



# DON'T FALL FOR THESE 5 BACK PAIN RELIEF MISTAKES

Back and neck pain can be debilitating, whether it's caused by acute injury or a chronic condition.

Dealing with back pain can be tricky, but repeatedly undergoing treatment that doesn't work can lead to disaster.

Finding relief and restoring your quality of life starts with knowing the facts. We want to help you learn what you need to know so you can make an informed decision in choosing the treatment option that's best for you.



## MISTAKE #1:

# GUESSING AT THE PROBLEM

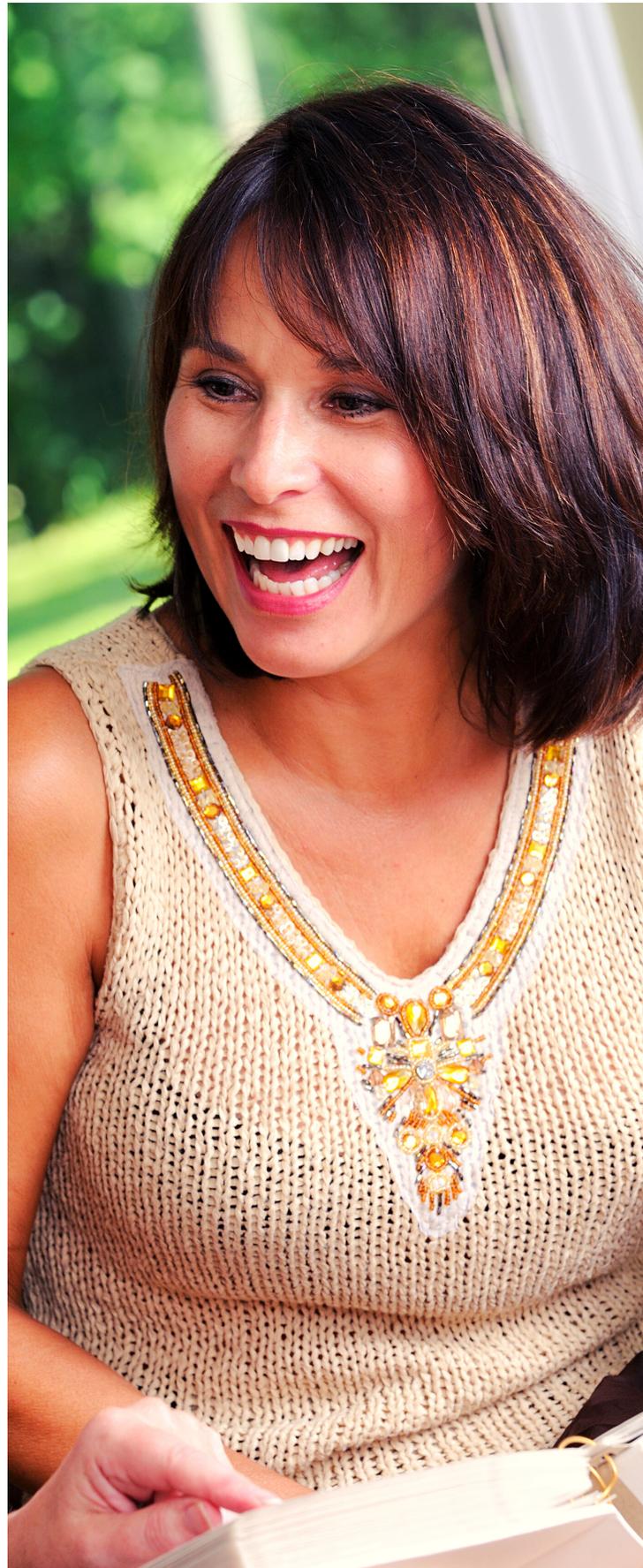
Finding relief for back pain starts with knowing what caused it in the first place. Starting treatment without the right diagnosis can leave you worse off than when you started.

There are 2 types of damage that generally cause back pain.

- Acute damage is something that happens instantly (such as an injury or accident) that is so violent that soft tissue cannot hold itself together.
- Chronic damage happens over time, either from repetitive movement or the body's aging process (commonly called arthritis).

