat work on the whole back plus to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain and on the adductor on the painful side..

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with another 3 min arm swinging.

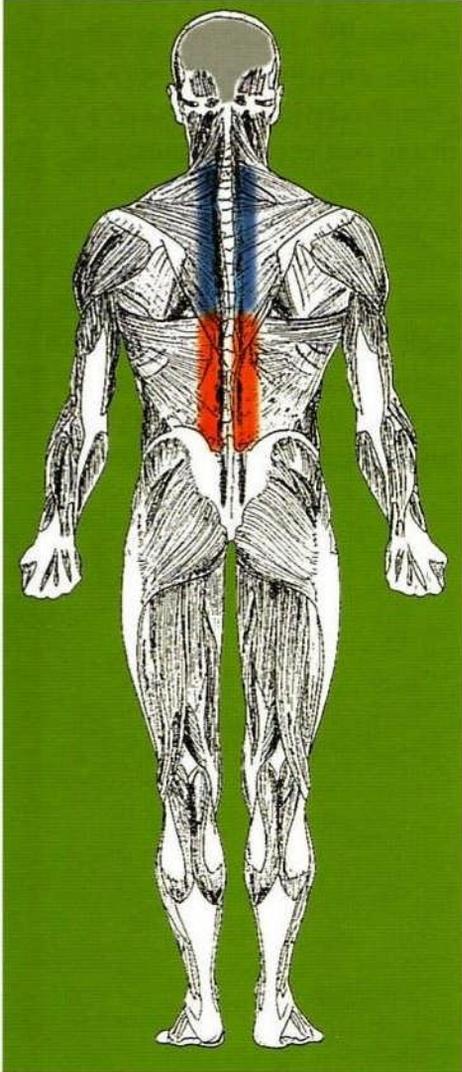
Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by self massage on the hips/ glutes. Intensive heat treatment to the outside quad muscle on the opposite side to the pain and adductor on the pain side.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free.

Obviously there is a fair commitment to time here, especially at night and some nights you may not have time to do it. If that happens, just skip that nights exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long.

If your pain is acute focus on the water workout and the SLM Yoga without the wall sit and ballet squat and don't do any of the exercises that irritate you until you can.

MID BACK PAIN (THORACIC).



MID BACK PAIN (THORACIC).

This pain has two main triggers, from a rotated pelvis causing the Erector Spinae muscles to be locked up in that area from the twist or more likely from very tight even lumpy hamstrings (more common). You will feel the tightness in this area and the tightness in the hamstrings when you contract the muscles during the SLM Yoga workout

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **It is important to work on the legs to deal with the rotation, especially the leg of the forward hip. The muscles in the thigh and adductor (inside leg) are usually the culprits that cause the pelvis to hold a twisted or rotated position although other muscles in the legs get involved fairly quickly due to compensations and the different stresses they are placed under because of the rotated pelvis.**
- **Erector spinae muscles where compensations have built up. Bracing against the rotation these muscles will be locked up regardless. In fact these muscles will never be loose and balanced when the pelvis is not loose and balanced. Working on them using the ball work along their length should be secondary or at least done in conjunction with stabilising and balancing the pelvis.**
- **Hamstrings, calf muscles and feet. These muscles will let go quite easily when the other more structural areas are taken care of but not before. The SLM Yoga techniques will be sufficient to deal with them.**

IMPORTANT POINTS.

Don't discount poor posture as a contributing factor with this problem. If you are someone who sits or stands hunched over a desk for long periods you might need to make sure your desk is ergonomically correct and you do some regular loosening maintenance exercises during the day such as the contracting the erectors and arm swinging to keep on top of things.

Another good exercise you can do to relieve tightening in this area due to poor posture is at the end of a day lying on a rolled up towel placed on the floor along the length of your spine and relaxing as your spine is supported while your shoulders relax and stay in that position for 15 minutes or so. Concentrate on really letting go of your whole body in this position and do it at the end of every day.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then Releasing the hamstrings. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back then again to the hamstring muscles.

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit and ballet squat and self massage on the hips and pelvis. Intensive heat treatment to the hamstrings.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back and hamstrings.

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise, finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 4 pm, Wall sit and Ballet squat then release the hamstrings technique. Intensive heat treatment to the hamstrings

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors followed by intensive heat treatment to the whole back and hamstrings.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, Wall sit and ballet squat and intensive heat treatment to the whole back and hamstrings.

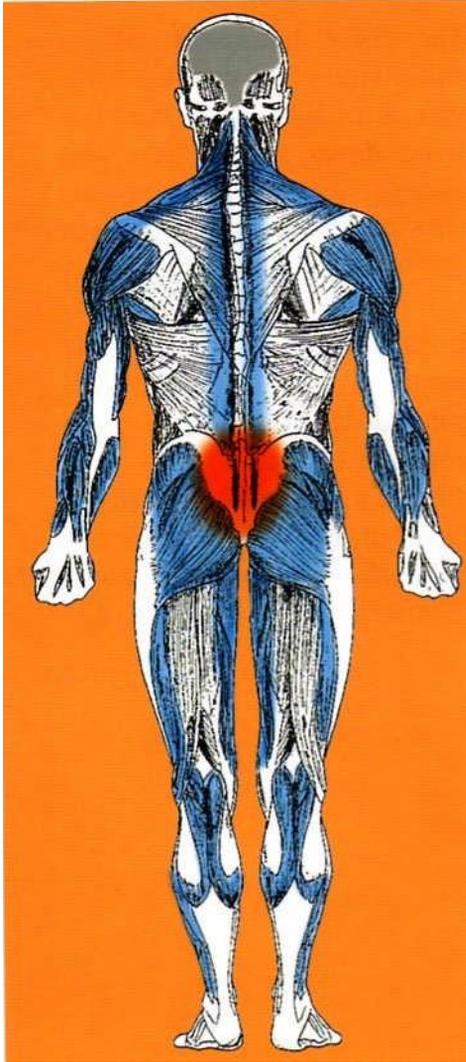
Day 7 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 7 pm, SLM Yoga followed by compressions along the erectors and intensive heat treatment to the whole back and hamstrings.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free. If you do not have time to do it every night skip that night's exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long.

If your pain is acute focus on the water workout and the SLM Yoga without the wall sit and ballet squat and don't do any of the exercises that irritate you until you can.

SACRUM PAIN.



SACRUM PAIN.

When pain is experienced right in the centre of, or around the Sacrum joint (S. I. Joint). Pain when trying to sit for any length of time, walking and standing. Even lying down on a hard surface can be too painful for some people.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **A rotated pelvis is the more common cause. The twist from the rotation is felt in the joint as the muscles in the lower back and pelvis tighten to brace against the twist.**
- **One leg longer than the other. The pain from a short leg is not usually in this joint but when the muscles in the lower back and surrounding areas are weak it could happen.**
- **Tight, contracted adductors and hamstrings. Again not very common but I have seen cases where a weakness in the muscles around the lower back and sacrum combined with strong/ over tight adductors and hamstring muscles could be the cause of pain in the sacrum joint.**
- **Weakness in the area after hurting it in a fall. Often people complain of pain in this area after a fall even though scans show no abnormality. When an area of the body is traumatised the muscles that support that joint or area often end up weak because during the trauma they become locked from the shock. Being locked up for any length of time causes them to become weak due to a lack of circulation and movement.**

IMPORTANT POINTS.

When this pain has been around for a while you will probably have a build up of compensation in the muscles around the sacrum. You will become aware of this during the SLM Yoga workout as an inability to switch on certain muscles in the area initially. Working on the area with the day by day treatment program should show a steady improvement.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then Compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the quadriceps and adductors.

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit and ballet squat and self massage on the hips and pelvis then intensive heat treatment to the quadriceps and adductors.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga then intensive heat treatment to the whole back and glutes (buttock/ hip area).

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 4 pm, Wall sit and ballet squat then release the hamstrings technique followed by intense heat to the hamstrings.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then self massage to the hips and pelvis. Intensive heat treatment to the quadriceps and adductors.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, Wall sit and ballet squat and compressions along the erectors then intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

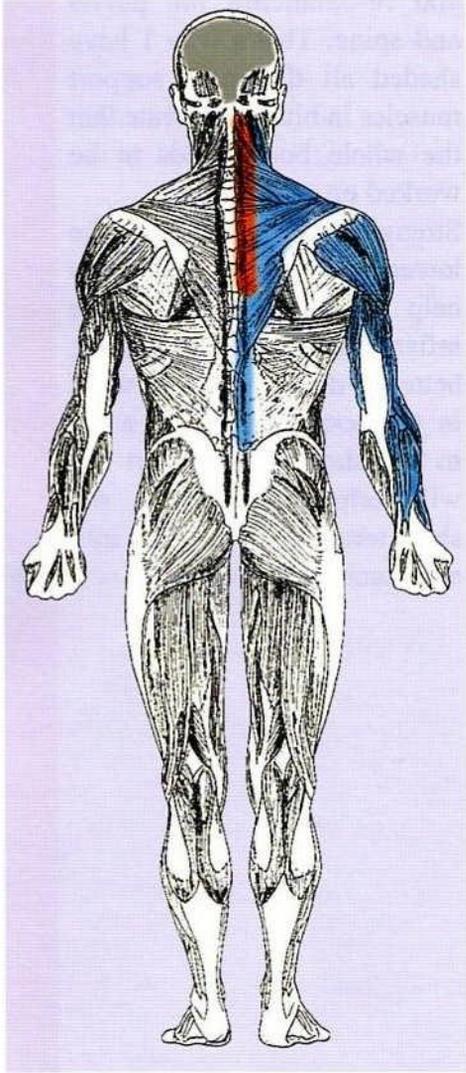
Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by release technique to the hamstrings and intensive heat treatment to the adductor muscles and quadriceps.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free. Obviously there is a fair commitment to time here, especially at night and some nights you may not have time to do it. If that happens, just skip that night's exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long.

