

101

BACK PAIN RELIEF TIPS

*Quick and Easy Ways to
FINALLY Beat Back Pain!*



Dear Friend,

For over a decade, the Healthy Back Institute has helped back pain sufferers from around the world get lasting relief from back pain. During that time well over 200,000 people from at least 85 different countries have turned to us for pain relief.

We've examined just about every back pain treatment option under the sun from simple tips and tools to full-blown therapies. Many are fantastic. Others are complete rubbish. At least some of them are bound to work for you.

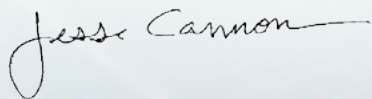
In this back pain tips guide, I'll share some of the best back pain relief tips we've gathered over the years to help you get fast and lasting relief from your back pain. Some are quick exercises and simple tips you can do right now to give your back a break from pain. Others will require an investment from you to fully benefit... whether of time, money, or both. But when you finally beat your back pain without going under the knife, you'll be thankful you took action.

So how should you best take advantage of this guide? That depends on you. Here's three different ways you can start using these 101 Back Pain Relief Tips to help your back:

- **"Tip a Day"** – Simply read one tip each morning, then try what you read that day... anyone can spare 30 seconds a day to learn something new!
- **Divide and Conquer** – Pick the one section that would most help you right now... for example, if your back pain is so bad you can barely read this guide, try starting with "Quick Remedies for Back Pain," but if your pain is mostly at night, you might find "Back Pain in the Bedroom" more immediately helpful.
- **Eat the whole elephant** – Sit down and read the whole guide in one evening, highlighting the specific tips you believe would help you most as you read, then pick one or two to try right away.

Regardless of which approach you choose to take, here's what I'd like you to do. Read through these tips. Take action. Then tell us your own success story. You can share what worked for you at the ["Share Your Story"](#) page on our website.

Best wishes for your health,



Jesse Cannone, CFT, CPRS, MFT

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Quick and Easy Ways to Finally Beat Back Pain!

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Quick Remedies for Back Pain

Having a back pain flare-up?

The tips in this section will help you end the pain and get on with your day as quickly as possible.



1 Rest – But not for too long!

Let's start by blowing one of the [biggest back pain myths](#) out of the water: that you should stay in bed as long as your back hurts.

If you just hurt your back, up to two days of bed rest can help your back rest and recover. But anything longer will be unproductive as your muscles atrophy and stiffen, potentially causing even more back pain. In fact, some studies show that bed rest longer than a couple days can double your recovery time! So... listen to your body. If you need to rest a day or two, do it. Then get out of bed and start moving again!

2 Fast Back Pain Relief Stretch

Stuck in bed with lower back pain? This gentle stretch is great for relieving painful muscle spasms in your lower back while lying in bed.

How to do it: Gently raise your knees from the bed to your chest then put a slight pressure on your knees for a light stretch in your lower back. Remember to listen to your body – the stretch should not add to your pain.



3 Make Back Pain Chill Out

Ice is one of the most effective tools for ending back spasms – if you get the ice on the injury fast. For best results, apply ice to the painful area within the first five minutes of a new injury or flare-up. 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off for the first 48-72 hours is recommended to minimize swelling and inflammation. A wet paper towel or thin t-shirt between your back and the ice will help prevent frostbite.

Want a flexible ice pack that's always ready to go? Try soaking then wringing out a small hand towel, fold it, place it in a ziplock bag then keep it in your freezer. The towel will conform to your back and the ziplock bag will keep you from getting soaked.

4 Back Pain Blow Torch

No, I really don't want you to take a blowtorch to your back (although I've known some who might give it a try if they thought it would relieve their pain). What I'm talking about is using heat to "burn out" back pain.

Similar to how ice shocks your body into breaking the pain-spasm cycle, heat also helps you break away from repeated muscle spasms. The warmth helps improve circulation to the area so your body can deliver more oxygen and nutrients to the injured area and carry away waste products to help it heal faster.

Heating lamps, heating pads, hot tubs, pain creams with cayenne pepper, or even a hot shower can all bring on the heat for your source of pain. Plus they're much safer than a blow torch. Again, try 20 minutes on, 20 off.

Want to know my absolute top recommendation for heat therapy for back pain? Don't miss Tip #100.

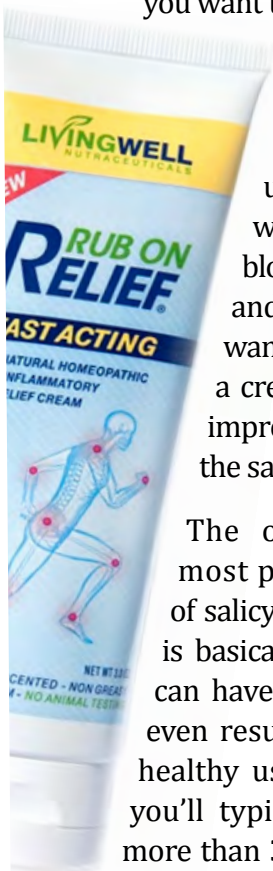
5 Double Shock

Back muscle spasms still keeping you miserable and in pain? Then it's time to let your back muscles know you mean business by giving them a [double-shock](#).

Start by applying ice for 20 minutes, then switch to applying heat for 20 minutes. Repeat this cycle three times. That'll usually settle down those out of control back muscle spasms in a hurry.

6 Rub On the Pain Relief

One old standby for pain sufferers around the world is a rub-on pain cream. Of course all pain creams aren't created equally so here's what you should look for if you want the best results.



Most pain relief creams use copious amounts of menthol, which is great if you want to stink up to high heavens. Yes, menthol works wonders for improving blood circulation to speed healing and it feels great, but if you don't want to smell so "minty fresh" look for a cream with titrated menthol which improves its effectiveness and allows the same effect with less smell.

The other common ingredient in most pain relief creams is some form of salicylate, like methyl salicylate, which is basically a form of aspirin. Heavy use can have undesired side effects, and has even resulted in the death of otherwise healthy users in rare cases. (That's why you'll typically see a warning not to use more than 3 or 4 times daily.) Proceed with

caution if using one of these.

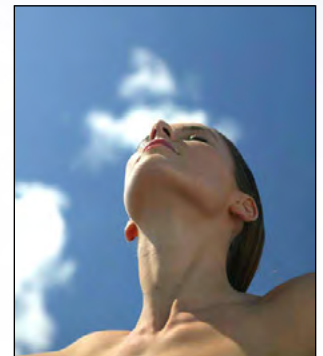
Instead of salicylates, look for a rub-on pain cream with all-natural ingredients. [Rub On Relief™](#) is one pain cream which uses only natural ingredients to tackle types of back pain most other creams don't even address.

7 In With the Good, Out with the Bad

If back pain has you feeling like screaming in pain, there's a good chance that's because your body is screaming for more oxygen. Making matters worse, many of us tend to breathe more shallowly while in pain, adding to our body's oxygen deficit.

Try this now: Slowly inhale a deep breath. Hold it a few seconds. Slowly let it out. Feel better already? Great!

Regular [deep breathing](#) will help you maximize your lung's oxygen capacity, calm nerves, and yes, decrease pain. Want to know if you're doing it right? Put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Breathe through your nose and make sure your belly rises first.



8 Hit the Hot Tub

Heating pads and heat lamps work great for warming localized areas of pain, but usually keep you somewhat immobile. Hot tubs provide heat to get your blood pumping like Tip #4, but across a larger area of your body at one time. Plus, hot tubs are fun, right? Saunas work well, too...

9 Home Health Spa in a Box

If you don't have easy access to a hot tub or sauna, no problem. Taking a hot bath or shower helps, too. But if you really want to give your back an extra boost of pain relieving power, add 2 cups of Epsom salt to your bath water. Many back pain sufferers swear by the relief Epsom salt brings. In fact, you should check out the numerous other [health benefits of Epsom salts](#) too.

10 Stop the Nonsense

This tip may seem like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised how many people fall into the trap of continuing to do what doesn't work for them.

If you're trying a new treatment or therapy, give it some time to work for you. This might take a couple weeks to a few months depending on what it is. But if you've found no or only minimal pain relief after this experimental period, it's time to stop wasting time and money on it and try something else!

Why is this tip in the Quick Remedies section? Because if you waste all your time, money and energy on a treatment that isn't working for you, regardless of what it is, you're not going to get relief. But if you try something new, it might work right away!

Back Pain in the Bedroom

If we spend 1/3 of our lives in bed, back pain is certainly going to have a major impact on the two important activities most adults associate with the bedroom: sleep and sex. The tips in this section will help you minimize the impact of back pain on both.

11 Get Lucky

Besides feeling good, did you know that orgasms actually make you, well, feel good? Scientific studies have shown that from start to end of sexual activity, endorphin production increases as much as 200%. Besides providing a feeling of well being, endorphins enhance the immune system, reduce stress, slow down the aging process, and blocks pain almost like morphine - only naturally. So if you're in pain, try having more sex.

12 Start Your Engines

If back pain has really put a crimp in your ability to perform in the bedroom, you might want to start things off a little earlier. Here's a few activities to try

before hitting the sheets to prepare your body for an enjoyable romp in the hay:

- Take a hot shower together with your partner. Besides allowing extra time for foreplay, the heat of the shower will relax your muscles and get your blood flowing.
- Begin with a massage. Done carefully, massage feels great, prepares your muscles to accept further activity, and can increase intimacy with your partner.
- If your back still isn't ready, try having your partner ice down the painful area so the rest of your night can heat up.



13 Sex Positions for Men

Men, back pain doesn't have to ruin your sex life. Try these positions tonight:

- Lay on a firm surface and use pillows to support your knees and head. You might like to try placing a small rolled towel under your lower back.
- Try a side-by-side position.
- Place a pillow under your lower back while your partner straddles you on top.
- Try sitting in a sturdy chair instead of lying down.

14 Sex Positions for Women

Ladies, these positions will help you enjoy your sex life again even with back pain:

- Try the missionary position with your legs bent towards your chest.
- Sit on the edge of a chair and have your partner kneel between your legs for entry.
- Rear entry may be more comfortable for women with back pain. Try kneeling on the bed or lying on your belly with a pillow under your chest.
- Sit on your partner's lap as he sits in a chair.

15 Get Your Zzzz's

Failing to get enough sleep for some folks may mean waking up grumpy. But there's a hidden danger even for those who can "get by" on less sleep.

