“The Spine is a series of boxes running down your back—you are on one end of it, and your head sits at the other.”

**OH! MY ACHING BACK!**

If you suffer from back pain, you are not alone. Each year, 5 million working Americans seek the doctors with complaints of low back pain, second only to heart problems and in the fifth ranked reason for hospitalization. Eighty percent of the American population will suffer with low back pain. Over time, humans have had to adapt to acquire the upright position and become the fondness of society; their low backs have suffered.

**SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM**

Back pain is one of the most common health problems in the United States. It is one of the leading causes of disability and time lost from work and is an expensive problem. The annual cost of low back pain is estimated at about sixty billion dollars. Chronic back pain increasingly recognized as the major personal, social, emotional, economic, and occupational interruption.

**WHAT IS IN MY BACK?**

It is important to understand about the back and spine as the back is working 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Every time you sit, stand, or even the act of moving, you are using your back. Also, consider the abuse that the back takes from you sports, obesity, improper lifting, physically or emotionally demanding lifestyles, pregnancies, poor postures, accidents, anxiety, tension, smoking and more. Considering all these things, it appears that suffering with back pain is probably more normal than abnormal.

Supporting the back is the spinal column from the base of your skull to the bottom of your tarsal bone, with 33 to 34 vertebrae. There are numerous problems that can develop at every level of the column, although some regions are more susceptible than others.

The largest vertebrae in the spine are the lumbar vertebrae. The most frequently injured vertebrae in the spine because of the position of the lower back and the body and the resulting pressure and stress on the region. Most slipped or ruptured discs develop in the area of the lumbar spine.

**ORTHOPAEDIC SPINE (CHEST)**

The bottom part of the spinal column is the sacrum, a single bone that contains the vertebrae. Below the sacrum is the coccyx, made up of three to five fused vertebrae.

**RACER (TAILBONE)**

The bottom part of the spinal column is often a pain if there is a fracture of the tailbone. If you have a history of the need to sit, it is possible that you will have to live with a certain amount of pain, but you can learn to work and enjoy life in spite of it.

**FACET JOINT ARTHRITIS**

The facet joints (the boxes of the spinal column) have a number of joint problems that give the spine its mobility. It is possible to develop arthritis in the facet joints as well as in the thoracic (chest), lumbar (lower back), and cervical (neck) vertebrae. This can cause pain and disability. One may also have tendons muscles over the lumbar facet joints. Even though it is not common over the lumbar facet joints. Even though it is not uncommon, there is a separation of the joints. A very small percentage of back pain victims suffer with ruptured discs.

The majority of people do not experience pain with their arthritic and bone spur. However, for reasons we do not know, some patients suffer quite severely.

**SPONDYLOLISTHESIS**

Spondylolisthesis means that the spine is out of alignment. It is seen in only a small number of patients.

**SPINAL STENOSIS**

With chronic low back pain has many individual causes, each patient must be evaluated differently. Our unique approach to managing your pain is based on medical and scientific principles and treatments. We will work with you to relax your pain and all the associated problems. We will also train you for the pain as the main problem, not simply as a symptom of another problem.

**GOALS OF TREATMENT**

Our aim is to make progress with small actions which add up and produce a large improvement in your quality of life.

**TREATMENT MODALITIES**

We offer numerous options to improve the management of your pain, providing a holistic type of care.

Some of our techniques include:

- Acupuncture
- Nerve Blocks
- Neurolytic Sympathetic Block (Radiofrequency & Hyperthermy)
- Physical Therapy
- Psychological Counseling
- Spinal Cord Stimulation

**DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF BACK PAIN**

**MUSCLES**

Like Rodney Dangerfield, our muscles “get no respect.” In fact, not only are our muscles not given the respect due, but more often than not they are perceived in a negative manner. Thus the phrase “all muscles, no brain.” The muscles are very important in the back as they assist and are responsible for controlling the spinal column that holds the many structures of the body. The vertebrae of the spinal column have a number of the spine and the joints. Sometimes, pain may be because of strain. It is considered by some as the most common variety, but you can learn to work and enjoy life in spite of it.

**NERVES**

The human spine is a busy road particularly rich with nerve supply. Sometimes, damage of these nerves in and around the spine and the nerve roots that exit the spinal column cause the pain which we call back pain.

The spinal column is an expressway to the brain. It is a delicate and sophisticated communications vehicle.

**WHY DOES MY BACK HURT?**

You may be thinking that all back pain is the same. Actually, everyone’s back pain is different. For some people, back pain means a “bent back,” poor posture, backache or aching. For others, it is severe and disabling.

Back pain is a disorder of complex origins and symptoms. It is an inexact estimate as it can originate in the muscles from some identified trauma, or it can be non-traumatic onset. It can even start somewhere else in the body and then attack the muscles of the back.

Back pain may start following muscle strain, ligament strain, facet strain, or sprain. It is common for back pain to be associated with degenerative arthritis of the spine and the joints. Sometimes pain may be because of the cartilage developed in the spinal column after surgery.

**FACT JOINT ARTHRITIS**

The facet joints (the boxes of the spinal column) have a number of joint problems that give the spine its mobility and allow it to bend and twist. You have facet joints at every level of the spine, including the neck, mid and low back. Gradual deterioration of these joints over time is what we generically refer to as the facet joints. Patients with lumbar facet arthritis complain of pain in the low back, hip, and thigh area. The pain is aggravated by bending backwards. One may also have tender muscles over the lumbar facet joints. Even though it is not common, there is a separation of the joints. A very small percentage of back pain victims suffer with ruptured discs.

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