If your pain is acute focus on the water workout and the SLM Yoga without the wall sit and ballet squat and don't do any of the exercises that irritate you until you can.

Once you are pain free work on strengthening your body with your normal exercise programs or an endurance type workout like swimming, Pilates or circuit classes and keep up the SLM Yoga.

PAIN IN RHOMBOIDS.



PAIN IN RHOMBOIDS.

(In the muscles between the shoulder blades next to the spine, one side or both)

This can be a very severe deep stabbing pain involving a nerve next to the spine and can cause pins and needles down the arm, or a constant nagging discomfort in the area that occasionally builds up and becomes acute.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **Arms especially triceps./** These can be difficult to release so I recommend the TENS machine if you have one and working on them yourself before getting deep tissue massage done to them and the whole arms. They can also be worked on during the SLM yoga.
- **Erector Spinae muscle same side.** This is well covered in the day to day treatment program.
- **Trapezius muscles.** Again hard to work on yourself but they will loosen with deep massage work being done to release the arms and massage to the traps and neck area.
- **In some cases a vertebrae will be out of place slightly and if it doesn't go when you are loosening the erectors with compressions using the rubber ball it may require a visit to an osteopath to have it treated.** Be sure to spend plenty of time yourself and use a lot of heat to give it a chance to go back during your treatments. Make sure you have loosened up the area well for some time before going for an adjustment to ensure a good result.

IMPORTANT POINTS.

When the pain is deep and constant and involving a nerve you will need to look for a deep spasm in the area you feel pain along the erector and hold on it with firm pressure using a golf ball for around 30 to 60 seconds. Do this a few times, in dispersed with heat, to effect a release. No more than 3-4 times each four days or so. Painful as this can be it is necessary to fix the problem.

Normally it can take 2 or 3 treatments to shift this pain completely, 30% or so should go each time.

Having someone carry out deep tissue massage on the muscles around this area will help. (see the day by day treatment program). If you do extra heavy work on it with the pressure work and the massage and the area feels weak because it is overworked you may need a sling so you can rest your arm on and off. Wear the sling after treatment for 24 hours (sling on for half to an hour, off for a couple of hours). Otherwise while you are up and about the weight of your arm and shoulder pulling on the area could bring the pain back very quickly and even heighten it for a couple of days.

I usually advise my patients that as soon as they feel pain start next to the spine support their arm with the sling for about half an hour to give the muscle a rest and then they should be right for another few hours before they need to do it again. It is important that the arm is well supported and you really lets it go so the sling is the only thing holding the weight of the arm and shoulder.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then Compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the pain side erector and shoulder and triceps muscle. (spend extra time on the contracting technique on the arms during the SLM yoga)

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm SLM Yoga and self massage on the hips and pelvis. Follow up with intensive heat treatment to the back of the shoulder and triceps muscle.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise (if it doesn't irritate the pain) finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the pain side erector and shoulder and triceps muscle.

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise (if it doesn't irritate the pain) finishing with 3 min arm swinging..

Day 4 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors with the rubber ball. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back and triceps muscle.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise (if it doesn't irritate the pain) finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the pain side erector and shoulder and triceps.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise (if it doesn't irritate the pain) finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, SLM Yoga and self massage on the hips and pelvis. Intensive heat treatment to the shoulder and upper back and triceps on the painful side.

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise (if it doesn't irritate the pain) finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

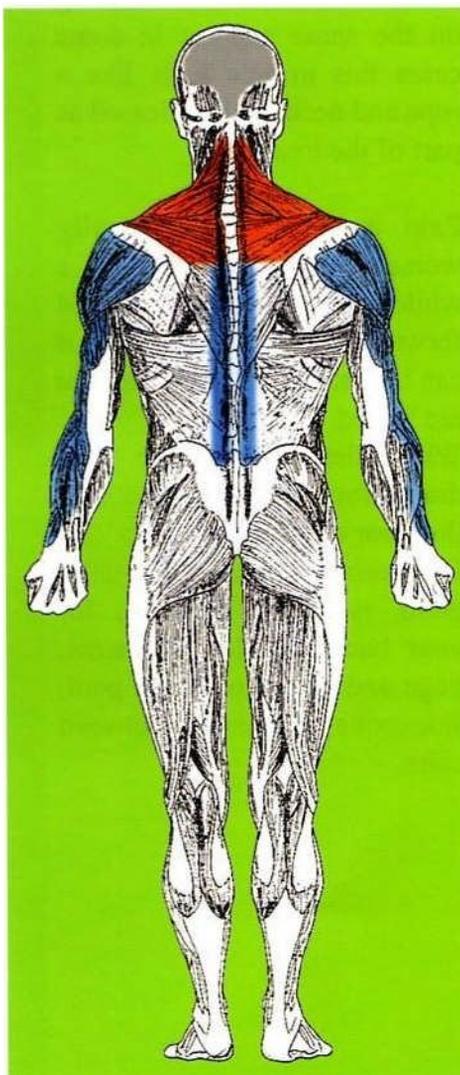
Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by intensive heat treatment to the upper back and shoulder and triceps muscle.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free. Obviously there is a fair commitment to time here, especially at night and some nights you may not have time to do it. If that happens, just skip that night's exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long.

Once you are pain free work on strengthening your body with your normal exercise programs or an endurance type workout like swimming, Pilates or circuit classes.

With this pain which is a difficult one to fix you really need to get weekly SLM massage or deep tissue massage to the arm and upper back, but especially the arm. Trust me on that. The triceps has a big involvement with this pain and although very sore when massaged it needs to be done. Have the therapist heat the muscles in the arm well before working on it using mostly compressions and that will make it more bearable. Obviously I recommend the SLM Bodywork massage if possible but if not available then another form of deep tissue work.

UPPER BACK PAIN.



UPPER BACK PAIN.

This relates to pain in the trap muscles, shoulders and the neck up into the back of the head.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **Tightness and weakness in the area it self.**
- **Very tight muscles in the arms, especially the deltoids.**
- **Tight erectors pulling into the painful area.**
- **Very tight in the neck itself.**

IMPORTANT POINTS.

This area can become very tight for a number of reasons such as: a whiplash injury, heavy or prolonged work with the arms, lack of sleep, sitting at a computer for too long with poor posture.

Often when people treat the area they do not use enough pressure to go deep enough to get the tissue to properly loosen up or work the other areas in the body which are influencing it, especially the erectors. Treatments such as normal massage or ultra sound will not normally make any lasting impression. If a treatment gives a day or two relief and then the problem comes back it means the work on the area hasn't been deep or long enough but it can also mean problems are left in the areas contributing to the tightness (such as the arms or erectors) and so the problem comes back.

Regular work with a rubber ball on the erectors as high up as you can get and lots of heat plus a daily routine doing the underarm shoulder swinging exercise for a few months is what it will take to clear it up completely. Deep tissue massage (preferably SLM) on the tight area and erectors and rest of the body every week will be necessary for the right result also.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking . Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then Compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the painful tight area (spend extra time on the contracting technique on the arms during the SLM yoga)

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit and self massage on the hips and pelvis then intensive heat treatment to the tight area and upper arms by placing them resting on a table next to you so they are at 90 degrees to the body and placing the heat pack onto them for long periods.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the painful tight area and the whole back.

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 4 pm, Wall sit then intensive heat treatment to the tight painful area, the whole back and the arms.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the painful area, whole back and arms.

Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, Self massage on the hips and pelvis the intensive heat treatment to the whole back/ neck and arms.

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by intensive heat treatment to the whole back, shoulders and arms.

Repeat this weekly program for as many weeks as it takes to become pain free. Obviously there is a fair commitment to time here, especially at night and some nights you may not have time to do it. If that happens, just skip that night's exercises and move on to the next night. Try very hard to do the morning exercises each day which won't take very long because the shoulder swinging is probably the most important part of the exercises along with the intensive heat treatments at night.

Once you are pain free work on strengthening your body with your normal exercise programs or an endurance type workout like swimming, Pilates or circuit classes.

What you will need to have is a rubber ball plus a heat wheat bag that is made for the shoulders/ neck area and also a large one that covers the whole back if possible.

Combine that self treatment program with an www.myotherapy.com.au/find every week for the first 8 weeks, especially on the arms and neck. If you find the area is really bad you might benefit from having 3 weeks of the SLM massage before you begin the shoulder swinging exercise.

If SLM massage is not available in your area then I suggest you try and find a good deep tissue massage therapist. The thing they may do which will be counter productive to your progress is staying there labouring the same area for the full 60 minute treatment. To get around this ask them to give the area a rest every 5 minutes by putting heat on the muscles and doing some massage elsewhere in your body whilst the heat takes effect, preferably the arms and erector muscles.

I strongly suggest you do the SLM Yoga every second day at least (In the evening) as you work through this program and then maintain that even when the area has recovered.

SCIATICA PAIN.

Just because you have debilitating nerve pain, don't for a minute think these self help exercises won't fix you because there is a good chance they will.