Studies have shown that a sleep deficit of two hours a night (e.g. sleeping six hours a night) for as little as six weeks can stimulate an increase in chronic inflammation.

If you haven't heard already, chronic inflammation is a major contributor to most of the top 10 killers, including heart attack, stroke, and even cancer. Chronic inflammation is also a major contributor to back pain. So while you need to minimize bed rest (see Tip #1), getting a regular eight hours of sleep is important for both your back and your overall health.



16 Finding Cloud 9

Selecting the right mattress is one of the most important decisions you can make to ensure a good night's sleep. But what's the best mattress for back pain? Well that depends...

- Those with lower back pain typically find a medium-firm mattress gives the right amount of support and comfort.
- Sciatica sufferers may find an even firmer mattress is important for preventing flexion which could aggravate their condition during the night.
- Those with spinal stenosis on the other hand usually need to sleep in a somewhat flexed position for comfort so a medium or even softer mattress may be warranted.
- Above all else, pick a mattress that is comfortable for *you* to sleep on, regardless of what any guide including this one says *should* help you sleep better. It's your back after all, and everyone is different. Don't forget, reputable mattress sellers will allow you to try a mattress and return it if it doesn't work for you.

In the market for a mattress now? Be sure to check out our free [Organic Mattress Buyer's Guide!](#)

17 A Firm Foundation

A sagging mattress can be murder on your back. If you're not prepared to buy a new mattress just yet, one way to give yourself a firmer foundation to sleep on is to slip a piece of plywood between your mattress and boxspring.

18 Pillow Talk

Even if you have the best mattress in the world for back pain, improper pillow usage will completely sabotage your efforts to sleep well and allow your back to recover. Regardless of their thickness, firmness, or number of pillows you use, what you want is a neutral spinal alignment when you rest your head for the night. Allowing your head to push forward, fall back, or lean to the side all night is a sure recipe for a neck ache and back pain in the morning.

19 Choose Your Position

One of the top questions we get is: What's the best position to sleep in for back pain? Sleeping on your back provides the most stable position for your spine.

Sleeping on your side would be our second choice – try placing a pillow between your legs to support your hips and relieve pressure on your lower back.

Stomach sleeping is the most difficult position for most back pain sufferers to sleep in because of the lack of spinal support.

Now here's my real tip. Try each of the sleeping positions mentioned above. Whichever one allows you to sleep best and wake up with the least pain is the right position for you.



20 Fight the Center Sag

The heaviest part of your body centers on your hips and pelvis. As a result, the extra weight in this area tends to cause even firm mattresses to sag further here than surrounding areas. A little extra support here can make a huge difference for your back.

You can add extra support to any mattress by simply folding a towel or blanket in half and slipping it under your fitted sheet (fold it in half again if it's thin). It may only make a few millimeter difference but your back will thank you in the morning.

21 Slipping Out of Bed (without slipping a disc)

Your day has been going great. Your back pain has been tolerable so far. But now it's time to get out of bed. Here's how to do it with minimal strain on your back:

1. Roll to your side near the edge of the bed
2. Let your feet come over the edge while you push down with your bedside elbow and push up with your opposite hand
3. Stabilize with both hands as you sit up to keep your back in a more neutral, balanced, and stable state

For a video demonstration of this technique, [click here](#).

Back Pain At Work

Many of us spend more time at work than anywhere else outside our home. Whether you're in your seat at a desk all day or on your feet, you're sure to find some tips in here to help you prevent back pain while on the job.



22 Hip to Be Square

Twisting and turning to stretch is great. But working all day long in the same twisted position will only leave you sore and cause your body to develop pain-causing muscle imbalances over the long run. Avoid trouble by always keeping your work directly in front of you, turning your chair rather than your body to face your work.

23 Listen With Your Ears



The way some folks talk on the phone all day with it jammed between their head and shoulder, you'd think they listen through the top of their arms. Invest in a telephone headset and use that for hands-free operation without a kink in your neck.

24 Ergonomics for Everyone

If you work a corporate desk job at virtually any Fortune 500 company, you're bound to have been given a lecture on ergonomics during orientation. That's because employers know how much money they can save on workers' compensation claims by

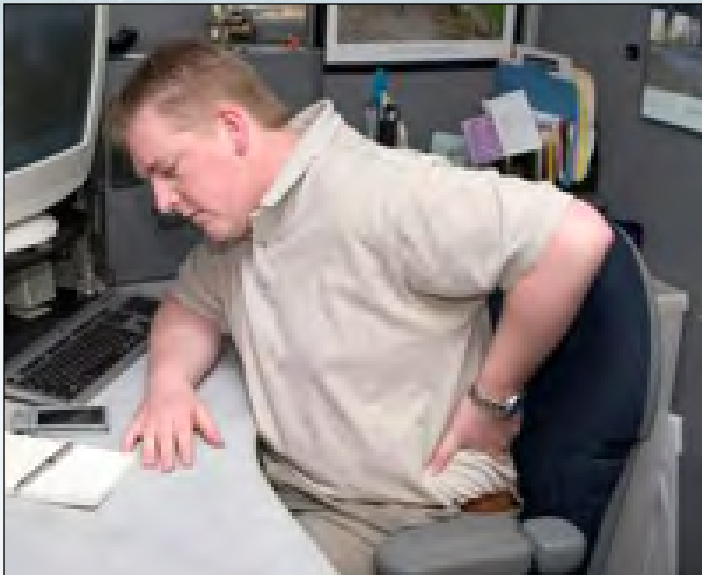
making sure their employees' workstations are set up correctly.

But you don't need a lecture or ergonomics specialist to benefit. Follow these tips and you'll be well on your way to a properly set up workstation:

- Place your monitor at least 20 inches away from your face, but not so far that it's hard to read
- Keep your keyboard and mouse in line with your monitor (see Tip #22)
- Adjust your chair and / or your keyboard tray so your keyboard is positioned slightly lower than your elbow and your wrists maintain a neutral position while typing
- Keep your mouse directly next to your keyboard
- If you're resting your wrists on a wrist pad when actively using your mouse or keyboard, toss it out!

25 Back Beat? Check Your Seat...

Pop quiz! What position do you find yourself in for most of your workday? If you're like most computer-bound folks at work these days, then your answer is... on your seat, right?



27 Throw Your Back In

Don't want to throw your back out? Make sure it's in the right position, especially when you're sitting. Specifically, make sure you give the curve of your lower back the support it needs with proper lumbar support.

Obviously, the first choice is to pick a chair which offers a good back support. See Tip #25 for advice on picking the right chair. But even if you're stuck with a lousy seat for now, there's still hope. Give your back what it needs with a [lumbar support pillow](#). In a pinch, even a small, rolled-up towel strategically placed behind your lower back can help.

And if that was your answer, then your very first consideration for preventing back strain should be a review of the office chair you're planted in all day. That's because sitting for prolonged periods of time can be a major cause of back pain and specially-configured office chairs with correct lumbar support go a long way toward taking back pain out of your daily picture.

If your current chair fails to make the grade by leaving you in pain then be sure to watch my [office chair review video](#) before purchasing a new chair. And yes, if your employer won't spring for a new chair you should buy it for yourself – it's that important!

26 Get On the Ball

Exercise ball, Pilates ball, whatever you choose to call it... get one and sit on it!

That's really the whole tip. Sitting on an exercise ball adds a measure of instability you won't find sitting on most chairs, causing your core muscles to automatically compensate to keep your body upright on the ball. Your back benefits as your stability and core strength improves. And it's fun!



While exercise balls are cheap, make sure to spend the few extra bucks for a heavy-duty ball that'll easily support your weight. If you're under about 5 feet, 10 inches tall (178cm), a 65cm ball should fit you well. If you are taller, consider going with a 75cm ball.

28 Use a Back Orthotic

Many people think of a brace for scoliosis when I mention a back orthotic, but that's not what I'm talking about this time. There's actually a type of seat cushion that works so effectively at instantly improving your posture and eliminating spinal pressure while sitting that the company which created it calls it a back orthotic, but officially it's named the Back Joy Core.



Here's how the Back Joy works. Normally when you sit down, your buttocks flatten out and your back muscles automatically tighten. The Back Joy cups your gluteus muscles to prevent this automatic tightening and reduces pressure on your lower back and tailbone.

We tested it out and found it to work very well. Check out my [video review](#) and see how you can get a Back Joy for yourself.

29 Driving Pain Away

You don't have to be an over-the-road truck driver to experience back pain from driving. Here's a few ways to minimize pain from too much time behind the wheel.

First, experiment with your seat and wheel height and position (you know, that "other" lever you forgot about coming out of the steering column). Small adjustments can equal major relief.

If your seat doesn't provide adequate lumbar support, consider using a lumbar support pillow suitable for vehicles (see Tip #27).

Perhaps most importantly, pull over and take stretch breaks as frequently as possible. Even 1 or 2 minutes of stretching your hip flexors, hamstrings, lower back, calves and chest can ease those aching back and shoulder muscles.

30 Egg Timers and Telephones



Sitting all day in the same position is a recipe for back pain disaster. Our bodies were made to move around, not sit motionless hour after hour, day after day.

Make it a point to frequently move your body while sitting. Personally I work my body about every 10 minutes or so. And anytime the phone rings I use that as an opportunity to stand up and take a stretch break as I answer the phone.

Not sure you'll remember to take frequent breaks? Get an egg timer or use a built-in timer on your cell phone or computer to remind you that it's time for a quick stretch break.

Try taking a 30 second stretch break every 10 minutes for one whole day and you'll notice the difference in less muscle stiffness and soreness.

31 Atlas Shrugged

Ayn Rand's most famous novel (one I highly recommend reading, or at least [watching](#), by the way) has a thought-provoking title: Atlas Shrugged.

Think of that. If you've been carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, it would be nice to take a load off, right? But if you're determined to carry the world around anyhow then the least I can do for your back is share our top 10 lifting tips to help you prevent a back injury:

1. Use your leg and buttock muscles. Bend your knees for heavy lifting to provide a solid foundation for the spine and keep your trunk straight up and down while lifting—a horizontal trunk can add

hundreds of pounds of pressure to your lower back!