## CONDITIONS THAT CAUSE BACK AND NECK PAIN

- Degenerative Disc Disease
- Herniated/Bulging Discs
- Spinal Stenosis
- Facet Arthritis
- Bone Spurs
- Repetitive Motion Injury
- Sudden Injury



These conditions put pressure on the nerves which can lead to painful symptoms like sciatica, burning, tingling, and numbness in your extremities (arms, hands, legs and feet). It can also cause muscles to spasm or weaken. You may also feel stiffness or pain when moving. Sitting too long may hurt. Having difficulty sleeping is also common when patients suffer from spinal disc disease and arthritis.

There are a variety of ways to relieve pain from all these conditions - but the only way to know which treatment options will work best is to consult with a trained medical expert skilled at diagnosing and treating them.

Natural treatment methods like Regenerative Medicine, non-surgical spinal decompression, and chiropractic care can provide significant relief.

**Research has shown natural treatments to be more effective than medications or surgery, particularly when combined with modifications to diet and exercise.**



## MISTAKE #2:

# RELYING ON PAIN MEDICATION TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Addressing the pain, inflammation, and discomfort of back pain with anti-inflammatory drugs and cortisone injections may actually make the problem worse.

Medications treat only one thing: the symptom. If you stop taking medications, back pain caused by injury, arthritis, or another underlying condition will return once the drugs wear off.

## NSAIDs

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) such as Advil, Aleve, Motrin, and Aspirin block pain by preventing the body from producing chemicals that signal the brain to feel pain in an injured and inflamed joint. These drugs circulate throughout your whole body via the bloodstream, so their effects are not limited to just the joint or spine. This also makes them potentially less effective. Cortisone shots create a pain-relieving effect similar to NSAIDs, but more powerful.

## CORTISONE

Cortisone is artificially made in a lab and designed to stop inflammation. The bad thing is that by doing this it also shuts down collagen-producing cells in the affected tendon or joint. Cortisone does not actually heal the underlying problem triggering the inflammation, it just blocks inflammation and reduces your sensation of pain. This fools you into thinking you are feeling better, but in reality there is no real improvement to your condition.

It's time to stop looking at drugs and cortisone as a fix and a cure. The key to ridding yourself of pain, inflammation, and discomfort is to find out what is causing it.

Once the cause is discovered you can then develop a plan to fix it.



Because Cortisone is a steroid, it has some pretty serious side effects that can get worse over time. These may include:

- Thinning skin
- Osteoporosis
- Weight gain, especially around the face, and increased appetite
- High blood sugar or diabetes
- Rapid mood changes, feeling irritable and anxious
- An increased chance of harboring infections like chickenpox or measles
- Cushing's syndrome
- Eye conditions, such as glaucoma and cataracts
- Depression or suicidal thoughts
- High blood pressure
- Tissue breakdown in cartilage, ligaments, and tendons



**Blocking inflammation and the ability to heal the damaged joint has two very significant results that could make your problem worse.**

*Your body needs to feel pain.*

It limits your activity and stops you from hurting yourself even more. Using drugs or cortisone shots to block pain eliminates this built-in safety mechanism. If you aren't feeling the pain, you won't be able to tell when you are causing more damage.

Even if the pain does not 100% go away with medication, feeling less pain and doing, say, 30-40% more activity than you normally would can cause tissue to tear and nerves to get pinched. You may not even know you made the problem worse until the drugs wear off.

*The stem cells inside your body are what heal you.*

They rely heavily on the inflammation and pain signals from your immune system to know what part of you needs to be healed, and when. The signals sent by inflammation are like markers or beacons that stem cells are attracted to. When a stem cell encounters an inflammation marker in a damaged cell, it knows the injured cell needs repair. The stem cells then go to work to regenerate the damaged tissue.

In essence, if you take a drug or get a cortisone shot that stops inflammation you're blocking the signal - and literally stopping your body from healing. This is why patients who take medications and get Cortisone shots seem to get worse, and more quickly over time, than someone who chooses an alternative method of treatment.

A better approach to treating back pain is to stop the destruction of the joint and allow the cartilage and tendons to rebuild themselves. The nice thing is that if you fix the cause of the problem, within a short time the pain, inflammation, and discomfort go away too!

### MISTAKE #3:

# WAITING TOO LONG TO GET HELP

The longer you wait to deal with the root cause of chronic back pain, the fewer treatment options you'll have.

The traditional medical route to relieving back problems is a slow and painful process. NSAIDS and Cortisone shots are typically the first route most people take. We've been conditioned to believe that pills and shots are the answer to a quick cure for our ills - but covering up the pain or trying to reduce the burning, tingling and numbness with medication only lasts a short time before you must take the next pill or get another Cortisone shot.