Sciatic pain radiates from the lower back down one or both legs, sometimes stopping in the thigh and sometimes going down to the foot. You don't usually feel the pain above the buttock/ glute area. The main cause is pressure on the spinal chord exit point of the nerves at L4/ L5 or L5/ S1. Much rarer causes can include tumours, cancer, bony growth, or infection. If you don't get a good response in line with the exercises shown here then make sure you have a scan to determine what might be wrong. It is probably a good idea you do this if you have not made good progress with the problem fairly quickly. If a scan shows an impinged nerve in your back it doesn't mean you will require surgery as by releasing the spasm and imbalance in the muscles and realigning the pelvis and spine the nerve should no longer be impinged. One thing to remember here is that if you don't have the pain all the time i.e. when lying down or sitting, it means the body can be positioned so the nerve is not being impinged. It is a positive sign that muscle imbalances are causing the problem.

Also sometimes you will get an incorrect picture when you get a scan because they are done when you are lying down and most people get relief from sciatica when they lie down.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- **Spasm located in the erector spinae muscles on the same side, around the low to mid thoracic area.**
- **This in turn can come from a tilted or rotated pelvis or tight contracted shoulder muscles.**
- **Weakness in the muscles of the lower back.**
- **Tightness in the quadriceps muscles and weak in the hamstrings. This causes a forward tilt of the pelvis when**

the muscle are engaged or start to fatigue.

- Possibly being held from the lateral calf which happens in rare cases.
- Bound up in the hip/ glute area requiring pressure point work. This causes a balancing tightness in the erector on the same side.

IMPORTANT POINTS.

The classic medical diagnosis you will hear with sciatic pain; is that the cause is an impingement on the nerve exiting at L4/ L5 or contraction in the piriformis muscle. So why do therapists struggle to get a quick fix on it ? Because they don't look at the rest of the body and what is causing the pressure to be on the nerve or in the glute/ buttock. This pressure on the nerve IS the sciatic pain but NOT the cause of it. The cause will be found in any of the contributing factors I have listed above.

I have treated hundreds of these and over the recent years have found it very straight forward to fix most cases and in just a couple of treatments turn off the pain by concentrating on the areas I have listed. Even when people are in so much pain they cannot walk they will respond well if the right muscles are being released.

I am telling you this to impress upon you what is possible if you focus on the right areas, and to encourage you not to be intimidated by a specialist's diagnosis or conclusion that the problem cannot be fixed without surgery. Even when you are crying and frozen from the pain, if you can get yourself onto a comfortable position where you are able to relax, preferable on your back on the floor, perhaps with your knees up, and your body isn't too far gone health wise, then you can help yourself. SLM Yoga is a great way to start along with rubber ball work along the erectors.

In my opinion, the idea that the piriformis muscle is the main cause of this pain (as is stated in most of the medical treatment books) is wrong and I would say by far the most common problem muscle would be the erector spinae muscle on the same side.

If you find a section of the erector in the lower half of your back that is extra tight and sensitive, after doing your warm up work, hold firm flat pressure against it with the rubber ball so that it causes the muscle to contract hard against your pressure. Hold that for 60 seconds or so before moving on, up and down the erectors. Be sure to come back to that particularly tight section on the same side as the pain enough times for it not to feel so tight and reactive. This is an especially good place to concentrate if your body is very hard and tight all over and you have sciatic pain. Of course the spasm is normally on the same side as the pain but, as is always the case with the body, it doesn't have to be.

Note: If you experience the worst discomfort when sitting and are best when walking around, search out the hamstrings, Glute Minimus and Erector Spinae muscles for the cause. When the pain is worst when standing or trying to walk, concentrate on the quadriceps, adductors and calf.

YOUR DAY BY DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM.

If your problem is too acute to do any thing much just lie on your back on the floor and do ball compression work along the erectors twice a day morning and night and the hips and glutes if possible for the first 3 days then once a day after that and at least 3 sessions of intensive heat treatment to the whole back with a good wheat bag. Add the parts of the SLM yoga that are done when lying on your back on the floor as well. Once you are out of trouble and up and about start with the day by day program. Any of the other exercises you feel you cannot do without irritating the problem should be left out until you can do them comfortably.

Day 1 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 1 pm, SLM Yoga then Compressions along the erectors. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 2 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side.

Day 2 pm Wall sit and self massage on the hips and pelvis then intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 3 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 3 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the spine. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 4 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side (in 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging..

Day 4 pm, Wall sit and follow on leg stretches then intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 5 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 5 pm, SLM Yoga then compressions along the spine. Intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

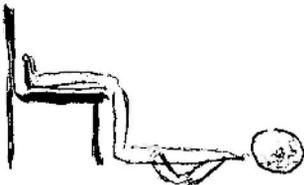
Day 6 am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 6 pm, Self massage on the hips and pelvis followed by the intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Day 7am, Arm swinging side to side for 3 mins on waking. Contracting the erectors, starting and finishing with the arm swinging from side to side. (In 2nd or 3rd week) followed by shoulder swinging exercise and finishing with 3 min arm swinging.

Day 7pm, SLM Yoga followed by intensive heat treatment to the whole back.

Getting deep tissue massage by a qualified SLM therapist or similar is recommended weekly for the first couple of months at least whilst completing the day by day treatment. Also doing all the other holistic things. Spending as much time resting on your back whilst you are in an acute phase is the quickest way to get relief. That is, don't take pain killers and try to keep going when the pain is bad or you will make fixing it that much harder. A good position to be in when you are resting is on your back on the floor with your legs up so the calf muscles are resting on the seat part of a hard chair. So your upper legs are at right angles to your body and your lower legs at right angles to your upper legs. (see diagram) This tractions the vertebrae and takes pressure off the nerve so it has a chance to settle and the inflammation can be dealt with by the body.



Lying position to traction spine when trying to relieve sciatica.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

With some of the back pains especially those involving the shoulder or arms you would benefit from purchasing a Sportsmed EMS/ TENS machine so you can properly work on the muscles. You will find it the most effective way by far for loosening the muscles in the arm by placing one of the pads on the deltoid muscle and the other on the forearm just below the elbow then putting the muscle on stretch as you activate it using contractions from the device. It works with a rechargeable battery and is very strong and effective. The one on the deltoid can be moved around to cover all three deltoid muscles and can also be varied by being placed on the triceps muscle as well. It can be used beneficially on other muscles as well such as the erector spinae and outside quadriceps which is difficult to work on in other ways.

When you are doing the self treatment exercises be careful to do them properly for the required time as stipulated in the instructions. If you don't do them thoroughly you are likely to irritate and stir up your problem rather than relieve it. If you are short on time better to just do some relaxed arm swinging exercise rather than half do for example the shoulder swinging or compression work along the erectors and save them for when you have the required time.

With all the instructions for the various pains, you will be working on isolated areas of the body and as all parts of the body connect it is important you combine your self treatment with the SLM yoga plus deep tissue muscle work to the whole body, preferably weekly, for a few months at least. The SLM therapists are trained to do this and balance your body as they work but if you are not near one of our qualified therapists then I recommend you find someone who can do a similar full body deep tissue treatment for you.

A great tip I got that you may be able to take advantage of is when you are arthritic or stiff and sore throughout your joints, take a ¼ to a ½ a teaspoon of Epsom salts in a small amount of freshly

squeezed orange juice every morning. It has an alkalising effect on the body and helps reduce the stiffness and soreness. It will take up to 3 months to take full effect so be patient and make it a part of your daily routine.

If after doing some of the exercises or self treatments with the ball you feel worse or bring on your pain, then it indicates that you have either not been thorough enough or pushed your body too far. You need to be more thorough if you have a relatively strong body or back off the extent at which you are going if your body is weak and ease into things a bit more. For example if you do the full night time program and feel stirred up or worse in the morning then try just the SLM Yoga at night and perhaps a hot bath until you feel you are coping with that well and then start adding the other parts. Heat is always a great thing to use to get relief whether it be via a hot pack or hot bath. Showers are never as effective. It would be a good idea to own a couple of heat wheat bags and have them handy for when you need them.

