

Physical Therapy “Cornerstone” in Treating Low Back

Approximately 75 to 85 percent of adults will experience low back pain at some point in their life. Too often patients that experience low back pain turn to surgical interventions first. A new article published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons* encourages patients to seek physical therapy as the first option in treating low back pain.

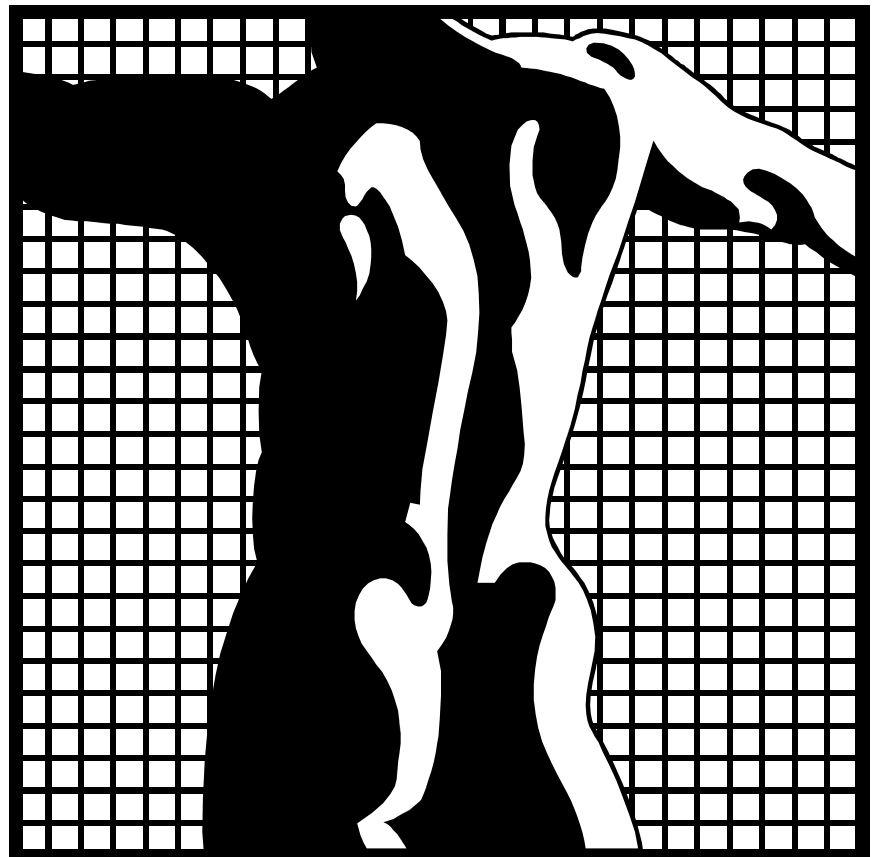
The review article, published in February 2009, states the most effective treatment for low back pain is physical therapy combined with anti-inflammatory medications. Physical therapy along with anti-inflammatory medication should be considered the “cornerstones” of non-surgical treatment for low back pain.

Physical therapist intervention in the treatment of low back pain includes exercise and spinal mobilization. Along with these treatments, patient education in proper body mechanics and staying active are also beneficial. Physical therapists are trained to identify which treatment strategies will be effective for each individual patient and in turn improves the effectiveness of care.

Exercises for low back pain include strengthening of the abdominal wall and lumbar muscles. Strengthening exercises for the abs and lumbar muscles have shown to have a positive effect on patients with low back pain. It has been found that exercise improves function and decreases pain in adult patients with chronic, as well as acute, low back pain.

Spinal mobilization can be an important component of a physical therapists treatment of low back pain. Hands-on therapy to mobilize the spine in conjunction with strengthening of the core muscle groups has been shown to be particularly effective in the treatment of low back pain. Spinal mobilization and exercise in research has shown to be beneficial for many patients suffering from low back pain. Care from a licensed physical therapist can improve the odds that patients can maintain their quality of life and avoid surgery.

Physical therapists are experts in developing safe and effective exercise programs for the individual patients specific needs and goals. Too often patients turn to surgery as the cure all for low back pain. Surgery should be the last resort in such situations. Physical therapy has been shown in a number of research articles to be effective in the treatment of low back pain through exercise and spinal mobilization. Physical therapy should be the first option for patients with a variety of low back pain causes.



Live Life to its Fullest!

Occupational therapy enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health, prevent or live better with injury, illness or disability.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants focus on doing whatever activities or occupations are meaningful to each individual. It is occupational therapists purpose to get beyond problems to the solutions that assure living life to its fullest. Solutions may be how to do a task, changes in the surroundings, altering of individuals behaviors.

Occupational therapists develop strategies and modifications customized for each individual to help resolve problems, improve function, and support everyday living activities. Occupational therapy helps individuals design their lives, develop needed skills, adjust their environments and promote healthy habits and routines that will allow them to thrive.

Occupational therapists take the full picture into account, the person's psychological, physical, emotional and social makeup and their environment to assist patients to:

- Achieve goals
- Function at the highest possible level
- Concentrate on what matters most to them
- Maintain or rebuild their independence
- Participate in activities of daily living they need or want to do

April is designated as National Occupational Therapy Month!

The goal of all occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants is to help each individual patient live life to its fullest.

"Occupational therapy is an exciting field to work in. It allows me to meet and work with such a wide variety of people and injuries. From carpal tunnel and other hand/arm injuries to strokes to home safety evaluations. It is rewarding to be part of someone's recovery."
-Nancy Schreier, OTR/L

We are so fortunate to have such a great OT staff. A special thanks to Nancy, Cindy, Kate, Diane, Sara and Tara for all your hard work and dedication!

*Information provided by the American Occupational Therapy Association

Aging at Home!

Do you have an older friend or family member who is finding it more difficult to manage daily tasks in the home? Do you worry about the health and safety of a parent living alone?

As abilities and strength diminish, families and other caregivers must often help the older person obtain the assistance needed to maintain independence.

One solution is modifying the home. The truth is that many aging people face limitation on independence in their home only because the design and arrangement of resources no longer meet their needs.

Enlist the help of an occupational therapist to aid you in identifying ways to improve safety in the home, to arrange resources, and to modify the environment to help compensate for disabilities individuals may be experiencing.

Occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistants are specialists in helping people to deal with the effects of illness and injury on their ability to manage daily life.

The therapist can also help you and the older individual explore implementing changes in ways that may make them more acceptable.

*Information provided by AOTA



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