

## Neck and Back Pain Explained

A strong and healthy spine is something that every person needs; yet many take for granted. Virtually every movement we make, every moment of the day, involves the use of the neck and back. So, when neck and back pain strikes, it can literally affect everything we do.

As we age, neck and back pain becomes extremely common. The condition affects not only your physical health, but your social and even economic well being as well. An episode of neck and back pain can disrupt simple daily tasks, routines, leisure activities, and employment. Neck and back pain can literally bring life to a standstill, which is why there are so many reports from doctors, and so many missed days at work.

There is no question that neck and back pain can make life downright miserable, but it is not necessary to jump into surgery. There are many other treatment options available, and pain management steps that you can take to overcome your obstacles. These non-surgical measures will not only help to relieve your pain but will also help you to reduce the likelihood of recurrences of this condition.

### Causes

Neck and back pain is usually caused by strains or other injuries to the muscles and ligaments surrounding the spinal column. These may be caused by sports injuries, or a sudden increase in physical activity to which the individual is not accustomed, such as a jarring motion or heavy lifting.

Viral infections may also cause flu-like symptoms that may be accompanied by muscular pain in the neck and back. In medical circles, this type of condition is called myalgia.

The natural degeneration of the spine is another possible cause of neck and back pain. Your spinal column is made up of individual bones called 'vertebrae' that are joined together by the intervertebral discs, joints and ligaments. These components are combined to form the strong and flexible structure of your spine.

As you age through the middle years and beyond, neck and back pain can occur as a result of the wear and tear of your intervertebral discs and other associated components of your spine. Movement is the number one cause of these degenerative changes. Motion causes the cervical (neck), and the lumbar (lower back) areas of the spine to break down over time.

Your ligaments and joints are biological structures that will try to heal and repair themselves. As a result, your spine may become deformed with bulging discs, buckling ligaments and bone spurs. These changes may also create a pinching of the canals through which nerves pass, with painful results.

### Treatments

There is no definitive cure for neck and back pain, but this condition is easily and effectively treatable. Pharmaceutical medications with pain-killing and anti-inflammatory properties are the most common therapies.

Passive physical therapy, used in conjunction with active physical exercise, is another popular option. Hot and cold compresses are applied to the painful area in order to alleviate the discomfort. Other modalities may be used, including the application of electric impulses that can override the muscular spasms that often characterize neck and back pain.

While it can seem impossible to lead a normal, productive life with neck and back pain, surgery is not necessarily the answer. If you suffer from persistent neck and back pain, speak to your health care provider to find out more about the treatment options that can help you get your life back.