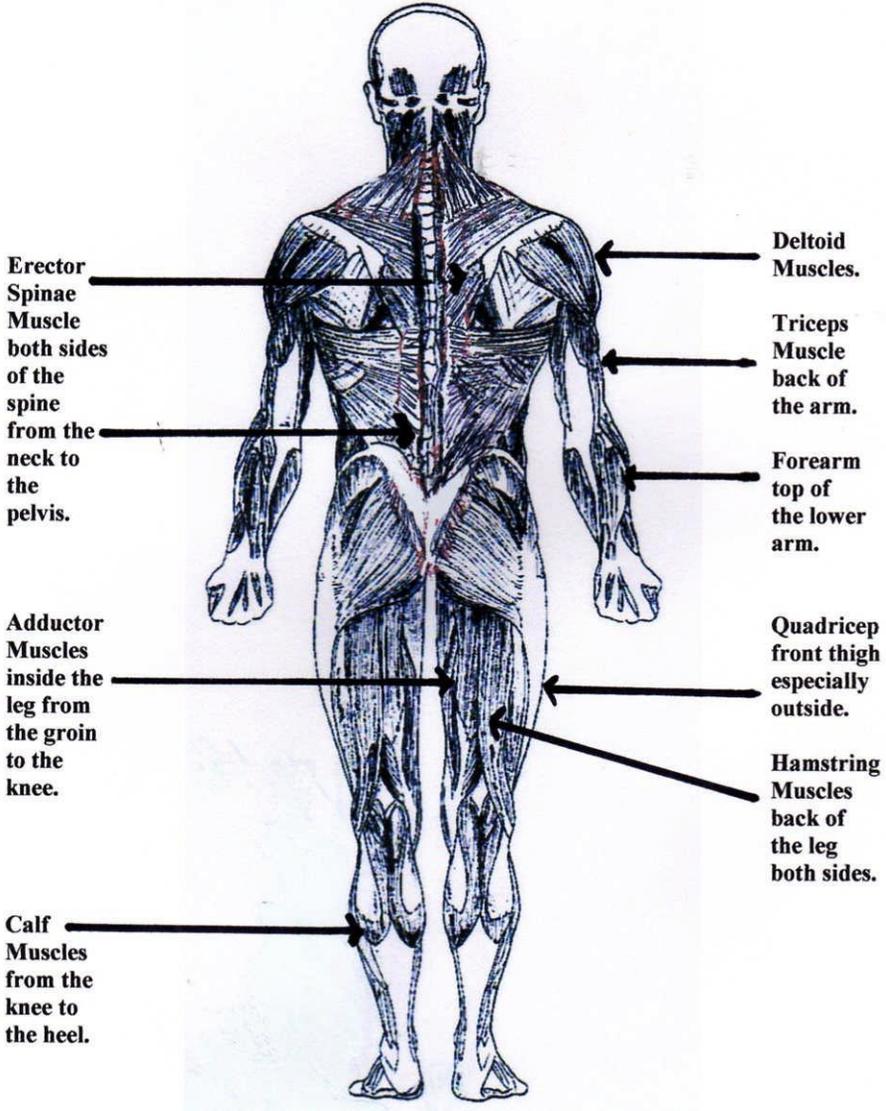
As I have pointed out already the deep tissue work from a recommended SLM therapist or another suitably qualified therapist is always very good to combine with the program I have outlined here. If the therapist you see doesn't work on your full body with deep tissue massage work each time you see them you probably won't be getting the right support for this program. Osteopathic or chiropractic work could be an exception as long as you were also getting the deep tissue massage work as well.

MAINTENANCE.

For ongoing treatment maintenance for all of the back pains once you are out of pain, I suggest you do the shoulder swinging exercise each morning and the SLM Yoga twice a week in the evening. On top of that do the ball work down the spine once a week at night before bed. (see the guide in the following pages on how to make your own two ball roller to ensure this maintenance is very fast and efficient). Also use the heat wheat bag once a day when you are sitting relaxing preferably before you go to bed. Finally try to get a full body, balancing SLM massage every one or two months.

You can order the wheat bags and TENS/ interferential machine at different places on the internet. The ideal rubber ball is one that is a little smaller than a tennis ball and usually sold at Coles or Kmart or \$2 type shops as a ball for the dog to chew. They are much better than tennis balls because they are solid rubber. The simple alternative is the set of Bakballs available in the shopping cart at www.backpain.com.au/bakballs.

IMPORTANT MUSCLE REFERENCES



EXERCISES

ARM SWINGING FROM SIDE TO SIDE.

This exercise is a great start to any thing you do even if it is just going to work at a desk job. It is a good exercise to do during the day as it helps to relieve stress and tension from the back and hip muscles after spending a long time sitting.

It is a fact that muscles perform at their best when they are loose and have good circulation and gentle range of movement exercises done for a reasonable length of time help to loosen you up and promote blood flow. Do this exercise regularly, when you first get up in the morning, before bed at night, during the day after you have been working in one position for any length of time or anytime you feel stiff or sore from what you have been doing.

The important things to remember with this exercise is stand with your feet shoulder width apart and let your arms swing very relaxed and freely from side to side by rotating your upper body as you keep your hips and head facing straight ahead, ie. Don't twist your hips and head. The movement should be largely momentum rather than effort focused on moving the spine. Swing side to side for 3 minutes. Diag showing arm swinging side to side.



CONTRACTING THE ERECTORS.

In combination with the arm swinging routine this exercise is very good for helping to loosen the erector spinae muscles and shoulders which is a critical part of helping many forms of back pain.

Firstly start with 3 minutes of the arm swinging exercise. Then stand with your legs apart and hands up, palms facing forward in line with the ears. Tighten or contract the erector muscles in your upper back and try to push your shoulder blades together and slightly arch your spine backwards. Contract your erector spinae muscles as tightly as you can and hold the pressure. Feel the contraction right from the lower back up through the shoulders and hold it for around 10 seconds before relaxing and doing 30 seconds of arm swinging. Repeat the contraction 5 times with the 30 sec relaxed arm swinging between each one and finish up with the 3 minute arm swinging. When you are not contracting the muscles be very relaxed. If you have time, finish this exercise with intensive heat treatment to the whole back.



Diagram shows push shoulder blades together position.

HAMSTRING AND GLUTE STRENGTHENING.

This is an exercise you should leave until you're pain free to help with weakness through your hamstring and glute muscles. There are three levels you can do depending on what you can comfortably handle. It comes down your strength to begin with.

The first and simplest form is for you to lie face down on your stomach elbows out and hands under your chin or beside your head and do a straight leg lift, with one leg, so your foot is about 25 cm or 10 inches high, and hold for 10 seconds. Put that leg down and lift the other leg and do the same. Repeat this about 10 time's one leg after another and try to do it every morning first thing. It is important you use your hamstring and buttock (glute) muscles to do the lift only.

A more difficult form of that one is to lift one arm as you lift the opposite leg, again holding for 10 seconds, then do the other arm and opposite leg. Again try to do 10 sets, using just the glute and hamstring muscles.



**Above the easier one legged strengthening and
Over the page using the whole body.**

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

The most difficult form and one everyone should try to progress to where practical, is to lift both arms and both legs at the same time, as high as possible, and hold for 10 seconds through 10 sets. The arm swinging for 3 minutes is a good warm up and warm down for this exercise. Again leave this one alone until you are pain free.



COMPRESSIONS ALONG THE ERECTORS.

The muscles that primarily support your spine are called the Erector Spinae muscles and it is logical to assume that any problem you have with your spine itself could well be the result of the influence these muscles are having on it. This is a great self treatment technique you can do to balance and regenerate these muscles turning. With perseverance you can loosen the stiff, contracted tissue that is locked up rather than functioning as normal supple, healthy muscles.

The amount of times you will need to do this exercise to take away your pain or be energized, will depend on the condition of your erector spinae muscles. Everyone's muscles are at a different stage of deterioration so whereas some people will feel great after just doing it once, a few people will need to do it 10 times before they notice a significant improvement. One thing I can promise you though, this will be one of the best treatments you will have ever had for your back and best of all it's free and you can do it yourself so it doesn't matter what time your back decides to give you trouble, you will be able to settle it down again with this technique. After that you should get to an SLM therapist as soon as possible to have your whole body loosened and balanced to keep your pain away.

This exercise is best done with a solid rubber ball with a little give in it, or second best is a tennis ball. Once you become a seasoned 'self therapist' you can migrate to a golf ball for more focused pressure.

Wear a tracksuit top or similar to provide a bit of padding at least initially if you find the pressure too painful but to get a good result with this exercise you will need to inflict a bit of pain on yourself. Lie on your back on the carpeted floor and place the ball under your body so that the erector spinae muscle (the muscle 2 or 3 cm wide that runs either side down the length of your spine from your neck to your pelvis) is being sandwiched between the ball and the spine.

Your pressure needs to come from the outside of the muscle on an angle across towards the spine and as deep into the muscle as you can get, so the pressure ends up towards the vertebrae. You should start as low down the erector as possible, just above the top of the Ilium.

Position your body in whatever way so as to apply the pressure with the ball into the muscle as deep as you can.

Try to ignore and relax with any pain you feel due to the muscles tightness and sensitivity, as it loosens the pain will reduce considerable.

Once you get the ball into the muscle try to relax your body completely, especially your back, and leave it there for at least one minute. After that, move the ball up one inch or 2.5 cm and do the same thing. Continue moving up your back slowly inch at a time repeating the process exactly. Do not rush it, rather take longer if need be.

Once you get up to the ribs you will find you cannot come in from the side of the muscle very well so just pick up as much of the muscle as you can and if they are too flat and hard to do that, apply the pressure directly down onto the top of the muscle.

Again leave the pressure there for about a minute at least, with your body completely relaxed or as best you can with the pain you are feeling. Eventually you should be able to relax completely with full pressure.

It you feel there is still some releasing happening within the muscle or area when the minute has passed just stay there until you feel that release has finished.

If you still find the pressure of your own body is too much because of the pain try a softer ball or having a long hot bath or do an intensive heat treatment to your whole back before you start.

The best time to do it is in the evening in front of TV very slowly and relaxed.

Then when you wake in the morning your back should feel much freer.

Do both sides of your spine each time you do it and even the side your pain is on twice is sometimes best. Start with that side then do the other then finish with the painful side again. If your pain is in the middle do both side twice.

If your pain is intense when you relax with your pressure on the ball, just try and relax and stay there whilst you count to 10 then move on. If you do this you could comeback to each side three or four times until your pain settles enough so that you can do it slowly, relaxing on each spot for at least the full minute.

Please don't even attempt to do this exercise unless you are confident about what you are doing and are prepared to take all responsibility for any soreness you feel afterwards. I am very confident a person with back pain will get much relief from following the instructions exactly as explained.

One of the later exercises is done with a double ball you tape together rolling down both sides at once. This exercise can replace the one using a single ball if that's too intense. Try to eventually progress to the single ball as the sensitivity decreases as it is the best way to get a deep release in the muscle. Expect the muscle to be very sore, especially if they are in a poor condition but the pain is worth it when the benefits are felt, so persevere if you can.