2. Stay close to what you are lifting to decrease the pressure on your spine.
3. Avoid twisting when lifting. If you must turn when lifting, pivot your feet instead of twisting your back.
4. Always be sure of your footing.
5. Take frequent breaks when lifting to prevent muscle fatigue which can make you more injury-prone.
6. Always use both hands when lifting and lift slowly and deliberately. Have another person help you lift heavier objects.
7. Space your feet at least shoulder width apart for better balance and a solid base for lifting.
8. Avoid tensing or arching your back when lifting.
9. Avoid lifting or carrying unbalanced loads or carrying objects overhead.
10. Keep your abdomen tight and tuck in your buttocks to ease the strain on your spine while lifting.

32 Left Holding the Bag?

If you're going to carry stuff around, be sure to follow these tips for picking a good bag / backpack to carry it in and follow these loading and carrying techniques to avoid back pain:

How to pick the right bag / backpack

Size - select a backpack that fits snugly to the curve of your back. Look for a backpack that does not hang below your waist when empty. A loaded pack should never fall more than 4 inches below the waistline.

Shoulder straps - choose a backpack with two adjustable and well-padded shoulder straps. Shoulder strap anchors should fall 1 to 2 inches below the top of the shoulder.

Waist belt - a waist belt can help ensure weight is carried properly by ensuring more of the load is transferred to your hips.

33 Watch What's On Your Feet

Wheels – consider using a bag with wheels so heavier loads can be pulled along rather than carried. Be sure the extended handle length allows you to pull the bag without excessive bending or twisting.

How to safely carry your bag / backpack

15% rule - never carry more than 15% of your weight. For example, a 150 pound adult shouldn't carry more than about 22 pounds.

Heavy items in back - securely pack heavier items to remain close to your back.

Keep it clean – regularly remove unnecessary clutter to minimize weight carried.

Wear both shoulder straps - distribute weight evenly across both shoulders by always wearing both straps. Adjust straps to allow free movement of your arms without twisting or bending to the side.

Use the waist belt - Reduce the load on your shoulders and neck by snugly fastening the waist belt.

Center the pack - wear the backpack centered across the curve of your mid-back. Avoid allowing the backpack to hang below your waistline.

Use the wheels - use the wheels if so equipped, particularly when carrying heavy loads.

We tend to take our feet for granted and seriously



neglect them. But our feet are critical to good biomechanics and overall health and fitness. They serve as the foundation for your body and even the slightest problem

in your foot can throw your entire body out of whack.

So put on the right shoes. And ditch the bad ones. Look, grab a trash can and go over to your closet right now and toss all those high heels and uncomfortable dress shoes (yes, men, that means you!) right into the can.

What? You spent good money to wreck your body with fashionable shoes? Then at least set them aside as often as possible and spend a little more good money to get yourself some footwear that actually fits and supports your feet well enough to deserve a place on your everyday footwear short list. And

if you insist on wearing those lousy shoes still, at least use a neutral shoe insert.



Fitness & Back Pain

Fitness isn't a measure of weight or how many reps of a particular exercise you can do...fitness is a measure of how close you are living to your optimal health. As you improve your real fitness you'll naturally decrease your pain...



34 It's a Dirty Word, But...

Somebody has to say it: constipation. That's because extra abdominal gas and fecal matter can create enormous pressure on your spine. Think of it... if you only have one bowel movement a day, there could be as many as eight meals backed up in your bowels.

Here's a few practical tips for preventing back pain from excess gas and constipation:

- Drink more water! Dehydration is a common cause of constipation which is easily eliminated by drinking a daily ounce of water for every two pounds of body weight (e.g. if you weigh 100 pounds you should drink 50 ounces of water daily).
- While fruit is great for breakfast, avoid eating fruit and sweets before bed. Your body will convert sugars found in them to gas and without food behind it to push it through you'll wake up in the morning with more back pain from the extra pressure.
- Use a [natural colon cleanse](#) to get things moving again. While hydro colon therapy also works, it can be quite uncomfortable and invasive. Look for a colon cleanse that includes an anti-parasitic while you're at it too because you may be surprised by what's lurking in there...

- Try a visceral massage, also called Sun-Moon. To begin, lie on your back and with both hands starting just above your right hip, apply inward pressure on your abdomen, going straight up to the bottom of your rib cage. Then follow along the bottom of the rib cage to the left and then down to the top of the left hip. Go slow and repeat to tolerance.
- Acupressure can also help relieve constipation. Surprised? Don't be... acupressure is effective for many conditions (more in Tip #92). Here's a [video demonstration](#) of how to use self-acupressure to relieve constipation.

35 Those Aren't Swarovski Crystals!

Your bowels aren't the only waste elimination system related to back pain (Tip #34). Your kidneys are another potentially overlooked source of back pain.

Some of the worst stabbing back pain you may ever experience could be from oxalate crystals, which are super-sharp kidney stones. These are formed when your kidneys try to protect you from high levels of oxalic acid by coating it with calcium. But these aren't the only kind... in fact, there are at least eight different forms of kidney stones. None pleasant.

Fortunately, kidney stones can be dissolved and washed away with a natural kidney cleanse. You can

find a good at-home natural kidney cleanse useful for dissolving virtually any type of kidney stone on page 549 of Dr. Hulda Clark's groundbreaking book, [The Cure for All Diseases](#).

36 The 900-Year-Old Back Pain Workout



We now know back pain has three general sources: body, mind, and diet. Yet the Chinese have been practicing and perfecting an art called Tai chi (pronounced "tie chee") that helps all three at the same time since the 12th century!

Although it was originally developed as a martial art, Tai chi is used as much for health reasons as self defense now. By focusing on proper movement, controlled breathing, and meditation, Tai chi helps those who practice it prepare their mind, body and spirit for healing – usually with great success.

Simply type Tai chi and your city's name into Google to find a local group to join up with to give it a try.

37 The Injury Rehabilitation Workout

Believe it or not, one of the most popular classes at many health clubs may be the answer to your back pain. It's called Pilates (pronounced "pah-LAH-teez").

Pilates was first developed as a technique to help dancers with deep body conditioning and injury rehabilitation. It helps develop a strong core, good posture, and balanced

muscle development – all important for preventing back pain. And since it was created specifically NOT to aggravate injuries, it's low impact unlike aerobics and other high-impact exercises.

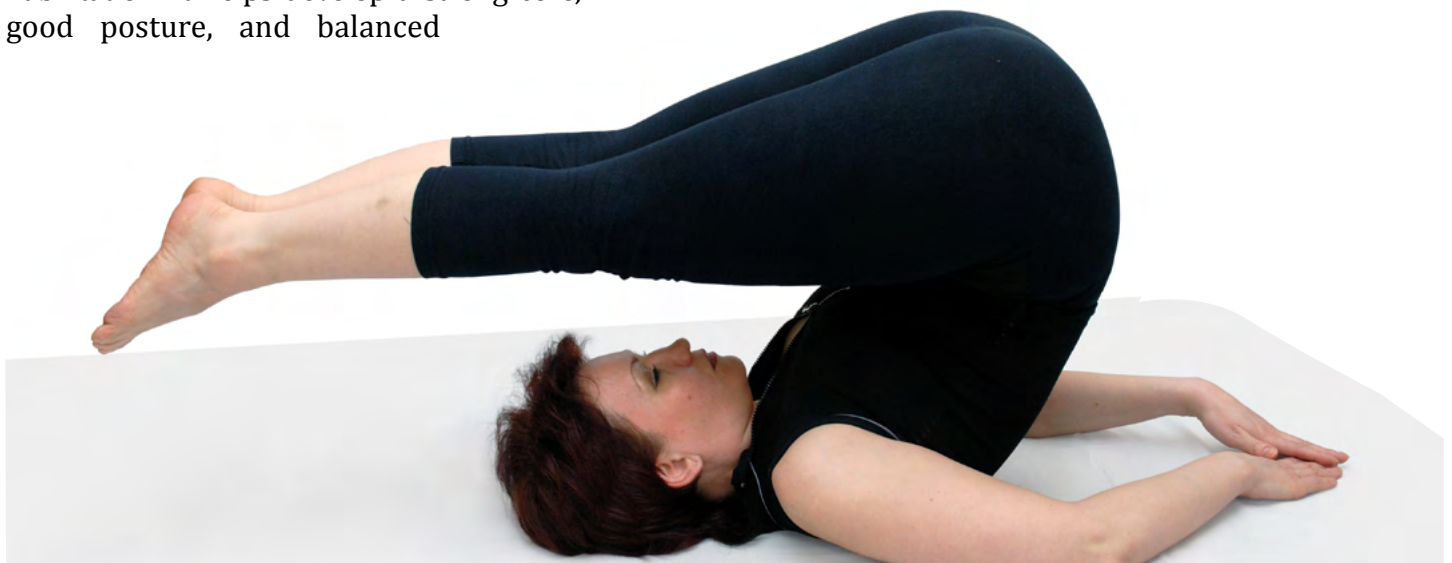
Want to give Pilates a try for free? Get a [free Pilates DVD](#) just for taking a risk-free trial of my Get Healthy & Fit print newsletter.

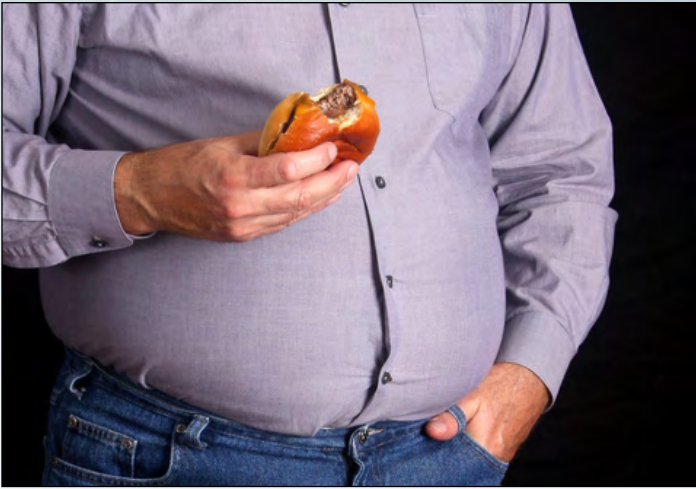
38 Namaste

If you attend a traditional yoga class, your instructor may give the salutation "Namaste" at the end of class, meaning simply "I bow to you." But if you don't think your back could handle bowing back, yoga may actually help.

Believe it or not, yoga isn't just for twenty-something girls who can contort their bodies into pretzel shapes without breaking a sweat. The trick is to choose a yoga method that works with you where you are. Hatha Yoga is an excellent form that works for most people, regardless of flexibility, experience, or physical limitations. Hatha yoga combines classic poses (or asanas), controlled breathing, and deep relaxation.

