

# Caring For Your Back!



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Created by: Dr. Michelle Da Silva, B.Kin (Hons), DC (Cum Laude)

Family Chiropractic and Athlete Care

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## Purpose

The purpose of this ebook is to talk about:

- The importance of back care – not just at work, but also at home and at play
- How few basic rules can make an important difference in how well your back performs, both on and off the job

## Importance of Back Care

### BACK PAIN

- Every day back pain and related (neuro-musculoskeletal) ailments affect millions of Canadians
- Back pain is one of the most common causes of lost time at work
  - Low back pain affects 85% of working population<sup>1</sup>
  - Over 50% of sufferers find back pain affects their quality of life and limits recreational activities<sup>2</sup>

### WATCH YOUR BACK

- Back pain not only affects performance and reduces productivity at work, it affects quality of life
  - Back pain frequently interferes with a person's ability to perform and enjoy simple day-to-day tasks
  - It also interferes with and even prevents participation in many important activities
- Pain may be associated with, or even be caused by, both work-related and non-work-related activities

### A HEALTHY BACK

- Your back supports you "24/7"
- A healthy back is integral to your overall health and well-being
- We'll focus on some simple but important things you can do to prevent injury to your back, and to keep your back strong and healthy.

1. Jill A. Hayden, Maurits W. van Tulder, Antti V. Malmivaara, and Bart W. Koes Annals 2005 142: 765-775. (in ) Meta-Analysis: Exercise Therapy for Nonspecific Low Back Pain

2. SURVEY OF CANADIAN ADULTS:BACK PAINPrepared for: The Canadian Chiropractic Association Prepared by: Environics Research Group Limited May 2003

## Basic Tips for a Healthy Back

### 1. KEEP THINGS 'NEUTRAL'

- Keep a neutral spine
  - This is your back's natural curve
- Practice good posture
  - Posture is important when standing, sitting or sleeping
- Practice good technique
  - Keep your back as straight as possible when lifting and bending
  - Here are some tips for lifting and bending...

#### TIPS FOR LIFTING

- Bend at your knees, lift with your legs
- Hug that load
  - Holding loads close to the body reduces strain on back muscles and trunk
- Flex your abs
  - Contracting or bracing abdominal muscles improves spinal stability
- Don't do the twist
  - Twisting decreases back stability and increases likelihood of injury; pivot feet rather than twisting the body

#### TIPS FOR BENDING

- Keep a neutral spine
  - Again, bend at your hips or knees but lift with your legs
- Stabilize
  - Keep feet apart for stability and balance
- Support
  - Support your weight, especially when crouching

### 2. GIVE YOUR BACK A BREAK

- Any body position can cause discomfort and fatigue if maintained for long periods of time
- Take frequent breaks, regardless of the task or activity
- Varying movements is especially important when engaged in repetitive tasks such as:
  - Typing
  - Snow shoveling
  - Standing and sitting
  - Here are some tips for maintaining a healthy posture when sitting...

#### TIPS FOR POSTURE AND SITTING

Do:

- Sit close to your work
- Sit on a chair low enough to just place feet on floor
- Have a chair support your back in a slightly arched position
- Organize work station to avoid repetitive bending, twisting and reaching
- Use arm rests to reduce stress to the upper body and neck

Don't:

- “Slump-sit” – your lower back should be supported
- Lean forward/downward to reach work
- Sit for long periods of time without getting up
- Sit on the floor
- Cradle the phone in the crook of your neck

### 3. WARM UP BEFORE ACTIVITIES

- Warming up and preparing properly before participating in physical activities can:
  - Reduce likelihood of injury
  - Increase strength and flexibility
  - Reduce muscle tension and stress
  - Facilitate movement and increase range of motion
- Here are some tips for warming up and preparing...

#### TIPS FOR WARM UP AND PREPERATION

- Preparation is especially important when learning a new sport or starting a new exercise routine
- Select the right clothing and footwear
- Remember to stretch:
  - Appropriately for the sport or activity
  - Stretch gently to avoid strain

### 4. PACK IT LIGHT, WEAR IT RIGHT

- Heavy loads and improper use of bags are a growing source of strain and injury
  - Computer and briefcases
  - Purses and carry-on bags
  - Backpacks
- Young children are especially vulnerable, so make sure they pack their backpacks correctly<sup>3</sup>

## Summary

- Following these simple tips and techniques can help you maintain a healthy back
- Remember, if you experience back pain:
  - Take it easy
  - Seek appropriate care

3. “Pack it Light and Wear it Right” – Developed by Tara Tasker as part of a multi-disciplinary project conducted by the Queen’s University Ergonomic Research Group

## How Can Chiropractic Care Help?

### CHIROPRACTIC CARE

- Chiropractors use manual therapies to treat neuro- musculoskeletal disorders, including:
  - Acute and chronic injuries and conditions
  - Back and neck pain, sciatica, headaches, chronic pain, osteoarthritis and many more
- Chiropractors also assist their patients with:
  - Nutrition and exercise programs
  - Lifestyle and work habits

### ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC

- Chiropractic is a regulated health profession
  - Each year more than 4 million Canadians visit a chiropractor <sup>4</sup>
- Chiropractors are primary health care professionals
  - They are authorized to perform and communicate a diagnosis, and to use the title “Doctor”<sup>5</sup>
- Chiropractors consistently receive among the highest patient satisfaction ratings because patients report:
  - Chiropractors take the time to listen
  - Chiropractors understand their condition
  - Treatment was effective
- Chiropractors are back experts — and more!

### WE’VE GOT YOUR BACK!

- Taking care of your back is a full-time job
- Chiropractors can help

**When chiropractic is covered, everyone benefits**

4. Miller W. Use of Alternative Health Care Practitioners by Canadians. Canadian Journal of Public Health 1997;

5. Government of Canada’s Chiropractic Act, 1991



# Family Chiropractic and Athlete Care

**Location:** 77 Queensway West, Suite 108, Mississauga, ON L5B 1B7

**Tel.:** (289) 643-8814

**Website:** <https://family-chiropractic-and-athlete-care.website2.me>

**Social Media (Facebook & Instagram):** @familychiroandathletecare