I would confidently say that for most back pains this exercise is the most beneficial of all of them. A demonstration of this exercise technique can be found at www.backpain.com.au/instantrelief and additional advice in the bonus videos section that come with this program.

SHOULDER SWINGING EXERCISE.

This exercise is designed to open up the flow of energy through the back, arms and shoulders and take pressure off the neck and lower back. It will help with the rehabilitation of the erector spinae and neck muscles and any imbalances they have, taking pressure off the lower back. It should be done once or even twice everyday each side, and preferably in the mornings at the start of your day and then where necessary, again at the end of the day, especially for people who spend a large part of their day sitting or standing.

To get in position stand facing forward one foot a little in front of the other, shoulder width apart. Put the same leg forward as the arm you are working with. The rotations with the arm are always an underarm action (similar to the pitch in softball) with the arm staying as close to the body as possible as it rotates a full 360 degrees.

As you rotate, keep the muscles of the arm and shoulder as loose and relaxed as possible generating the swinging action with momentum from throwing the hip forward rhythmically as the arm moves through the bottom 180 degrees of the rotation. Rotate at a good speed to make sure momentum and not the shoulder muscles are doing the work.

During the rotation keep the other hand, i.e. the left hand when you are rotating the right arm, on the hip for balance. Other things to keep in mind are stand tall with your back straight, head up and your muscles and breathing relaxed throughout.

It is important that you do 5 minutes on each arm in each session as it will take that long for the muscles to warm up and loosen sufficiently to give you the benefit we are looking for. The looser the muscles get the easier doing 5 minutes will become so if at first you are not able to do 5 minutes straight through, do 2 minutes

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.

each side twice or another suitable mix so that you get 5 minutes done on both sides. Work toward doing 5 minutes straight through on both arms as soon as you are able to.

Don't worry about any lack of flexibility or clicking or crunching noises coming from the joint which is common when you first start doing this exercise, you should find this will gradually fade away as you continue with it and the muscles loosen up. The most important thing is to keep trying to relax the muscles as you do it, especially around the shoulder joint. Initially this exercise should be done in conjunction with SLM bodywork treatments (or the SLM Yoga) when the therapist thinks your shoulder is ready for it and then later as a way of maintaining suppleness in the tissue in the upper body. Note hold off doing this exercise if it irritates your pain in any way. See an example in the online videos if req'd.



WARNING:

(SEE DISCLAIMER AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS DVD REGARDING THIS EXERCISE.)

WALL SQUAT.

This is one of my favourite exercises because it makes you strong through the back and legs and helps keep the pelvis balanced. It is excellent for rehabilitating the quads, adductors and gluteal muscles. When carried out correctly you will get to a stage where you can feel every muscle in your legs working evenly, enabling you to loosen or realign any that are causing your pelvis to twist or tilt. It is important you do the wall sit exercise correctly and for long enough to properly warm up and work on all the muscles involved. The minimum time I recommend you should do it for is 20 minutes and you should adjust the height you sit so that you can just make that time. If you find after 10 minutes your muscles are burning and shaking and you feel you have to stop, try coming up the wall a bit to lessen the pressure. If necessary, go for a walk around for a minute or two before returning to the sitting position, perhaps not going down as far so you can stay for extra time to get to the 20 minutes.

As you do this exercise try to apply the pressure into your muscles evenly as you would if you were to slowly stand up but stop at the point just before you start to move. To explain it another way rather than brace your muscles to hold your position, push into your feet and muscles from the waist down evenly spreading the pressure into your legs and sacrum where it touches the wall behind you but at the same time try to keep the muscles relaxed.

If you don't already have much strength and fitness in your legs and lower back you should not bend your legs very much at all so you can maintain an even pressure throughout all your muscles for the full 20 minutes. If you feel your muscles begin to burn and shake, don't worry, that's normal and will stop happening as you get more used to it and the blood flow to the muscle increases. Sometimes it can help to do it after a walk when the muscles are

warmed up or alternatively after soaking your legs in a hot bath. Try your best to ignore the burning and shaking, it will slowly go away. Once you can go for the full 20 minutes without any real discomfort you should try to drop down a little further even if it's only for part of the 20 minutes.

As you sit in this position be sure to consciously use all the muscles in the lower half of your body as evenly as you can. Keep your lower legs at right angles to the floor. Keep your upper body relaxed and resting against the wall behind you. Let your arms fall relaxed beside you or if you prefer read a book while you sit. Keep your shoulders and head back allowing for the natural curve of your spine as you lean back against the wall.

I find it's good to watch TV while you sit as it makes the time go by a lot faster as it takes your mind off any discomfort you may be experiencing. If you are distracting yourself by concentrating on TV or reading etc, be sure to reassess your position from time to time to make sure your pelvis is straight and your weight is being distributed evenly throughout your whole lower body and your upper body is relaxed.



BALLET SQUAT.

Combined with the wall sitting exercise the ballet squat strengthens and lengthens the muscles on the outside and inside of the legs. It's very good for the people who are tight in the hips or adductors or weak in the ankles. It is best done after the wall sitting exercise and can make up part of the 20 minutes you are aiming to achieve with it.

For those who struggle to stay too long in the wall sit position, the ballet squat can be a good break which gives tiring muscles a rest. Try a couple of minutes of the ballet squat after 10 minutes of the wall sit then go back to the wall sit.

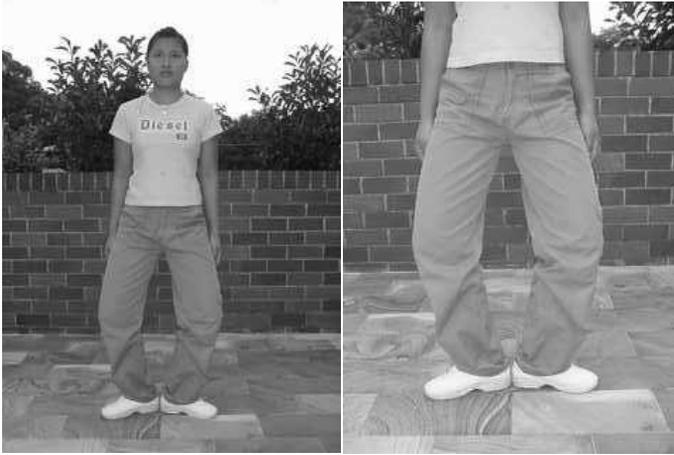
When doing the ballet squat brace your stomach and lower back muscles sufficiently to keep you upper body straight and upright being sure not to slouch forward. The lower you try to go with this exercise the harder it is to stay upright so don't attempt to go too low when you start. You will need to concentrate and balance yourself when doing this exercise focusing the pressure into the legs evenly.

With both of these squats if you become aware of a tight muscle or area in the legs after you go through the warm up stage and have felt the majority of muscles loosen up, focus the pressure into these tight areas until you feel them change and release.

When you first start doing this exercise you may find it difficult to keep your balance and stop your muscles shaking. This is quite normal and will improve as you get stronger with this posture.

This exercise is excellent for people with weak ankles perhaps as a result of previous ankle strain injuries. As with the wall sitting exercise try to go lower as you get stronger which will help to bring back the optimum length and strength into the muscles.

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.



QUAD STRETCH.

Doing the wall sitting and ballet squat exercises are great for rehabilitating unhealthy muscles and strengthening the legs generally but after the exercise the muscles will have a tendency to be contracted so you need to fix that before they cool down. The best way I have found is to sit on your calf muscles for 5 minutes leaning back on your hands putting a small amount of resistance against the stretch as you allow the muscles to cool. By doing this you should avoid getting any knee pain later on from the muscles staying contracted.

For some people whose muscles are in a bad way sitting in this position can be very difficult in the early stages and if that's the case with you I suggest that after the squats you sit in a hot bath for 5 or 10 minutes, just from the waist down if you like so that your legs are submerged then get out and stretch the best you can so that you can relax with the stretch for about 5 minutes.

Alternatively after the wall sit and ballet squat go for a walk that enables you to stride out for 5 or 10 minutes then come back and do the sitting position to lengthen the muscles. Work toward being able to do the 'quad stretch' even if it is only for short bursts of 1 minute until you get more strength and flexibility and can stay comfortably for the full 5 minutes. If it helps, you can place a pillow under your bottom to take some of the pressure off your knees initially until you get more accustomed to it.

The most important thing to remember with both the isometric exercises and the warm down stretch is to do them with correct posture, that is, make sure the pelvis is level and straight, and the forward point of both knees is level and your feet symmetrical. Even if these positions feel crooked, line yourself up visually and hold that position until the muscles warm up and what looks straight feels straight. This aspect is critical if you are to achieve your goal of re-aligning your pelvis and spine by rebalancing your muscles. Over the page are three different quad stretch positions.

Do It Yourself Guide for Sciatica & Back Pain Sufferers.



Leaning back on your hands is a good way of putting some extra length into the quadriceps (thigh) muscles and stomach/ hip flexors.

If you have difficulty doing this exercise because of the pressure it places on your feet try doing it on a bed, perhaps with your feet hanging over the edge and add the pillow under your bottom if that makes it more comfortable also. By persevering with this exercise over some time you will slowly improve your flexibility and eventually be able to do it on the floor as intended.

SELF MASSAGE ON THE HIPS AND PELVIS.

This next ‘self treatment’ exercise is a simple one, doing deep tissue massage in and around your hips and gluteal or buttock muscles using your solid rubber ball (or tennis ball). This will have a flow on effect of releasing tension from the leg muscles and improving circulation to the lower half of the body (great for restless legs).