Since yoga can help you specifically with back pain, I've asked internationally-recognized yoga expert Lucas Rockwood to put together a quick video to show you how to get relief right now using a simple yoga pose. You can watch that free video [here](#).





39 Fight the Fat

If you need another reason to banish those ten (or more) stubborn pounds that are keeping you out of your skinny jeans, here it is: being overweight can help cause back pain. The more overweight you are, the more likely you are to suffer from debilitating back pain.

Don't believe the lie that only overweight people get back pain... but excessive weight will increase the strain on your back. So start making some healthy changes.

Drink more water to start. Start reading labels and avoid processed foods, refined sugars, and artificial sweeteners (I don't care if they ARE in "diet" sodas or whatever... diet schmiet).

Really want to get a jump-start on burning fat? I highly recommend [taking a look](#) at what my friend Rob Poulos and his wife did to finally get a handle on their weight...

40 Be Hard Core

No, you don't have to join the Marines to be hard core (though that might help). But if you have lower back pain, there's a good chance you need to strengthen your core.

If you're not familiar with the term, strengthening your core simply means increasing the strength and stability of your lower back, abdomen, and surrounding areas of your midsection.

Believe it or not, sit-ups aren't necessary or even recommended for building core strength. They're

actually a great way to hurt your back. Instead, try some of the tips right in this guide. Pilates is an excellent place to start (Tip #37), or for what may be the world's easiest way to begin building core strength, see Tip #26.

41 Don't Be a Slouch

Posture matters when it comes to preventing and alleviating back pain. Let's face it - your posture can probably use a tune-up. In fact, the way you've been walking, standing, sitting and bending over for years has probably contributed to the back pain you have now by putting unnecessary strain on your back.

Remember this quick posture tip: always keep your ears, shoulders, and hips in line with each other, whether you're sitting, standing or walking. Need more help with postural causes of back pain? I highly recommend you check out the Alexander Technique described in Tip #73.

42 Step Off the Stair Stepper

Aerobics, jogging, and similar exercise routines that focus on endurance may only test your ability to endure more back pain. Worse yet, they tend to increase the efficiency of your heart and lungs - by *decreasing their capacity*. This makes you far more susceptible to keeling over dead from little unpleasantries like a heart attack.

The truth of the matter is you don't have to spend an hour a day working out to strengthen your heart, lungs, and muscles while getting fit. High intensity interval training is the way to go instead. I recommend Dr. Al Sears' [PACE Program](#) for that.

But if you're already experiencing back pain, you'll want to start with something specific for back pain. A few sets of these three exercises may give you as much relief as that pain pill you were about to pop by promoting blood circulation, releasing endorphins, and relaxing tight muscles and easing spasms:

Exercise 1 — Knee Bends: Do some gentle, relaxed knee bends. If you have knee or back issues it is best to do them with the assistance of a chair, table or desk. Stand relaxed with feet shoulder-width apart and place your hands on the support. Tighten your stomach muscles and exhale while bending your

knees and going down as far as you can without falling or straining your knees. Inhale while standing up. Do 10 of these, and then move onto the next exercise.

Exercise 2 — Waist Twists: With your hands relaxed at your sides and feet shoulder-width apart, simply start swinging your arms right then left, patting both hands on your lower back as they reach around. This will massage the kidneys. Be sure not to swing or pat too hard, just in a relaxed easy motion! Breathe naturally and relax. Simply do a count of 10, and then relax.

Exercise 3 — Hip Rolls: Stand back away from your support and stand with legs at shoulder-width apart. Tighten your abdominal muscles and put your hands on your hips. Imagine you have a hula hoop, or are doing the hula, and rotate your hips clockwise 5 times, then rotate them counter-clockwise 5 times. Be sure to relax and smile and breathe naturally with this exercise.

43 Give Bad Bacteria the Boot

An interesting recent study out of Denmark found that a 90-day course of antibiotics reduced or eliminated back pain in 75% of participants.

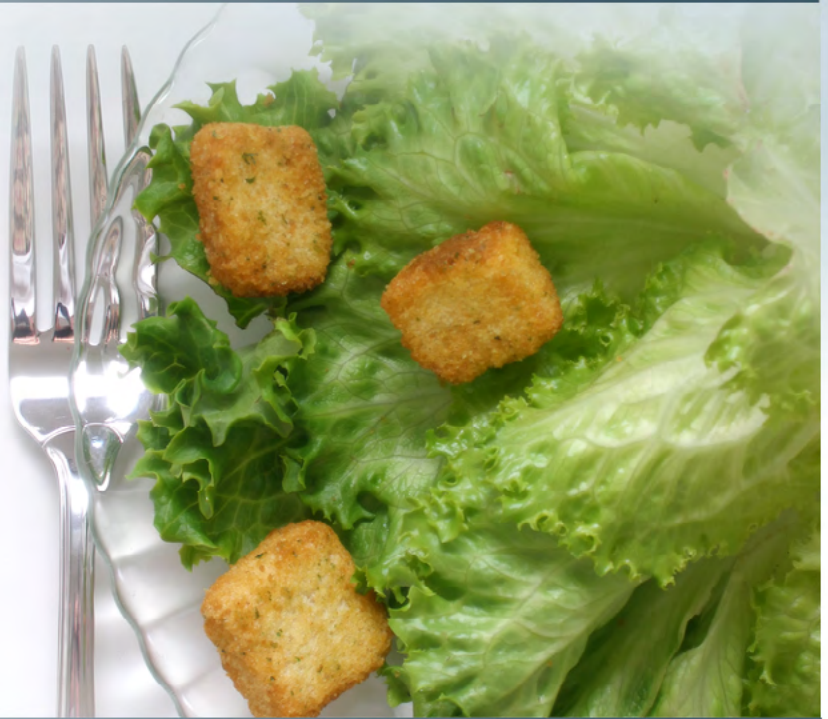
That's promising news for chronic back pain sufferers... but there's a problem with antibiotics. They don't just kill off the bad flora, they also kill off the good. And an increased use of antibiotics has been associated with a 37% increase in cancer rates.

So where's the tip? Use something that helps your body to fight off the bad bacteria naturally while keeping the good: [systemic proteolytic enzymes](#). These are enzymes your body produces in abundance... until your late 20s when production falls off a cliff.

Taking a [proteolytic enzyme supplement](#) not only boosts your immune system against bad bacteria, it also cleans up excess fibrin in your bloodstream which clogs your arteries with scar tissue and leads to systemic inflammation... another major contributor to back pain.

Back Pain Relief Diet

You've heard that you are what you eat... but are you eating up back pain? How would you like some simple dietary changes that can help heal your back? That's what you'll find in this section...



44 Candy as a Cure?

If it's ginger candy, maybe. Ginger, a powerful natural anti-inflammatory, has some mild aspirin-like effects and stimulates improved blood circulation.

Whether you have rheumatoid arthritis or muscular

discomfort, ginger may provide some needed relief. Ginger comes in many forms including ground, fresh and dried roots, and even ginger ale (though most commercial drinks have little, if any, real ginger).

For some natural ginger back pain relief, cut a 1- to 2-inch piece of fresh ginger root into thick slices



and add it to 1 quart of boiling water. Cover and simmer on low heat for 30 minutes. Cool for another 30 minutes, then strain, sweeten with honey to taste and drink.

And for those times you can't make tea, keep a ginger candy handy. My favorite are the

Original Ginger Chews by the Ginger People. You can find them at your local natural food store or [online](#).

45 Clear and Copious

That's how you want your urine. If your urine is dark yellow, except after taking vitamins, eating, or first thing in the morning, that's a sign that you probably need to drink more water. Here's a few good reasons your back will thank you for doing so:

- Water is necessary to replenish the fluid in your spinal discs (dehydration is a significant factor in both herniated discs and spinal disc degeneration)
- Your body needs adequate water to flush toxins out of your body... built up toxins can help create new and aggravate existing trigger points causing referred pain (See Tip #79)
- Even mild chronic dehydration can lead to constipation and back pain (See Tip #34)
- Dehydration is also associated with muscle cramps; while this is more likely to affect your legs, all muscles including those in your back will suffer from a water deficiency

46 Sayonara Starbucks

Caffeine is a naturally occurring pesticide, found in the beans, leaves, and fruit of over 60 plants. It paralyzes and kills certain insects feeding on the plants. Do you really want to consume a substance nature intended as a pesticide on a daily basis?

Dozens of studies have proven caffeine causes heart palpitations, muscle spasms, muscle cramps, irritability

and insomnia. Speaking of muscle cramps and muscle spasms, how much is caffeine contributing to the pain in your back? I know one good way to find out...

Scared to go cold turkey? Try these tips to help wean yourself off your caffeine habit:

- Switch to half decaf and half regular
- Drink 8 ounces of water before you have a caffeine drink
- Avoid caffeine before bed and first thing in the morning
- Experiment with herbal alternatives to coffee
- Switch to non-caffeinated sodas
- Drink more water (Tip #45)
- Set a goal to be caffeine free in 30 days – and track your progress!

47 Don't Feed the Fire Within

Not all foods are created equally when it comes to staying pain free. Many foods you are eating may be causing an inflammatory response, keeping you in unnecessary pain. Cool the burning fires of inflammation pain by eating more anti-inflammatory foods and less of the inflammatory ones.

Anti-inflammatory foods

Alaskan Salmon (wild)
Fresh whole fruits, vegetables
Bright multi-colored vegetables
Green tea
Water
Olive oil
Lean poultry
Nuts, legumes and seeds
Dark green leafy vegetables
Old fashioned oatmeal
Spices, especially Turmeric and Ginger

Inflammatory foods

Sugar, from any source
Processed foods
French Fries
Fast Foods
White bread
Pasta
Ice Cream
Cheddar Cheeses
Snack Foods
Oils such as vegetable and corn
Soda, caffeine and alcohol



48 Pull Down the Nightshades



Just because a food is “healthy” doesn’t mean it won’t keep you in pain. Nightshades are a whole group of foods most people consider healthy, but might be secretly keeping you in pain.

Some people are sensitive to a chemical alkaloid called solanine found in nightshades which can trigger pain. The easiest way to find out if these are affecting you is to completely eliminate them from your diet for two weeks. Take note of any changes to how you feel, then eat a large amount of nightshades the next day. You should know within 24 hours by how you feel whether you have a nightshade sensitivity.

