

Alliance Handshake

October 2016

If you have ever groaned, “Oh, my aching back!” you are not alone. Back pain is one of the most common medical problems, affecting 8 out of 10 people at some point in their lifetime. It is the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work days.

Men and women are equally affected by low back pain which can range in intensity from a dull, constant ache to a sudden, sharp pain. It can come on suddenly – from an accident, a fall, or lifting something heavy – or it can develop slowly, perhaps as a result of age-related changes in the spine.

Regardless of how back pain happens or how it feels, you know it when you have it. And chances are, if you don’t have back pain now, you will eventually. The NIH reports that in a 3-month period, more than one-fourth of U.S. adults experience at least one day of back pain. It is one of our society’s most common medical problems.

-William Van Ry, Owner & CEO

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It is very important to exercise the mind as well as the body. With each edition of our newsletter, we will include a memory word game for you to complete.

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Last issues word: **EQUATING**

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eating	unite	tinea	giant
etui	untie	ting	gnat
quag	agent	tinge	guan
quaint	ague	tuna	guinea
quiet	anti	tune	gunite
quinate	antique`	neat	
quint	augite	gain	
quit	aunt	gait	
quite	tang	gate	
unit	tine	gaunt	

The average is 26 words. Did you meet or beat this average?

Can you find 47 words within this issues word **RELIEVED**?

RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING BACK PAIN

Many diseases can cause or contribute to back pain. These include various forms of arthritis, such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, and cancers elsewhere in the body that may spread to the spine. In addition to underlying diseases, certain risk factors may increase your risk for low back pain:

Age: The first attack of low back pain typically occurs between the ages of 30 and 50. Back pain becomes more common as we. As we grow older, loss of bone strength from osteoporosis — a condition in which bones become brittle typically as a result of calcium or vitamin D deficiency — can lead to a fracture. At the same time muscle elasticity and tone decrease. Discs — the soft pads between each of the vertebrae of the spine — begin to lose fluid and flexibility with age. This decreases their ability to cushion the vertebrae.

Fitness Level: Back pain is more common among people who are not physically fit. Weak back and abdominal muscles may not properly support the spine. “Weekend warriors”—people who go out and exercise a lot after being inactive all week—are more likely to suffer painful back injuries than people who make moderate physical activity a daily habit. Studies show that low-impact aerobic exercise is beneficial for maintaining the health of discs.

Pregnancy: is commonly accompanied by low back pain, which results from pelvic changes and alterations in weight loading. Back symptoms almost always resolve after delivery.

Weight Gain: Being overweight, obese, or quickly gaining significant amounts of weight can put stress on the back and lead to low back pain.

Diet: A diet high in calories and fat, combined with an inactive lifestyle, can lead to obesity, which can put stress on the back.

Genetics: Some causes of back pain, such as ankylosing spondylitis, a form of arthritis that involves fusion of the spinal joints leading to some immobility of the spine, have a genetic component.

Occupational Risk Factors: Having a job that requires heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling, particularly when it involves twisting or vibrating the spine, can lead to injury and back pain. An inactive job or a desk job may also lead to or contribute to pain, especially if you have poor posture or sit all day in a chair without good back support.

Mental Health Risk Factors: Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression can influence how much you focus on the back pain and your perception of how severe it is. Pain that becomes chronic can even contribute to the development of anxiety or depression. Stress can affect the body in numerous ways, including causing muscle tension. Muscle tension can increase back pain.

Backpack Overload in Children: Low back pain unrelated to injury or other known cause is unusual in pre-teen children. However, a backpack overloaded with schoolbooks and supplies can strain the back and cause muscle fatigue. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons recommends that a child’s backpack should weigh no more than 15 to

20 percent of the child's body weight.

CAN BACK PAIN BE PREVENTED?

One of the best things you can do to prevent many types of back pain is to exercise regularly and keep your back muscles strong. Exercises that increase balance and strength can decrease your risk of falling and injuring your back or breaking bones. Exercises such as tai chi and yoga—or any weight-bearing exercise that challenges your balance—are good ones to try.

Eating a healthy diet also is important. For one thing, eating to maintain a healthy weight—or to lose weight, if you are overweight—helps you avoid putting unnecessary and injury-causing stress and strain on your back.

To keep your spine strong, as with all bones, you need to get enough calcium and vitamin D every day. These nutrients help prevent osteoporosis, which is responsible for a lot of the bone fractures that lead to back pain. Calcium is found in dairy products; green, leafy vegetables; and fortified products, like orange juice. Your skin makes vitamin D when you are in the sun. If you are not outside much, you can obtain vitamin D from your diet: nearly all milk and some other foods are fortified with this nutrient. Most adults don't get enough calcium and vitamin D, so talk to your doctor about how much you need per day, and consider taking a nutritional supplement or a multivitamin.

Practice good posture, support your back properly and avoid heavy lifting.

These things may all help you prevent injury. If you do lift something heavy, keep your back straight. Don't bend over the item; instead, lift it by putting the stress on your legs and hips.

RECOMMENDATION FOR KEEPING YOUR BACK HEALTHY

- Always stretch before exercise or other strenuous physical activity.
- Don't slouch when standing or sitting. When standing, keep your weight balanced between both feet.
- At home or work, make sure work surfaces are at a comfortable height.
- Sit in a chair with good lumbar support and proper position and height for the task. Keep shoulders back. Switch sitting positions often and periodically walk around the office or gently stretch muscles to relieve tension. A pillow or rolled-up towel placed behind the small of the back can provide some lumbar support. During prolonged periods of sitting, elevate feet on a low stool or a stack of books.
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.
- Sleeping on one's side with the knees drawn up in a fetal position can help open up the joints in the spine and relieve pressure by reducing the curvature of the spine. Always sleep on a firm surface.
- Don't try to lift objects that are too heavy. Lift from the knees, pull the stomach muscles in, and keep the head down and in line with a straight back. When lifting, keep objects close to the body. Do not twist when lifting.

- **Maintain proper nutrition and diet to reduce and prevent excessive weight gain, especially weight around the waistline that taxes lower back muscles. A diet with sufficient daily intake of calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin D helps to promote new bone growth.**
- **Quit smoking. Smoking reduces blood flow to the lower spine, which can contribute to spinal disc degeneration. Smoking also increases the risk of osteoporosis and impedes healing. Coughing due to heavy smoking also may cause back pain.**

Following any period of prolonged inactivity, a regimen of low-impact exercises is advised. Speed walking, swimming, or stationary bike riding 30 minutes daily can increase muscle strength and flexibility. Yoga also can help stretch and strengthen muscles and improve posture.

Ask your doctor for a list of low-impact, age-appropriate exercises that will strengthen the lower back and abdominal muscles.

The logo features the word "Alliance" in a large, bold, black serif font. The letter "A" is significantly larger than the others. Within the negative space of the "A", there is a black silhouette of two people standing and shaking hands. To the right of "Alliance", the word "Handshake" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a background of vertical grey lines of varying heights, creating a textured effect.

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