You should be trying to work on all the muscles in and around the pelvis, especially the sore ones. When your muscles are sore, it basically means they are tight and/ or weak and need the massage. Strong healthy muscles will feel very little pain. You will find after you do this exercise a dozen or so times the sensitivity will have reduced considerably which shows you your muscles are becoming stronger and healthier just by freeing them up and getting blood flow to them.

In the process of doing this massage you will find some particularly sharp sensitive points which are either pressure points or trigger points. If you hold your ball pressure on these points for a couple of minutes when you come across them, it will contribute greatly to the whole area releasing and improving.

To get in position lie on the carpet on your back, perhaps resting on your elbows, and place the ball under your body (pelvis/ buttock area) so it works deeply into the muscles. You probably should start with just applying body weight pressure on the multitude or very sensitive points you can find then trying to relax your body for a couple of minutes once you are onto a good point. The sensitivity of the area should drop away as you lie there, but regardless, after a couple of minutes roll the ball in any direction until you find the next sore point to stay on. You can continue this for an hour or more alternating from side to side so that you give the area a rest every 15 minutes or so while you swap sides.

It is important to consciously relax your body as you are lying on the points. This helps encourage the whole body to let go which is what you are trying to achieve. If you think the ball is too hard

and painful find a softer ball to start with or wear more padded pants and slowly progress to the firmer ball. Remember the more pain you feel just means the worse the condition the muscles are in.

In some cases, when they are unbearably sore, it might be better to start with some exercise on those muscles to toughen them up a bit before you start to massage them, such as the leg raising covered earlier. It will be an individual choice depending on your body. Be assured that perseverance will bring results and although it can be difficult at first to inflict the pain on yourself it will improve quite quickly, in something like two weeks.

Eventually you will be able to work on all of the muscles through that area and feel a more pleasurable pain as it releases the tightness.

You may feel a bit bruised the next day and so I would not do it again before 3 days at least had passed and your muscles have had a chance to recover.

When done properly this exercise will take a lot of tension away from the lower back and hips. One word of caution though if you feel the sciatic nerve at any point with the ball it is ok to apply flat pressure to it but don't grind away on the nerve with a massage action as you could injure it.

RELEASING THE HAMSTRINGS.

Another very important part of the body when it comes to back pain is the hamstrings, at the back of the upper legs, especially when the pain is around the middle of the back, (the Thoracic region) and down from there.

Tight hamstrings will feel like tight cables in the back of your leg and although you might have no idea they are tight from the way you feel normally, they could possibly be the one reason your back pain is not getting better.

The best way I have found to release the hamstrings is just to use a tennis or rubber ball whilst sitting on a bench of some sort. Ensure that the whole of your hamstrings are sitting on a solid base. In this position you can place the ball under your leg and apply deep holding compressions along the different cable like muscles using the pressure from the ball against the bench and the weight of your body leaning forward to apply the pressure. Work slowly and deliberately from one end of the muscles to the other.

Probably the most important line to work on first is down the centre of the hamstring and very deep. You don't have to do any rolling around on the ball, starting at the top of the hamstring just hold the deep compression into the muscle and then move down an inch and hold the pressure down again, for at least a minute but can be up to three.

The two other important lines you should work on are; the outside line of the hamstring which gets more painful the closer you get to the knee, at the tendon, and the inside line of the hamstring that can produce quite a sharp pain when doing the compressions but is nonetheless very important and needs to be done.

If you can imagine lining up 3 balls side by side across someone's hamstrings, which would normally be the full width of the leg, that pretty well shows you the three lines you should work down. If you experiment with the ball in the general area of these lines, the

muscles you should be working along will be obvious from the tight sensitive feeling they have. Just remember to start up near the buttocks and follow the line all the way to near the knee, slowly and deeply.

As you work away from the body, towards the knee, you might have to place your hands down onto the top of your legs and lean forward a little to get the pressure you need on the ball. You can't really do this properly sitting on the floor because with your legs outstretched you can't get enough pressure down to be effective. That's why a bench or ledge is best where your lower legs hang at right angles to the upper legs.

Be sure to work from leg to leg a couple of times each session that you work on them. I would aim to do it thoroughly, once or twice a week, until the tightness is gone and they are not very sore to work deeply on them. Once the condition of the muscles is much better you only need to do this exercise occasionally.

You can use heat to help if the muscles are too sore or go for a brisk, ten minute walk before hand and you should find it a lot easier. Remember the sorer the muscles are, the worse condition they are in whether weak or just tight and some strengthening and heat are the best things to combine with the tennis ball work. Definitely not stretching. You can read in this book as to the reason for that but stretching the conventional way is strongly discouraged basically because it won't work and any short term positives are not worth the long term negatives.

RELEASING THE FOREARMS AND HANDS

Tension in the arms has a significant effect on the shoulders which affects the upper then lower back and pelvis and so on. It is therefore important you don't let too much of the tightness accumulate in the lower arms and hands in the first place. In this computer age a problem I am seeing more and more these days is tight forearms and hands because of all the time people are spending using keyboards and their mouse. Loosening these areas can have the effect of releasing lots of tension from the neck, shoulder and upper back area, something I know many people are trying to do. Invariably treatment by conventional therapists concentrate on the neck and shoulder area and consequently don't get an effective result, mainly because they don't address the lower arms and the day to day pressure people are putting on that area.

There are a couple of good ways of working on these areas to loosen them up.

Firstly get a square bucket and soak your lower arm in hot water for a few minutes. Try to start off with the water as hot as you can. Take a squash ball in the palm of your hand and squeeze it gently pumping the muscles in a form of self massage, just for a minute or so, then relax the lower arm in the hot water again for a couple of minutes.

Repeat this on and off for 10 minutes or so or until your forearm muscles start to tire and then just leave it soaking until the water cools down.

As well as this you can take a strip of rubber strapping made from a flat piece of a bicycle inner tube. Cut the tube so it is a flat piece of rubber then cut out a two inch or 5 cm wide strip. Wrap the rubber around the forearm starting at the wrist and strapping up the arm firmly so it restricts the circulation. Leave it on for around 4 minutes. You can do a bit of squash ball squeezing whilst it is on. This will act like an internal massage for the muscles.

After 4 minutes take it off and soak the arm in the hot water again.

Repeat this process 4 or 5 times finishing with the soaking in the hot water again. This is a good thing to do any day you spend a lot of time using the mouse and have tight forearms.

Next you should work on your hands using the same rubber ball you use for the other techniques (you can't effectively use a tennis or golf ball for the hands). You should soak your hands first and then place a solid rubber ball in each hand. To get the right pressure into the palm of your hand get onto all fours on your hands and knees, leaning your body weight from arm to arm doing compressions into the palm of the hand with the ball. Be sure to change the point of contact with each compression and work the whole palm as thoroughly as you can, especially the sore points you find. When you do find a sore point you can leave the pressure into it for 10 to 20 seconds.

The energy meridians that run throughout the whole body are stimulated from the hands and feet so this exercise will have the effect of releasing blockages by stimulating the flow of energy along these meridians and dropping tension from the muscles around the neck and shoulders. As you could imagine, releasing and balancing the muscles throughout the body will not be complete without working thoroughly on the hands and feet and I believe this technique is the best way of doing that for yourself.

To work on your feet you do the same procedure standing on and off the ball with your full body weight to get the pressure as you do compressions to the muscles around the bottom of your feet. Again use the hot water to prepare and soften the muscles and go from foot to foot a couple of times. Another good treatment for the feet is to do the strapping with the strip of rubber all the way around the foot and ankle and up the leg slightly, leaving it on firmly for 4 minutes then soaking the foot in hot water before strapping it once more.

A GREAT WATER WORKOUT.

Some people are in a very bad way, their body is weak and in pain and nothing in the way of therapy holds for very long because of that muscle weakness. If this describes you it might be best for you to get into the water and do some gentle exercise that will help build strength into all the important muscles in your body. I particularly like this workout is because you don't have to put your head under water and it is not as boring as swimming up and down a pool, yet it also provides a good level of exercise.

To begin, you will need a kick board or preferably one of those pool noodle floatation devices (these are best) Hang in deep water and do a scissor action with your legs, like you are kicking a ball, one leg after another. You can do this easy to start with and just this exercise if you feel it is all you can cope with initially. Do it for 10 or 15 mins or until you feel you have had enough.

Then use the noodle to sit on because we are going to start with warming up and exercising your upper body. It is a very simple exercise and probably the hardest part will be balancing on the board or noodle in the sitting position. (great for working your stabiliser muscles) For the noodle place it in a horseshoe shape and sit on it with the ends threaded through between your legs at the knees. So you are supported under your buttocks and hamstrings.

When you are in the sitting position, face the way you want to go and drag your body through the water (in that sitting position) using your hands in a breath stroke action. Keep your lower body nice and relaxed and just use you upper body.

Try to move your arms in such a way as to get all the muscles in your upper body working evenly and even bring your stomach muscles into play as you do it. If you have a friend to exercise with and once you get proficient at it, you can even have a bit of fun and turn it into a race.

Once you have reached one end of the pool stay facing the same way but row yourself backwards by reversing the action of your arms. Make your way to the other end of the pool and then head forward again.

Once you feel you have given your upper body a thorough workout, get down into the water and hold the kickboard to your chest or place the noodle under your lower stomach and do some kicking using your arms in a dogpaddle action.