So which foods may need to be pulled off your “heavy eating” list? Tomatoes, potatoes, red and green peppers and eggplants are the most common nightshades.

49 Banish the Bread

Got unexplained aches and fatigue most of the time? That bagel, bowl of cereal, or plate of pasta may be what’s standing between you and pain-free living.

While full-blown celiac disease affects less than 1% of the population, as many as 1 in 20 people have a gluten sensitivity which can cause literally a hundred

different symptoms including fatigue, upper respiratory problems, abdominal pain, and even – you guessed it – back pain.

Give up the gluten for a month and see if you can tell a difference in how you feel. Even if it doesn’t help your back pain it might help other issues you’re having. For help adopting a gluten-free diet, visit www.celiac.com for recipes, restaurant tips and grocery shopping guides.

50 Fresh from the Farm... or Factory?

Processed food, and I use the word “food” loosely here, is frequently loaded with herbicides, pesticides, petroleum-based fertilizers, injected antibiotics, artificial food coloring, and all sorts of other food additives most of us can barely pronounce. And it might even be genetically modified to boot.

One of the best ways to avoid eating this inflammation-causing and health-wrecking garbage that can contribute to back pain flare-ups or worse is to eat food the way it was intended. Natural, wholesome, and organic.

Sadly, eating healthy organic food can be much more expensive than eating factory-food. So at the very least, shop organic for anything found on the Environmental Working Group’s “[dirty dozen list](#)”. Each year EWG analyzes which crops are the most contaminated with pesticides at the market so these worst of the worst are the ones you’ll want to replace with organic first.

Also, look for local organic farms or farmers’ markets to shop from to support those who are trying to keep wholesome food available. The more farmers who return to organic methods, the more inexpensive organic foods will become. And you might even save a little buying direct...



51 Take Out the Toxic Waste

In today’s modern society, the question isn’t whether or not we’re exposed to environmental pollutants... it’s how much. That’s why we need to

detoxify our bodies on a regular basis – at least annually.

There are many types of detox programs available. Colon cleansing (Tip #34), kidney cleansing (Tip #35), flushing fibrin out of your system with proteolytic enzymes (Tip #43) and chelation therapy for heavy metals (see Tip #52) are four ways to flush toxins out of your system to improve your health and decrease pain in your back and throughout your body.

52 Analyze This

When our body's chemistry is out of balance it's impossible for our body to function correctly... and pain is just one of the warning signs of this bigger problem. If you're having mysterious illnesses or unexplained pain, consider having a blood test and / or a hair analysis to examine your mineral levels and check for the presence of heavy metals performed by a competent laboratory or holistic doctor. What you discover from this analysis may not only help you battle pain, it might save your life.

53 Wipe Off That Milk Moustache

Keep watching those milk commercials and they'll try to convince you of the importance of increasing your daily intake of calcium. But for many back pain sufferers, that could be a recipe for increased pain and health troubles.

Most of us get plenty of calcium. What we really need is more magnesium. When we get too much calcium and not enough magnesium, our body responds with muscle cramps and deposits the excess calcium into our arteries and joints.

For the shocking truth on how this whole Calcium Lie is literally killing us, don't miss my [interview with Dr. Robert Thompson!](#)

54 Perfectly Balanced

If you're constantly battling muscle and joint aches and pains the culprit could be as simple as a pH imbalance. While a healthy pH is ideally 7.35, or just slightly more alkaline than pH-neutral pure water, most Americans' pH falls below an acidic 6.5!

One recent study tested the effect of supplementing the diet of back pain sufferers with a daily [alkaline mineral supplement](#). In four weeks average pain scores dropped in half!

You can also introduce more alkaline-forming foods and reduce acid-forming foods in your diet. Aim for a 4:1 ratio of alkaline to acidic foods in your diet.

Some of the best foods for increasing alkalinity are fruits such as watermelon, grapefruit, mangoes, papayas, melons, grapes, kiwi, apples, blueberries and pears. Replace that acidic salad dressing with olive oil and lemon juice which are both alkaline-forming foods. And have a glass of water with lemon in place of that sugary soda.

You can keep tabs on your own pH levels with inexpensive pH testing strips found at your local pharmacy.



Stress & Back Pain

The more stressed you are, the more likely back pain will wreck your day. End stress and you'll reap the benefits of less pain and possibly a longer life. The tips in this section will help you on your way...



55 Take a Chill Pill

Perhaps the most powerful thing you can do to reduce stress is to recognize the difference between a need and a want... and to change our expectations of what we “need” to be happy. Yes, we may want things to be different and should work towards that end, but in the meanwhile we can simply decide to look at the stressor as a desire rather than a need and feel the weight lift right off our shoulders.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
The courage to change the things that I can;
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr

56 Flip Ow to Om

If you thought meditation was only for Buddhist monks, you're in for a pleasant surprise. Meditation is actually one of the most effective long-term stress relievers ever discovered, and it requires no spiritual component at all to benefit.

By slowing your brain waves from a high beta stage



down to a low alpha, meditation dissolves stress and reduces pain. It works so reliably I like to call it “Push-Button Stress Relief.”

Not sure how to get started with meditation? Listen to my free interview with Bill Harris then request a free CD that'll help you get started [here](#).

57 What You Don't Know... CAN Hurt You

Not knowing why your back is hurting can be stressful because you want the pain to stop... NOW! You took a step in the right direction by reading this guide.

But look at it from a different angle. Even if you're not in pain today, what you know can help you prevent or quickly eliminate pain tomorrow. That's why it's so important to always continue learning. Here's a few places to start:

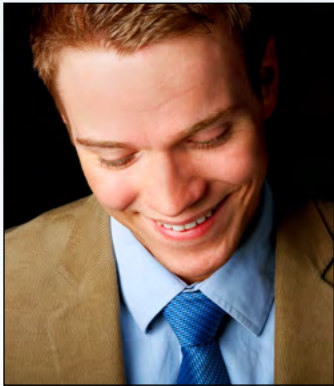
You'll find a ton of free resources on the Healthy Back Institute's website at www.losethebackpain.com.

Visit our [blog](#) which is updated throughout the week with new back pain, general health, and motivational articles and videos.

Ask for a free copy of my book, [The 7-Day Back Pain Cure](#).

Discover the latest cutting-edge pain relief tips, tricks and therapies and learn directly from world-leading experts how to stay healthy and out of pain with our monthly print newsletter, Live Pain Free. Readers of this guide can [ask for a free trial](#) and get a free copy of our 2-CD set, The Complete Healing Formula for Back Pain (this sells for \$79!) just for taking a look.

58 Free Medicine at Its Best



It may sound silly, but laughter truly is the best medicine. And you really can't beat the price.

Laughter is effective in reducing pain, increasing job performance, connecting people emotionally, and improving the flow of oxygen to the heart and brain and strengthening your immune system.

Want to add some ha-ha's to your life? Go to the library and borrow some classic comedies or a few joke books. Spend some time with kids and ask for their best jokes and their toughest tongue twisters. Make a trip to the dollar store and pick up some kid-at-heart supplies like jacks, bubbles, jump rope and crayons. Before you know it, you'll be feeling like a kid again inside and out.

59 You're Fired!

Is there someone in your life who desperately needs to get a pink slip? You know who I'm talking about... it's the one you hate hearing from... the one you always let the answering machine pick up or whose email sits in your inbox for days before you respond.

If you find yourself actively avoiding a person, there's a reason. Call it survival instinct. So think about your relationship with that person right now.

If every time you speak to them you get brought down yourself, there's a negative aspect to that relationship that could hurt you, literally, through the stress it brings. If so, then it's time to show them the door, or

if you're stuck (co-worker, family member), at least be firm about keeping time together to a minimum. Here's a 3-step process for deciding on writing out that pink slip:

1. Examine yourself first... are you creating any type of negative atmosphere that leads the other person to be the way they are around you? If so, fix that first.
2. Have a friendly but direct and honest discussion with the other person about how their attitude is negatively affecting you. It's possible they don't even realize they're being a jerk... or at least how much it's impacting their relationship with you.
3. When all else fails... "You're Fired!"

60 Get Back On Your Hobby Horse

All work and no play make for a boring and more stress-filled life. Be sure to allow time for leisure pursuits to allow your mind and body time to rest and recover.

Perhaps you have an old hobby that you just "have no time for" any more? Set aside some time to pick it back up again. Even better if you know or can find other people who enjoy the same hobby. Make time for leisure, even if you have to put it on your calendar.

61 Knock That Chip Off Your Shoulder

Gratitude and forgiveness may not sound like pain relief treatments, but they're more powerful than you can imagine.

Seeing life through the glasses of gratitude shifts your attention away from what hurts and towards the people, things, and experiences that bring you pleasure, happiness and joy. So be thankful and let it show!

Research shows the consequence of the opposite emotion... holding onto anger... is often back pain. And those who hold onto their anger the longest are likely to feel the most lower back pain. Perhaps there's some truth in the adage that holding onto resentment is like drinking poison and hoping your enemy will die. Isn't it time to free yourself from the pain of holding a grudge against someone else?



62 Sweet Expectations

How's your power of positive thinking? Or has your ability to overcome your back pain fallen victim to stinkin' thinkin'?

When it comes to chronic pain, your perception of pain can be greatly influenced by your expectations. Expect to stay in pain and your body will never let you down.

To change your expectations for the better, make plans, fully expecting to feel well enough to follow through. Choose cheerful and optimistic companions so their good spirits will rub off on you. Drop the word pain from your vocabulary and when someone asks how you feel, say "fantastic" even if you aren't quite there yet.

Live with the expectation you will get relief from your back pain and you're far more likely to follow through with the actions that will help you succeed in that quest.

63 Send Your Back Pain Packing

When you're constantly in pain, it can be hard to look forward to anything. But that's when you most need to have something to look forward to.

Decide today to plan a trip. Go ahead and put it on your calendar and look for ways to make it happen.

Start a vacation jar where all extra change is deposited at the end of every day. Send away for brochures from places you've always wanted to visit, or start exploring potential destinations online.

The simple act of preparing for a pleasurable experience will help take your mind off your pain and give you an added incentive to deal with your back pain before the trip so you can enjoy it even more.