Typically, patients spend about a year with their MD going back and forth with different medications or drug combinations. When those don't work, you'll be referred for an x-ray or an MRI. When this reveals that you have advanced arthritis or pinched nerves, things are suddenly more serious.

Your doctor may give you a referral to an orthopedic surgeon or a neurologist for an epidural shot. Taking a shot of a very powerful steroid into your spinal column may give you a few months or weeks of relief - but it will not fix your problem. Eventually the effect will wear off and you will be back to square one again.

By this time you might have spent about 1½ to 2 years living with gradually worsening symptoms. The next thing you may get is a referral to Physical Therapy (PT). But by this point you'll already be behind the curve. Physical therapy addresses the muscle component of back pain, but does not necessarily address the nerve or spinal structure component. Ultimately, to resolve the problem you need to address all three.

**Until you fix the problem with your spinal structure, nothing is going to get better. The sooner you start, the better you'll be in the long run. If you wait too long you may have no other choice but to undergo the knife.**



**Don't let the pain get so bad that the only option you're left with is surgery.**

A complete program for correction of back and neck pain will address all three areas that are causing your problem: the nerve, the bone, and the muscle.

#### MISTAKE #4:

## OVERESTIMATING WHAT WORKS FOR OTHERS

Do not make the mistake of thinking that one solution fits all. Not all treatments that have benefited others will work for you.

Exercise, stretching, getting massages, seeing Chiropractors, and doing Physical Therapy are all treatments that can be helpful ... in the right circumstances, that is! Without a whole-body approach to your care, on their own these beneficial services will not completely alleviate your pain.

Think of baking a cake and leaving out 1 or 2 ingredients. The cake will not turn out very well without following all the necessary steps in the recipe. Consider trying Integrative Medicine, which customizes every patient's treatment to combine therapies that address The Big Three - muscle, nerve, and bone.

### CHIROPRACTIC

Chiropractors adjust the bones of the spine, called the vertebra, to keep them in alignment. But before you undergo any adjustment, make sure that the chiropractor takes an x-ray or sends you out for an x-ray. If arthritis is the root cause of your back pain, there is no way to know how bad the arthritis is or if chiropractic adjustments are safe unless he/she sees an x-ray.

If you have a degenerated disc, herniated disc, or bulging disc, you are not a very good candidate for chiropractic adjustments. Chiropractic is also not a very good treatment for arthritis, if all you are getting is an adjustment. You should be able to tell within 6-12 chiropractic treatments if it is helping. If you've had dozens of adjustments without seeing significant relief, they may be hurting you and it is time to look elsewhere.

### PHYSICAL THERAPY

Exercise and massage and Physical Therapy address the muscle. But if the problem is a pinched nerve then all the exercise, massage, or Physical Therapy in the world are not going to help, and in fact, might make things worse.

15 years ago when we started treating spinal disc disease we were taught to do PT first like most doctors. After about a year of watching patients have relapse after relapse, we stopped giving PT to patients at the beginning of their treatment program. We instead found that PT is very beneficial near the end of treatment. This is a 180 degree opposite approach even to this day, PT is still offered by most physicians first and not last.

## MISTAKE #5:

# LOSING SIGHT OF YOUR OPTIONS

If you have been told that there is nothing that can be done or that you will just have to live with it, don't take no for an answer.