You can use flippers if you have them because these will make the muscles in your legs work more evenly and you can get some speed up which is more fun. If you wear them whilst you do the hanging in deep water and rowing action when sitting on the board or noodle they will create a bit of extra water resistance and make your workout a bit harder.

Once you have given yourself a workout with the kicking you can then revert to sitting on the board or noodle and whilst stationary move your arms up and down through the water slowly like a bird flaps their wings to get a varied workout on the arms and shoulders.

Follow that with another kicking exercise where you sit on the kick board holding it in position or the middle of the noodle holding the ends and in a half sit-up position, kick up and down the pool.

Alternate between the legs and upper body exercises and as you tire with one move on to another so that after 40 minutes or so you will have had a good all over workout. The strength you gain from this will give you a good base and enable you to start making progress dealing with your back pain using the other exercises and self treatment techniques.

INTENSIVE HEAT TREATMENT.

It is common knowledge that heat is very helpful when it comes to treating tight sore muscles because it helps open up the circulation, but it can also be a very useful part of your self treatment regime to rehabilitate the chronic tight ones. You can use a wheat bag or heat pack or soak in a hot bath or spa, or a combination of both, the aim is to immerse a muscle in heat regularly and keep it there for 15 or 20 minutes.

If you become aware of a particularly tight muscle when doing the SLM yoga or another form of exercise you can regularly apply a heat pack to that muscle as a very effective way of helping it loosen up. You need to get the heat pack as hot as you can handle without scalding yourself and apply it directly to a preferably stretched tight muscle for two heat cycles. That is: when the heat pack feels like it has cooled the first time re-heat it and put it on again. This should mean you have the heat on for around 30 minutes. This is what I refer to as intensive heat treatment.

The wheat bags are particularly good because they retain the heat for a fairly long time but if you don't have one you can make your own heat pack by wetting a towel until it is damp (but not dripping), fold it into a pad the size you need it and put it into a plastic shopping bag then into the microwave until it is suitable hot. The thicker the towel the longer the heat will last.

Repeat this process daily or as directed by the day to day program, until you feel the muscle has loosened and doesn't tighten up after exercise. If you notice it when you start your exercise you could heat it before going to play or train and in time you should find the exercise helps to rehabilitate the muscles. Then repeat the heating process again after the exercise. Basically the longer you have had the tight muscle the more times you will need to do the heat pack treatment to get a lasting result.

DO EXERCISE THE EASY WAY.

To stay healthy and strong, exercise is very important and should be a part of your day but there is no dodging the fact that it takes time, often time you don't have. Well there is another way you can exercise without allocating time to go to the gym or head off for a walk. That's right you can do your exercise as you go about your normal day just by concentrating on what you are doing and using your body in the right, balanced way.

Take walking for example, when most people walk they actually stroll using mostly momentum and don't concentrate on switching their various leg muscles on and pushing off with them to go forward. Try it next time you have to walk any distance and purposefully use the heel toe action and different muscles in your legs to switch on and push off with each step. By doing this you can turn a 20 minute walk into more work than a normal 1 hour stroll and of course do it while you are getting to where you have to go anyway.

A lot of people spend their day sitting at a desk and end up with a very tight back and a stiff body from the lack of movement. In fact it is often these people who end up with a chronic back problem simply because they don't give their muscles enough exercise as they sit for too much of the day.

Next time you are sitting for any length of time try to switch on the muscles around your hips and pelvis by putting your feet on the floor in front of you and pushing your buttocks down into the seat whilst holding a slight arch in your lower back. Also switch on your erector spinae muscles by sitting tall in your seat.

I am sure you will feel the muscles tire very quickly and it will be difficult for you to hold that pressure for any length of time. This will show you just how weak these muscles have become but by doing this regularly you will in fact loosen and strengthen these muscles and soon notice you can hold the pressure a lot longer than you could when you started. By doing this exercise you will

also become aware of any imbalance you carry in the pelvis and attempting to hold the pressure evenly with the muscles on both sides will help you work towards correcting that imbalance. You will see much more about exercising this way, to correct any imbalances in your body, in my SLM Yoga DVD that accompanies this guide.

If you are one of the luckier people, your job will involve your moving around most of the day doing a variety of different tasks as you go. Even if that is getting in and out of a car and walking short distances, perhaps up and down stairs, the odd bending movement and lifting or carrying things. The reason you are lucky is that you have a great opportunity to do a variety of exercises during your day and give your body a great workout just by carrying out your job.

For the next week take the time to think about what you are doing as you go about your day and consider the ways you can do the same things as you focus pressure on different muscles to give them a good strengthening workout. Walk up the stairs more slowly and deliberately and make your leg muscles do all the work then sometimes run up as you push off with your legs so you get some cardio vascular fitness at the same time. If your job involves bending and lifting be sure to use your legs to squat down and keep a straight back so as to strengthen your leg muscles and lower back rather than put strain on it. Treat the object you are lifting as a weight by sharing the weight evenly between both arms and hold it close to your body. It might not feel like a lot of effort each time you do it but the accumulation of lots of little efforts make a big effort and you will be surprised how much strength and fitness you gain without spending any extra time than you had been previously.

There are lots of ways you can turn your day to day activities into a good all over workout it just takes a little imagination and thought as you go about things until it becomes a good habit.

WALKING.

You always hear that walking is the best exercise for you if you have back pain, I know it is one most doctors will recommend you do. Well you might be surprised to hear that as most back pain sufferers have a leg length discrepancy to deal with, walking is a very bad exercise because it irritates the pain by setting up an unnatural rocking action in the pelvis that irritates the joints and causes inflammation.

Should you be one of the rare cases that doesn't have a short leg to go with your back pain then you will probably find walking is fine and doesn't irritate you but if you have found it makes you worse and have been wondering why, now you know the answer.

Walking generally is great for your circulation and legs but all the same it does very little for your upper body. So if you love to walk as your main form of exercise make sure you add in a daily shoulder swinging exercise so you give your whole body a good workout rather than just confining it to the lower half. Also as you walk, think about the different muscles in your legs and make sure they are all working to propel you forward as it is very easy to stroll along using mostly momentum and not really give the muscles much work. Also be sure you add plenty of hills and stairs to your walk and don't just stay on flat ground and vary the pace a bit during the walk so sometimes you are moving along at a brisk pace and sometimes you are going along more slowly. Try and give your lungs a workout as you go so it turns into good cardio vascular exercise for you as well.

TROUBLESHOOTING.

If you have any questions or difficulties please go to the www.BackPain.com.au/forum/index.php linked on the backpain web site and enter the private area for assistance.

MAKING A DOUBLE ROLLER FOR YOUR BACK.

As an extension to the compression work you do up and down the erector spinae muscles along side your spine, I will explain to you how you can make a roller for your back by taping two of the rubber balls together. You need 3 strips of Gaffa tape (cloth tape) and the two rubber balls. (the scotch brand Gaffa is stickier than most and works best) Although more expensive, the Gaffa tape is better than normal cloth tape because it is stickier and adheres to the balls properly. Cut the tape strips long enough to be able to wrap right around the balls completely, and some. You will need the 3 strips to properly cover the balls and overlap the tape a little then simply pressure the tape so it is stuck down thoroughly.



Lie on your back and place the balls high up at the base of your neck. Place the balls so the space between them sits over your spine and the ball line up on each of the erector spinae muscles.

You are using your body weight for pressure which you should be sure is exerted firmly into the erector spinae muscles. Place your feet flat on the floor with your legs bent and your knees pointed toward the ceiling. Lift your weight up with your legs so you increase the pressure you feel on the balls at the base of your neck, then slide the balls slowly down the muscles about an inch and stop when you feel you have a drag effect on the muscle and the pressure is quite strong. For the best position, you should have your hands behind your neck and elbows pointed to the ceiling as you do this.

You might find that as you drag the balls down your muscles your top drags as well and as it bunches up it stops the ball. I suggest you hold your collar with your hands behind your neck to stop that happening.

Try and relax your body so the balls sink deep into the muscles and wait until the pressure subsides and pain fades away before continuing. It could take up to 90 seconds. Then drag the ball another 3 to 5 cm down the muscles until you again feel the pressure and perhaps pain and leave it there as you relax your body again for up to 90 seconds. As you wait on the pressure it should feel like a traction pressure on the vertebrae, like you are trying to rest the balls between each one.

Continue working down the muscles like this very slowly and not progressing until the pressure and pain have subsided. As you get to the middle of your back you can use the pressure to hyper extend your spine and open up the vertebrae just using your body weight without needing to lift your torso with your legs. Be sure to move the ball slowly and methodically down your erector muscles until you get to the base of your back.

If you held the pressure for the 90 seconds but didn't feel like the pain and pressure had subsided repeat the process once more and you should feel quite a difference. Even try putting the hot wheat pack on between each time. If the pressure and pain is too great then wear a thicker top to provide some padding.

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR BACK PAIN BEYOND THIS GUIDE.

Getting your body into a more ‘treatable’ condition.

I am regularly using this description both to my students and patients because a body’s ‘treatability’ is such a critical factor in determining whether you are going to get rid of your back pain easily or not and for how long it is likely to stay away.

By now I would hope that you have had a good chance to work with most of the self help exercises and judging by the emails I have been getting, a lot of you have been getting really good results and either reducing your pain or taking it away completely which is fantastic and very satisfying for me. Being realistic I am sure there are some of you out there who haven’t had the same success and maybe one of the reasons is because your body is not in its optimal ‘treatable’ condition yet.