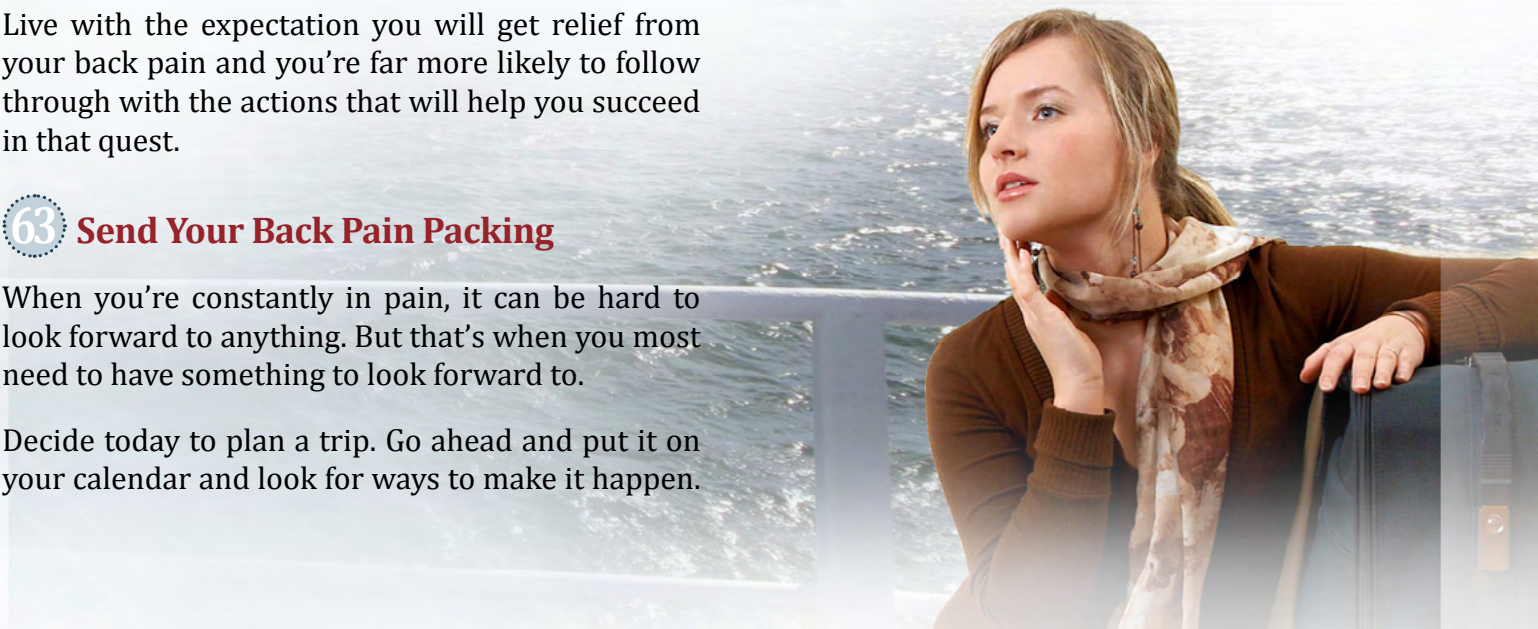
Need a destination suggestion? How about the beach or near a waterfall... Tip #75 tells you why.

64 Affirm Your Pain Relief

Living with pain isn't easy. You feel bad physically, so it's easy to feel crummy emotionally, too. The worse you feel emotionally, the worse you feel physically. It's a vicious cycle that feeds on itself and makes you feel even worse.

So it's time to cut that cycle short. Simply eliminating negative self talk and replacing it with positive self talk can help you recover faster.

Develop an affirmation that expresses how you want to feel, not necessarily how you are already feeling, such as "I feel fantastic today" and repeat it as often as necessary throughout the day. Try it... you'll feel less pain, and you'll be better prepared to cope with whatever pain still comes your way.



Therapies & Tools

If you thought your only back pain treatment options involved your family doctor, chiropractor, or a surgeon... guess again! There are literally dozens upon dozens of effective therapies and tools for ending back pain. Here are some of my favorites.



65 Relieve Pain in the Pool

No, don't relieve yourself in the pool - please! Just relieve your pain...

Playing in the water is not only fun, it's therapeutic. That's because water supports your body while providing a gentle resistance to your movements. As you move more slowly in the water the effect on muscles is gradual and non-fatiguing.



Here are some water exercises you can try:

- Swim the breast stroke, which opens up your hips
- Walk in the water, kicking your legs back up to your butt
- Hold onto the side of the pool or tread water and kick your legs in different directions, especially circular motions
- Splash around! Simply playing around in the water will automatically help you limber up while having fun!

By the way, cold or rainy weather doesn't have to get in the way, either. Many local YMCA, parks, and

hotels have indoor pools you can enjoy. Also, don't miss our [free audio](#) on water exercises for back pain.

66 Frequency Specific Microcurrent

Here's one of those treatments that was proven successful... then banned because it threatened the medical establishment's status quo. But now it's back and better than ever.

Frequency Specific Microcurrent (FSM) uses special machinery to send tiny currents of electricity at specific frequencies to heal a huge array of health issues.

FSM greatly reduces inflammation, softens knotted and scarred muscle tissue and actually changes the function in nerves that have long sent out pain signals. FSM increases the energy in cells within the injured area as much as 500%, allowing healing to take place at the cellular level.

The current applied is extremely low so you can't feel it at all. Yet in most cases the pain doesn't return after treatment because the source of your pain has actually healed.

For more information on Frequency Specific Microcurrent treatment, check out the introductory video and article [on our website](#).

67 Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic care is a common choice for back pain sufferers seeking care outside the traditional medical establishment. And it can be a good choice as many chiropractors offer a holistic approach to wellness.

However, contrary to popular opinion, chiropractors' main job isn't helping your back pain. It's eliminating subluxations, or misalignments in your vertebrae, which can interfere with your body's natural healing process.

Many chiropractors offer a wide range of therapeutic options in addition to spinal manipulations, or adjustments. You can find a chiropractor in just about any medium-sized or larger town.



68 Rolfing

When your body is involved in a physically or emotionally stressful situation, it tightens up and so does your muscles... resulting in cramping, trigger points and pain. If that painful tension is not eliminated, it can become chronic pain as the physical stress remains locked in muscle memory.

Rolfing is a method of soft tissue manipulation using direct deep pressure, applied to specific areas around cramped back muscles with the fist, fingers and elbows. Rolfing therapy relieves muscle spasms and breaks down scar tissue so your tendons, ligaments and fascia can resume their normal function and dimension.

While the tissue manipulation helps you get back on your feet, education keeps you there. During Rolfing Therapy you learn how to practice improved gait, posture, and movement to allow for greater range of motion and performance while reducing pain.

69 Prolotherapy

If you want an oyster to produce a beautiful pearl, first you need a little bit of irritant. Prolotherapy uses a similar concept to help your body repair damaged tendons and ligaments.

While uncontrolled inflammation is very dangerous, your body does need a certain amount of inflammation to stimulate healing. This is particularly true when the damaged area has a lower blood supply such as tendons and ligaments have.

During prolotherapy, a substance is injected into soft tissue near the injured site, causing increased local inflammation. This extra help can result in repaired tendons and ligaments as much as 40% stronger than the originals!

70 Prolozone Therapy

If you thought Prolotherapy (see Tip #69) might be helpful, you'll simply love Prolozone Therapy.

Created by Dr. Frank Shallenberger, Prolozone Therapy combines prolotherapy with ozone to provide crucial oxygen your body needs to repair itself in these areas known for low blood supply (and therefore low oxygen supply). Specific nutrients are added to the treatment as well to ensure your body has the building blocks necessary to regenerate damaged tissues, joints, ligaments, and tendons.

Prolozone Therapy may be the most promising treatment I've ever seen for treating joint problems such as arthritis. Definitely make time to listen to my [interview with Dr. Shallenberger](#) about Prolozone Therapy.

71 Feldenkrais Method

How would you like to feel more pain relief than ever by being lazy? Can you imagine a physical healing routine so relaxing and enjoyable that you would hate to skip it? That's what you get with Feldenkrais.

With the Feldenkrais Method there isn't any of the pushing, resisting,



or straining you get with many treatments. In fact, it's not really a treatment, therapy, or exercise at all... it's more of a learning process that activates your ability to "tune into your body."

During Feldenkrais class you'll likely lie on a mat on the floor. But unlike other programs, movements are slow, easy and kind of lazy. Your instructor will ask you to imagine something similar to lying on a grassy hillside, watching the clouds roll by. Movements are rolling, and nearly anyone of any age or condition can indulge themselves in this enjoyable, peaceful, de-stressing and exhilarating form of movement.

Hard to believe, but in an enjoyable hour or less you'll be on your way out of the building, and on your way out of pain. For more information about the Feldenkrais Method or to find a class near you visit www.feldenkrais.com.



72 The Back Pain Robot

No, this robot won't come running, yelling "Danger Will Robinson! Danger!" But a robotic healing touch might just be in your future.

The state of the art back pain relief robot I'm talking about is referred to as a therbo robotic arm or Meilus Robotic Therapy, named after the robot's inventor Al Meilus. Guided by a physical therapist, the robot applies specific pressure to overly tight muscles to relax and lengthen them on the spot.

How does this differ from what your physical or massage therapist can do? The robotic arm can go deeper than the human hand and is more precise in targeting specific muscles. Plus it offers a "squeeze and hold" technique followed by a second gentle push not found in manual physical therapy.

See the back pain robot in action or request a free phone consultation through [this page](#).

73 Alexander Technique

Our own repeated actions... literally the way we move and hold our bodies as we accomplish tasks... are often responsible for our pain.

The Alexander Technique, originally developed over a century ago to help actors and musicians overcome difficulties caused by poor posture and muscle use, is also a powerful tool for eliminating the movement and postural habits that cause back pain.

Unlike many therapies where a practitioner "does something" to you, with the Alexander Technique a teacher watches you perform common movements and activities with an expert eye, then helps you retrain to perform them without unwarranted muscle stress and tension. The result is transforming, with studies showing continued pain improvement even a year after the classes – using a proven technique with zero side effects!

For more information about the Alexander Technique or to find a teacher near you, visit www.amsatonline.org in the United States or www.alexandertechnique.com elsewhere.

74 Massage



Touch is one of the best ways to heal, and Massage therapy goes a long way toward attacking your back and neck pain at its sources. An experienced Massage Therapist can use one or more of these techniques to help you with back pain:

Swedish massage: the most widespread treatment used in the United States. Generally soothing, it involves the use of kneading and friction in long strokes and deep circular movements. Most well-known massage

techniques fall under the category of Swedish massage.