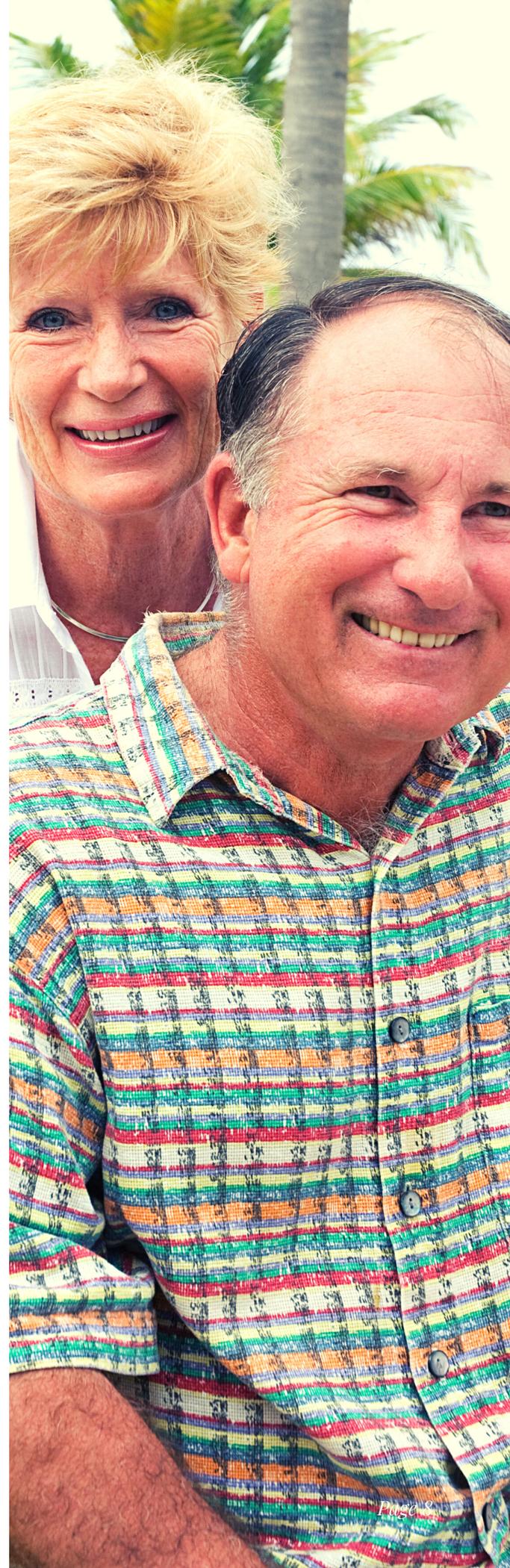
It is easy to give up on doctors, lose faith in healthcare, and regret losing years of quality of life because of your back and neck pain.

Arthritis is a chronic disease. The healthcare system in the United States has a poor track record of helping patients with illnesses like arthritis that do not go away. Medications, cortisone shots, physical therapy, exercise, late night infomercial remedies, back braces, chiropractic care, creams, copper bracelets, and anything else you can imagine may offer some relief for a short period of time. In the end it is likely that you will only be left with increasing pain and loss of quality of life. (Not to mention all the money they cost you, too.)

## **You owe it to yourself to *not give up.***

Advances in modern medicine have produced some amazing successes in the last 20 years. Patients have grown sick and tired of being sick and tired. They are fed up with more drugs and more cortisone as the only answer to their pain. This has pushed medical science and researchers to look for the true cause of disease and develop treatments that correct the problem and not just cover up the symptoms.

With an attitude toward prevention of chronic illness, wellness-based doctors have taken the research and development of new medical treatments and have begun changing the way patients deal with arthritis.



**Non-surgical spinal decompression** addresses degenerative disc disease, herniated and bulging discs, and many other arthritis related conditions of the spine.

**Regenerative Medicine**, *which is perhaps the biggest medical breakthrough of the last 20 years*, harnesses the power of stem cells to help provide cushioning, stabilization, and lubrication to worn out and damaged tissue.



These innovative treatments are especially necessary as the U.S. population reaches a higher overall average age. With life expectancy now about 72 years, our patients want to be able to do at 70 what they did at 40 or 50 years old. Regenerative Medicine is the perfect answer to wellness and prevention, as well as maintaining quality of life well into our golden years.

The main thing we want you to know is that as a patient you need to listen to what your heart desires. If you are being told to take more medication and you feel that is not the right answer or it doesn't fit with your belief system, it's time for a change. Find a doctor who will listen to you, partner with you to reach your health goals and keep you accountable to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Conventional medical treatment is outdated when it comes to dealing with back and neck pain. If you break a bone or need stitches, conventional medicine is excellent at handling emergency and short term health issues.

For chronic disease and prevention, Integrative Medicine and multidisciplinary medical practices are best suited for patients that want to take charge of their health and maintain it for the long-term.



# Our team at Vitality Medical Group wishes you well in your journey to a better quality of life!

Finding the best solution to your chronic back and neck pain is incredibly difficult and can be demoralizing. We understand. That's why we use 15 years of experience to provide innovative, multi-disciplinary treatment options customized just for you to heal the root cause of your pain and bring relief.

Call us today to schedule a free consultation and get on the path to the vibrant life you've been dreaming of!

**SCHEDULE YOUR  
CONSULTATION**



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