



NLJ Fitness & Wellness Consulting

Call Today 206-852-4768

Back Pain and Activity

By Nancy Jerominski

THE most common reason for back pain is poor posture (and, interestingly enough, dehydration and poor nutrition). [Paul Chek](#) is very fond of saying “If you’re not assessing, you’re only guessing.” By overlooking what isn’t working correctly, pain and chronic injuries simply will not go away.

A postural assessment and movement screen are critical to find where muscular imbalances and poor recruitment patterns are. If the client has too much spinal flexion or lordosis or their cervical curves are flat or excessively curved, those ought to be addressed by:

- Stretching the short tight muscles (nearly always the flexors of the spine)
- Strengthen the long, loose muscles (nearly always extensors of the spine)
- Teaching good core activation and recruitment
- Correcting faulty movement patterns

Usually people have developed bad training habits that require undoing and retraining. Folks nearly always need to learn to use the deep core muscles of the inner unit: the transverse abdominus (TVA), the pelvic floor and multifidus.

These are the fundamental core muscles, which are all on the same neurological loop. If one of them doesn’t work right, none of them do. Core conditioning involves more than this but learning how to use these three is a crucial beginning.

Typically when someone comes to me with 3 or 4 pain levels, we use that as their level 1 “gauge” (With 3 ruptured lumbar discs, this is my level 1). If my program doesn’t increase their pain levels or actually decreases it (which usually happens), we’re on the money.

If their pain goes up significantly, well, that’s a really good indicator they’ve done something they shouldn’t. One of my clients had back surgery several years ago. Through these assessments and retraining, he now enjoys skiing, rigorous conditioning and golf, just to name a few. And, he’s in his fifties!

My clients learn that by paying attention to what their bodies tell them, they get stronger and enjoy their daily activities, whatever those may be.



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A favorite line I stole from one of my highly esteemed teachers, [Paul Chek](#), is: “Pain is your body’s idiot light.” Their pain becomes a very accurate gauge to let them know whether they are helping or harming themselves as they move towards their goals.

Pain Busting Tips:

Get a good postural assessment. Stretch the short tight muscles and strengthen the long loose muscles. Be wary of trainers who tell you “No pain, No gain”. There is no gain when your pain goes up, only systemic draining.

- **Stop doing curls and crunches from the floor or on machines!** Those over-train and shorten the rectus abdominus, push out the transverse abdominals, adding significantly to forward head posture and low back pain.
- **Move in moderation! If your pain levels get worse you’ve done too much.** If they stay the same or decrease, you’re headed in the right direction. Movement increases circulation and brings nutrients to the bones and tissues but it must be done correctly.
- **Drink plenty of pure, chlorine free water!** If your muscles and tissues are dry, they’re going to ache.