Myofascial therapy: targets the muscle and myofascial systems, promoting flexibility and mobility of the body's connective tissues (fascia).

Trigger Point therapy: focuses deep pressure on myofascial Trigger Points—knotted muscle fibers that are painful and tender when pressed. (See Tip #79 for more on Trigger Point Therapy)

Deep Tissue massage: involves intense pressure and patterns of slow strokes to relieve tightness or knotting in the deep layers of muscles.

Sustained Pressure: also known as ischemic or digital pressure, it alleviates hypertonic (tight) areas within muscle and fascia.

75 Negative Ion Therapy

Who says you shouldn't be negative about your back pain? I do, for starters. Stress and anxiety will only make your back pain worse. But here's one time I'll make an exception... because negative ions actually help you feel better.

In case you forgot high school science class, an ion is an atom or molecule with an electric charge, and they're found throughout the air we breathe.

Positive ions, which stimulate our stress neurotransmitter serotonin, can cause us to become irritated, agitated, and exhausted. They're common ahead of an incoming storm and are byproducts of air conditioning, computer monitors, and TV sets.

On the other hand, negative ions counteract the effect of positive ions. They've been shown to boost our immune system, speed healing, fight depression, and reduce even severe pain. You'll find an abundant supply of negative ions after a thunderstorm... near waterfalls... and by the ocean.

Since moving water helps create negative ions, taking a shower can lift your spirits by adding more negative



ions to the air. So can burning 100% beeswax candles. And my favorite home method for generating negative ions is a powerful pain relief and healing tool all by itself... you'll find it in Tip #100.

76 Bowen Therapy

Afraid there isn't a form of bodywork gentle enough for you to handle yet powerful enough to actually work? Your fears are answered in Bowen Therapy, a form of bodywork gentle enough to help infants and the frailest of elderly patients... yet scientifically proven to improve flexibility and stimulate the body's healing processes. Even if you've had back surgery, Bowen Therapy is safe enough to complement and speed your recovery.

During a 20-90 minute bodywork session, a Bowen practitioner uses his fingers and thumbs to move across muscles, tendons, and peripheral nerves to trigger your body's natural self-healing response. What makes the Bowen technique unusual is that between each set of moves, the practitioner leaves the room, allowing your body time to adjust before the next set of moves.

Learn more about Bowen Therapy including a brief introductory video [on our website](#).

77 Trauma Releasing Exercises

Have you ever been so scared or shaken that your whole body literally shook? That's your body's natural mechanism for relieving stress and tension.

As adults, we tend to suppress that instinct. This leaves unresolved tension and stress to linger in our body, for years or even a lifetime. And as you're probably aware, stress can wreak havoc on your health – and is a major source of all kinds of pain.

Trauma Releasing Exercises are a unique yet simple way to create a series of tremors in a controlled and sustained manner to release deep chronic muscular tension from the core of your body. They've been used around the world to successfully help traumatized victims of disasters and wars overcome the built up tension and stress caused by their experiences.

Even if you aren't aware of a particularly traumatic event in your past, I recommend you give this therapy a try. Look for a nearby class or simply get the Step by Step DVD and Trauma Releasing Exercises book from the technique creator's website at traumaprevention.com/store.

78 Aromatherapy

Could your nose be the answer to your back pain? Possibly...

Aromatherapy, which uses the scent of essential oils both as a form of relaxation and healing therapy, directly affects the amygdala... the emotional center of your brain now thought to have an important role in persistent pain.



Here's an aromatherapy "recipe" found to give remarkable pain relief to sufferers of nerve-based pain. Simply combine the ingredients and apply to the site of pain for relief.

- 4 drops of chamomile oil
- 3 drops of marjoram oil
- 3 drops of helichrysum oil (if you can find it, very effective)
- 2 drops of lavender oil
- 1 ounce of St. John's wort oil

79 Trigger Point Therapy

If you've never heard of trigger points before, you're going to want to sit up and pay attention. Trigger points are probably the most overlooked source of pain in the world... and the most prevalent direct cause of all types of pain.

Trigger points are tiny knots in muscle fiber that get locked into place... and can send pain signals to areas far from the actual knot, called referred pain. Ending the pain can be as simple as massaging the trigger point to allow the knot to release, but first you have to know where to find it.



The book I recommend most for learning about trigger points without needing a medical degree is [The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook](#). Or, you can simply get my [favorite trigger point tool](#) for treating them which includes a full 20-page pictorial guide showing where to find your trigger points and a complete DVD for conquering this source of chronic pain.

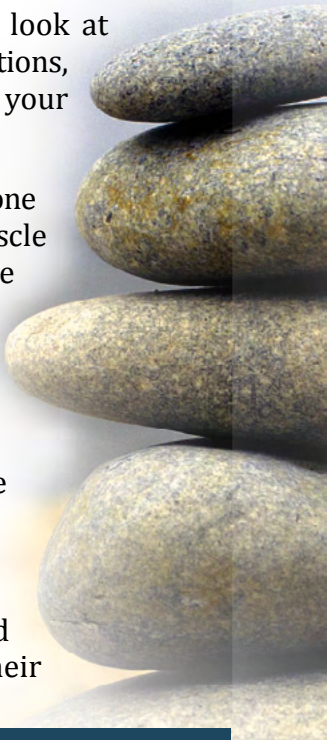
80 Muscle Balance Therapy

If someone held a gun to my head and told me I had to pick one, and only one, treatment for back pain... this would be it. That's because after a decade of helping people in pain I've found that muscle imbalances are by far the most common underlying cause of back pain.

Don't be surprised if you've never heard of muscle imbalances. Even your doctor may never have heard of them, much less know how to treat them. That's because they're trained to look at symptoms, like back pain, and conditions, like a herniated disc. Not the reason your disc herniated in the first place.

A muscle imbalance occurs when one muscle overpowers an opposing muscle through unequal use. The muscle which gets worked more becomes stronger and tighter, while the less used muscle becomes weaker and stretched out.

Here's one example. Many people who sit all day long develop lower back pain. That's because sitting causes them to constantly tighten their quadriceps, lower back, and hip flexors to remain upright in their



chair, while their hamstrings, glutes, and abs just get weak and flabby. This one set of muscle imbalances causes the most common postural dysfunction we see, called a forward tipped pelvis.

And that's just one example. Many back pain sufferers have multiple postural dysfunctions caused by muscle imbalances like these. Fortunately, by eliminating the muscle imbalances a neutral posture is restored and back pain disappears. How do you do that? By simply exercising the weak muscles and stretching the tight muscles.

For more information about muscle imbalances and how to treat them, take a look at our [Lose the Back Pain System](#). If you have upper back or neck pain, you can also check out our [Lose the Neck Pain System](#) which uses the same principles of muscle balance therapy.

81 Inversion Therapy



Your doctor just advised you to have back surgery. Quick, what do you do next?

Besides getting a 2nd and 3rd opinion, if you'd like a 70% chance of cancelling that back surgery altogether you might want to get yourself an [inversion table](#). Those are the results reported from a recent

study of back surgery candidates in England who tried inversion therapy first.

Of course, you don't have to wait for a doctor to recommend a scalpel before trying out inversion. If you have any kind of back pain inversion can probably help.

EMG readings (a measure of muscle pain) show a 35% decrease in pain within the first 10 seconds of inverting. Another inversion study showed 155 out of 175 people who were out of work due to back pain were able to return to work after just 8 inversion treatments. That's pretty significant pain relief!

Contrary to popular opinion, you don't have to go upside down to benefit, either. The car manufacturer, Volvo, paid for their employees to start using inversion therapy daily – but only at a slight 15 degree incline,

nowhere close to a full 180... and sick time promptly dropped in half!

82 Magnetic Therapy

You've probably heard of magnetic therapy before, perhaps from a relative who swears by their magnetic bracelet. Magnetic therapy can help your back pain, but before you run out and buy a bracelet consider these important points:

- The magnet must be of therapeutic strength – any old refrigerator magnet won't do. To have any effect whatsoever, the magnet must have at least an 800 gauss surface strength. Beware of "therapeutic" magnets which state a 3,950 gauss strength – that's the core strength of a standard magnet with a weak surface strength of only 500. Real therapeutic magnets have core gauss readings of 10,000 or higher and are always listed in whole numbers rounded to the nearest 100.
- Look for a high-quality magnet. The best therapeutic magnets are made of neodymium, a rare earth magnet with very high gauss strength for its size and strong resistance against demagnetization from proximity to other magnets or being dropped.
- Most importantly, if you're looking at magnetic therapy specifically for back pain, forget the bracelet. While a well-fitted magnetic bracelet may help improve circulation, increase your energy levels, and possibly even lower your blood pressure, it won't do anything directly for your back as the magnetic field decreases rapidly with distance. What you need is a magnetic back brace where powerful magnets are placed close enough to penetrate the source of pain.

83 Vibration Therapy

Good vibrations can help relieve pain. Here's how to make your own:

Make a fist, squeeze hard, then touch your injured body part very lightly with your trembling fist. This vibration will activate the larger nerve tracks in the area which respond to light touch/vibration, thereby overriding the signal of pain, which is much slower.

84 Radiofrequency Ablation



Radiofrequency nerve ablation (RFA) has an intimidating name, but the concept isn't. And it may be just the back pain or arthritis solution you're looking for as it helps nearly three-quarters of those who try it.

The basic idea is a doctor uses an electrical current created by radio waves to heat up the nerves that are transmitting pain. This one- to two-hour outpatient procedure causes the treated nerves to transmit less pain signals for a period of months or even years. It won't fix the root cause of your back problem, but it can help you deal with the pain while you work on the bigger picture.

85 Music Therapy

Ready to reduce your disabling pain? Maybe it's time to dust off those old records in the attic, or at least download some new songs for your iPod. Music therapy has been proven to reduce anxiety, depression, pain and improve sleep. Research shows that music helps whether you're making it or just listening, so it doesn't matter if you dropped out of those piano lessons back in 3rd grade.



The key to finding music that can help you soothe

sore muscles is to choose songs with lyrics you aren't familiar with... or no lyrics at all. In other words, if you can sing the words in your head, then the song may not offer you the distraction you need. Listen to slow, meditative music to help lower blood pressure, regulate breathing and ease muscle tension. Healing harmony may be music to more than your ears alone.

86 Progressive Relaxation

Just relax! But how do you relax while you're in pain? A little at a time with progressive relaxation.