I have new people come into my clinic all the time but only a small percentage of them don’t need to make lifestyle changes to get their body into a condition where I can give them a faster and longer lasting fix for their pain. Managing them is not so difficult if they want to spend the time and money seeing me regularly, but that is not my goal. I like to have people coming in for the shortest possible time and so for me educating them on diet and lifestyle issues is an important part of providing an excellent service. That is the same message I keep pointing out to my students and hopefully they are passing that same message on to their patients as well.

I find a lot of people who come in with a tight stressed muscles are under the impression they are eating fairly well and I’d have to admit on the surface it often appears to be the case. I think the main weakness I have picked up from these people is that they are not eating foods in the right balance or they are not eating properly for the amount of exercise they are doing in a day.

What I would like to do here is give you a few things to think about for yourself so you can better decide if you need to make some changes to your diet or perhaps lifestyle. This should get your body into a more treatable condition that you will respond better to the self help exercises you are doing or the treatment you are getting from your SLM therapist.

The first question I want you to ask yourself is, are you drinking enough water? Is there a chance that your body could be dehydrated ? If you exercise a lot or work in a physical job such as a tradesperson, massage therapist or even do lots of flying in an aeroplane (very dehydrating), the answer could well be yes. If you work in shorts and T-shirt or the equivalent and feel quite comfortable even on a cool day when everyone else is dressed warmer, you might well be losing a lot more fluid than you realise, even if you are not sweating a lot on the surface. If this describes you then just drinking water may not be quite enough and you may need to add a small amount of mineral salts to your water to help absorption and replace the lost minerals to help counter dehydration. Personally I have been using a product called Endura added to my water during the day for a while now and have noticed a definite improvement in my energy levels and muscle suppleness. I was drinking plenty of water before but obviously not replacing the minerals I was losing with the sweating I was doing during a day.

Secondly, a lot of people who come in to see me suffer from not eating enough protein and far too many processed carbohydrates like pasta, white rice and bread. Too much of these foods cause the muscles to feel stiff and pasty and sore and not very responsive to techniques that would normally work to loosen them up, but that's not the only problem they can cause. Let me quote a small section of a very good book you could read if you were interested in learning more about food and diet and the way to better health and wellbeing which I recommended earlier in this guide. It is called the X Factor Diet, written by Leslie Kenton. I quote "In 1988 in a burst of enthusiasm the US Surgeon General officially directed all Americans to cut their consumption of fat, especially

saturated fat- and increase the number of carbohydrates they ate. The rationale was simple, cut the fat intake to almost zero and you will leave behind heart disease, diabetes and obesity and most of the degenerative conditions plaguing modern man. However, in the 10 years following the US surgeon generals dietary directives , obesity in the US tripled, adult onset or type II diabetes soared while other degenerative diseases continued to mount.” The book goes onto a more detailed explanation but the important message here is to cut back on carbohydrates, don’t be afraid of fats in moderation but eat more protein especially vegetable proteins and fish. Don’t consume too much red meat or chicken which is generally very poor quality protein due to the way they breed and feed the animals for the mass market.

I find getting someone to cut down on the processed carbohydrates, especially at dinner time, and add more protein, fresh fruit and vegetables, to their daily intake helps soften their muscles sufficiently over a couple of months. I use this mix regularly with consistently good results.

As a way of increasing their protein intake but not eating too much meat I recommend more vegetable proteins like beans, chick peas, lentils and tofu or mixed nuts for snacks. You can also buy Spelt pasta which contains high quantities of protein and fibre and tastes as good if not better than normal pasta. You can also use the spelt flour for cakes and bread. For the very active I add some protein powder or amino acids, the building blocks for protein. This is best taken as a protein shake for breakfast or straight after exercise.

Obviously you can’t beat eating lots of fresh fruit and vegetables during your week but unfortunately these days we hear that they are also being sprayed with antibiotics and pesticides and picked before they are ripe then kept in storage and gas ripened to suit everyone except the consumers so go for organic if at all possible. We need plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables for their vitamin and mineral content, to help our body function properly and although I don’t avoid the regular trips to the fruit and vegetable market

because of the things I mentioned above, I make sure I also take a daily serving of the probiotic super food In Liven to get whatever I might be missing out on from the fresh produce. Also it is organic and contains vegetable and protein ingredients. I give it to my young children as well in their watered down juice or milk and as I am sure they don't get as much as they need.

I understand eating well is an effort for many people because they are busy and preparing healthy nutritious meals takes time and planning, but believe me you need to make the effort because without it your chances of suffering from pain or getting an injury are greatly increased, let alone getting rid of the pain you may already have.

The final point I would like to mention on making your body more treatable is getting enough sleep. Nothing will stress the body faster than a lack of good quality sleep, like 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep in a dark room. If you find it hard to sleep because of your pain, try to do some meditation for an hour everyday as this can also have the effect of relaxing and rejuvenating the muscles without you needing to actually go to sleep. Also SLM Yoga before you go to bed may help. Both can be useful exercises for dropping tension from your muscles and reducing your pain levels.

Heal Lift

I spoke about heel lifts briefly in an earlier section but it is important enough to go over again in more detail.

I try to avoid giving people a heel lift to balance their pelvis but for some people it is the only way. If you have been working on your problems for a while and you still have a short leg then consider putting in a heel lift to help balance your pelvis and take the pressure from your lower back. If the discrepancy is just minor, say a couple of mm then putting an extra inner sole in your shoe can be a good way of getting that extra height on one side. But if the discrepancy is 12 or more mm then you will find it hard to stay in your shoe if you try to build it up from the inside. In this situation you should consider having a boot maker put an extra sole and heel on the bottom of your shoe. This will mean you are restricted in the shoes you can wear but you may not need to wear them all the time.

Be sure you have the shoes with the lift when you are walking a lot or on your feet. If you are spending a lot of your day or night sitting down it is not so important. For a female you could consider adjusting the height of one heel on your high heels to balance you up or if you like to wear thongs on your feet in the summer stick an extra thong base, or part of one, on the bottom to balance you up that way, it doesn't always have to be done on enclosed shoes.

Visiting a podiatrist might be a good way for you to adjust the height of one leg especially if you find you pronate (arches fall inwards) or supinate (arches fall out) when you stand in bare feet. (see pictures)

The cheaper alternative though is to buy some Foot Logic off the shelf orthotics for a fraction of what a Podiatrist would charge. These will do fine in most cases.

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The photo on the left shows an individual who should consult a podiatrist for orthotics. On the other hand, the person on the right has little need for such adjustment.

When deciding which shoe to put the lift in be sure it is the short leg. You can see this by standing in front of a mirror and the short leg will be the one indicated by your pelvis being pulled down. Putting the lift in the wrong side will make your symptoms much worse.

It is ALWAYS preferable to fix the short leg with bodywork if at all possible but use the lift if this isn't possible.

THE BIOFLEX INVERSION MACHINE

Manage your pain and strengthen your core.

The self help techniques covered in this guide are designed to work on strengthening your alignment and releasing the tight problem muscles in your body which are most important when realigning your structure and releasing you from the grip of pain.

Back pain can be eliminated. You can unlock your spine and finally feel lasting relief from back pain and sciatica.

Using The Bioflex Natural Traction inversion machine you can reverse the effects of gravity plus strengthen your core muscles - your lower back and abdominals.

Without a strong core, you simply can't achieve that lasting relief from back pain and sciatica that you've been looking for.

You may be familiar with the 'ankle grabbing' inversion tables. You clamp your ankles in, lie back and invert to approximately 45 degrees. The ankle clamps grip tightly, reducing blood flow around your ankles and your ENTIRE body weight is supported by your small ankle area. Hey, they even look painful. Plus you simply can't safely achieve the full 90 degree inversion that provides full decompression and relief from bulging, tight, strained discs.

By comparison, The Bioflex provides safe natural traction... without clamping . Your body weight is comfortably and safely supported by your largest muscles.

The Bioflex has two inversion positions, one at 90 degrees and one at 45 degrees. At the 90 degree position you are enjoying full, effortless, safe spinal decompression - NO other inversion machine on the market will do that! You can also curl up and down against gravity for a superior abdominal workout, in the correct bent-leg position.

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PLUS, unlike the inversion table back machines, at the 45 degree position The Bioflex inversion system enables you to strengthen your lower back. It's safe, easy and works your lower back in a way that can usually only be achieved by expensive machines found in health clubs.

There's no need to suffer back pain and sciatica - get your life back! Decompress your spine and regain back health! Call us today and receive your Bioflex within 48 hours - you'll be so glad you did!



USEFUL LINKS.

Clean Energy Bio fermented Brown Rice protein powder as a source of daily protein and a meal replacement so it contains all the essential vitamins and minerals to help you lose weight.
www.backpain.com.au/zen

Herbal Fibreblend a great way to help detox your body by cleaning out your bowel and fixing problem in that area. Highly recommended after seeing it work for people for 15 years. Look it up online

BakBalls a moulded set of two balls for working on the body. Saves you having to run around and find the rubber balls and taping them together yourself.
www.backpain.com.au/bakballs

Vibration Machine. This is a great machine if you are not good at doing regular exercise and want the easy way around it. Watch the video of my daily workout using this machine.
www.backpain.com.au/vibration

Bioflex Inversion machine, a great way to manage your pain and build a strong core in just 3 mins twice a day. Check it out at
www.backpain.com.au/inversion

Accredited SLM therapists can be found here:
www.learnmassage.com.au/directory

See other resources to help you in the bonus video section of the web site. Go here to log in using your email address:
www.sciaticpain.com.au/bonusvideos/users/access

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