Progressive relaxation lets you easily and effectively integrate body awareness, breathing, and controlled movement together to relax and relieve pain.

Start by lying on your back in bed in loose clothing. Systematically tense then relax each part of your body starting with your feet and progressing towards your head. It helps to have a guided audio take you step by step through the process, like this [free one](#) provided by the University of Maryland Medical Center.

In 10 to 15 minutes you'll find yourself much more relaxed, with less pain. It's also a great way to relax in preparation for sleep. Best of all, progressive relaxation can be done right at home at no cost.

87 Homeopathy

"Like cures like" is the medical principle behind homeopathy. The idea is substances that would cause a particular symptom in a healthy person can be used in minute quantities in a sick person to heal them of the same.

You can purchase homeopathic medicines over the counter at many health food stores and pharmacies, or online. These remedies come in pellet or liquid form already prepared, just follow the directions like any medicine.

One major difference between homeopathic medicine and conventional drugs are homeopathics are much safer than conventional drugs, with little or no side effects.

Here's some of my favorite



back pain related homeopathic remedies:

- **Arnica** – suitable for all types of pain
- **Bryonia** – helps when you have a cold or cough with back pain
- **Nux vomica** – helps with nighttime pain
- **Belladonna** – relieves shooting neck pain
- **Calcarea carbonica** – aids chronic neck pain
- **Colocynthis** – relieves sciatic pain

88 Hypnosis



Stuck with back pain you can't shake? Try hypnotizing it away.

"You feel yourself getting very sleepy. Keep your eyes on the swinging watch. I will count down from ten to zero, then you'll bark like a dog."

Don't worry – that's not what I'm talking about! Medical hypnosis is more than a nightclub act... and you'll stay awake, alert, and in full control of yourself. But instead of making you bark like a dog it offers powerful relief of both acute and chronic pain.

Think of hypnosis like using a magnifying glass to focus the rays of the sun to make them more powerful. Hypnosis can help keep your mind concentrated and focused, allowing you to have more control over your physiological responses – so you feel less pain.

You'll want to find a [trained specialist](#) to get started, but with a little practice you'll soon have all the tools you need to get in the groove on your own.

89 Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

How deep is your pain? Chances are it's deep enough to be agonizingly real, yet close enough to the surface that you can literally tap it away with your finger.

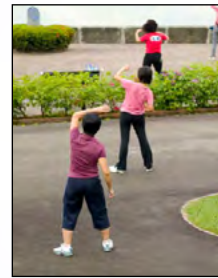
Using Emotional Freedom Technique, or EFT, thousands of people have eliminated years of pain in just a session

or two of guided tapping. Once learned, you can use EFT to safely relieve recurring pain at will – often within minutes.

Since EFT alleviates the body's programmed reaction to certain learned stimuli such as certain sights, sounds, smells and situations, effects are usually long-lasting if not permanent. Learn more about EFT at www.eftuniverse.com.

90 Qigong

Qigong ("chee-gung") is the ancient Chinese art of using your mind to direct the energy within your body. You might think of it like a physical and mental cross-training technique with similarities to yoga and tai chi.



Qigong can help you manage your back problems by improving posture and stability in the trunk. It promotes better breathing techniques which help cultivate vital chi energy, seen by practitioners as an intrinsic life force critical to your health and well-being.

Classes are offered in most metropolitan areas, and dozens of books and DVDs offered on the subject can help you teach yourself the ancient art of Qigong right at home. Just 20 minutes a day may make all the difference for your back.

91 Acupuncture

Ever thought of using needles to relieve your back pain? That's right... needles.

Acupuncture is a powerful therapy which relieves pain when the needles are inserted into strategic points on the body to relieve blockages and restore balance to the flow of qi, or energy, flowing through the meridians, or energy pathways, through your body.

While it may sound uncomfortable, and the practice has many skeptics, the needles are actually so thin they rarely cause any pain at all. Better yet, acupuncture helps even skeptics get fast pain relief. Here's a video of one [amazing acupuncture technique](#) that works nearly instantaneously.



92 Acupressure

Not a fan of needles? Acupressure can be safely performed on yourself to get an effect similar to Acupuncture (See Tip #91)... without even leaving your house!



We've posted a number of videos demonstrating how to use acupressure to relieve different kinds of pain on our website... here's a great acupressure technique you can use on yourself for [fast sciatica pain relief](#).

93 Reflexology

When does a foot massage become more than a foot massage? When it uses the principles of reflexology to help more than just your feet.

Reflexology uses thumb, finger and hand techniques to apply pressure to your feet or hands at specific points which relieve pain and promote healing in other areas of the body.

You can hire a reflexology professional... or you can give it a try right now. Watch Steve Hefferon show you how to do it with this [free video](#) then use the free reflexology charts in the article below the video to get started!

94 Reiki

Reiki, a form of energy healing, is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes pain relief for many people. Reiki is a natural and holistic complementary healing modality that has the potential to



restore and maintain your health through healing energy. Reiki has been said to promote natural self-healing, balance the body's energies, strengthen the immune system, and relieve pain.

Because Reiki is so gentle, there are very few limitations as to who can benefit from this form of healing. As you lay relaxed and fully clothed, a Reiki practitioner holds his hands on or above you. There is no pressure on the body at all and the practitioner moves his hands where he is spiritually guided to do so. The patient often feels a slight warming or tingling, as well as relaxation while healing takes place.

95 Polarity Therapy

Ever see a gutter clogged with leaves? The water flows through... eventually... but is just as likely to overflow the sides instead of going through the pipe as designed when it rains. Clear the leaves and water flow returns to normal.

Polarity therapy works in similar fashion. During a session, the practitioner will lightly press and discover tender points on your head, neck, shoulders, back, feet and hands. Gentle pressure will be applied to each tender spot and its corresponding reflex area until the tissues relax and tension releases.

Releasing this tension unblocks the flow of energy through your body. Tension and pain is released. Polarity therapy can induce a profound relaxation along with relief from hypertension and anxiety attacks. The polarity therapy hands-on treatment is coupled with exercises, diet, and counseling to promote long-term healing and relaxation.

96 Jin Shin Jyutsu

Jin Shin Jyutsu may be one of the best healing modalities you've never heard of. It's the Japanese practice of using the power of gentle touch to induce deep relaxation, promote wellness and tap into your body's own healing capability.

Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioners recognize twenty-six "Safety Energy Locks" (SELs) that are located along energy pathways in your body. Gentle touch releases body energies that have been "stopped up" at these locks by stress, physical energy, emotional strain, or mental fatigue. The skillful use of touch is applied at

several of these SELs at various places on your body in a specific sequence. This gentle pressure releases the energy blocks to restore proper energy flow.

An excellent introduction to Jin Shin Jyutsu is [The Touch of Healing](#) by Alice Burmeister and Tom Monte or visit www.jinshinjyutsu.com.

97 Theracane



A deep muscle massage can break apart [trigger points](#) causing referred pain to your back and other parts of your body. But a skilled masseuse isn't always available, or affordable. That's where a Theracane can help.

The two foot long Theracane with its six knobs for pressing out muscle knots is an effective tool for hitting those deep muscles knots wherever they are – even on your back and shoulders. And it's small and light enough to take along everywhere you go: at home, at the office, even on vacation!

98 Foam Roller

No, I'm not asking you to paint your living room wall. I'm talking about a special foam roller which lets you use your body weight to massage away pain out of sore spots across your body.

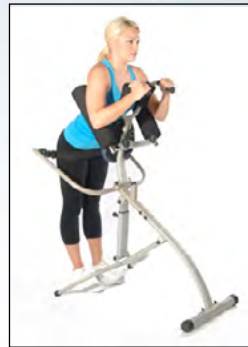
These kinds of foam rollers are commonly found in one and three foot lengths, with densities varying from slightly harder than a pool noodle to much more solid.

When using a foam roller to massage away pain, simply place the foam roller on the floor then roll on the foam until you find a tender, sore spot. Then roll back and forth across that tender point to work out the muscle knot. My personal favorite foam roller is called the [Bumpy Roller](#) which includes 200 bumps to really work out both trigger points and larger muscle knots.



99 Back Ease

Lower back pain is often the result of tightness, pressure and compression on the spine. The [Back Ease](#) is a simple but revolutionary device for easily decompressing your lower spine right at home.



Simply step forward, rest your arms on the arm pads, then let your body lean forward for 1-3 minutes. The Back Ease does all the work of gently stretching your spine to relieve painful pressure. It works as good as or better than inversion therapy (see

Tip #81) for the lower back.

100 Far Infrared Heat

Know how good it feels to hang out in the sun? The deep penetrating heat that warms you up so nicely is called far infrared.

While heat is a great tool for easing back pain, normal heating pads only heat the surface of your skin. But a [far infrared heating pad](#) gives the same kind of healing heat given off by the sun, providing soothing heat as much as three inches deep! It's the same kind of heat used by neonatal intensive care units to keep babies warm.

Besides feeling great, far infrared heat actually helps your body heal by dramatically improving circulation in the treated area. They're also a terrific source of negative ions (see Tip #75). It's not a stretch to say you haven't really used heat to treat your back pain until you've tried the healing heat of far infrared.

Never Ever Give Up!

This may be the most important tip of this entire guide!

One of the worst things about back pain is it is often caused by more than one thing at the same time. That's why many back pain sufferers often get *some* relief but can't seem to go the last mile to permanent, total, lasting relief. This common condition is called Mixed Pain Syndrome.

If we get 90% relief from our pain, with only a slight nagging ache or recurring twinge left, that's progress. But we all want 100% relief from our pain, right?

Going the last mile for lasting pain relief means we have to address those other causes of back pain we overlooked at first to get the full healing and total pain relief we're looking for. That often takes experimenting with multiple treatments to find what works for you. Remember, pain often involves more than one of the three major components: body, mind and diet.

To help you finally get rid of that last 10% of your back pain, we recorded a [free audio](#) on overcoming Mixed Pain Syndrome for you. Apply these tips and the many techniques referenced throughout this guide and you're sure to find relief. I look forward to [hearing of your success!](#)

But Wait...There's More!



I expect you've already found the **101 Back Pain Relief Tips** in this guide helpful for ending your back pain. If not, then be sure to read Tip #101 again. **But that's not all!**

Just for you, we've recorded a whole bunch of videos demonstrating many of these back pain relief tips & tricks... and I've also thrown in a handful of unannounced bonuses... all just to thank you for purchasing and reading this guide. [You'll find the videos and free gifts here.](#)