

Back and neck pains can be treated with new technology and multi approaches

By Dr. Brent Wells
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It's the second most common reason people visit their physician, the third most common reason for surgery and the fifth most common reason for hospitalization: back and neck pain.

Back pain manifests itself in a wide array of symptoms: sharp, jabbing pain like being hit with a shovel; dull, constant pain that seems to start low in the hips; excruciating, body freezing pain that prevents you from standing

upright after bending over; numbness and pain in the arms and legs while sitting or driving. If you talk to people who have pain, they'll tell you it's a life-altering event.

Automobile accidents create many neck injuries as in a rear-end accidents where the impact can cause the body and head to travel in opposite directions. As the body is pushed forward, the head is thrown back in a whipping motion. Neck muscles and vertebrae can be damaged causing the victim mind-numbing pain with each turn or movement.

Long ago, when man spent the majority of his day engaged in finding and catching his food, being fit was a matter of survival. If you couldn't throw a spear, you might not eat. If you couldn't run, you could quickly find yourself on the lower end of the food chain,

the meal of something larger, faster, stronger and hungrier than you.

Long hours of sitting affect physical mobility

Nowadays, with routines that often consist of sitting at a computer for long hours, driving cars to and from work, and eating foods high in fat from the local drive-thru, our physical mobility has suffered.

More than half of the country is considered overweight, and an ever-increasing number are considered obese. And while our forefathers often died in their 40's and early 50's, at that age in our lives, we're simply hitting middle age, with another 30 or 40 years to live.

Middle age is most often the time when injuries from years and decades past resurface to prevent us from even the most simple of tasks. Bending, walking, lifting, carrying, and other activities we often take for granted can become impossible when back pain exists. And back pain exists for one-sixth of Americans at any given time, and will occur with 85% of Americans at some point in their life.

So what do we do to relieve and prevent back pain?

Multiple approaches

Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers in Anchorage, Alaska brings a multi-disciplinary approach to pain treatment: chiropractic for posture alignment and pain relief, physical therapy for strength and mobility, and advanced technology (DRS for low back pain and MCU for neck pain) for concentrated treatment of specific areas of the spine identified as the root of the pain. This unique combination has proven itself with many patients as a winning formula.

"I had been to several chiropractors, and chiropractic by itself didn't seem to be enough. It wasn't until Doctor Wells put me on the DRS that I really started feeling better. I completed 23 treatments and am now totally pain free" says Ed S. a BHPW patient.

Eric M. another BHPW patient agrees: "I felt like an old man the day after I did anything physical. I kept thinking that if I feel like this at 33, how am I going to feel when I'm 50 or 60? I spent some time with Dr. Wells and decided to try his treatment program which included chiropractic, physical therapy and DRS. The DRS really worked for me".

Living with neck pain?

Another BHPW patient, Katie P. was living with neck pain following an automobile accident until several months of chiropractic and physical therapy at Better Health eliminated much of her daily pain.

"I was told there was nothing more physical therapy by itself could do. I saw a TV commercial for Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers and came here, went through their treatment program and was able to get some relief," she said.

How do we keep our backs healthy? Better Health Pain and

Wellness Centers suggest a lifestyle of fitness and healthy nutrition. Lose the extra 15 pounds, stand up and stretch regularly if your job has you sitting for long periods, find a regular workout that you enjoy and be consistent with it, warm up before you exercise, and stretch out following. Build up your 'core' strength and you will experience less back pain.

But if your back pain is caused by a recent or long term accident, such as a fall or an automobile crash, or by long-term wear, body strength may not be the only factor to consider for treatment. Compressed, worn out, bulging, or herniated disks, pinched nerves and other significant pain-causing injuries caused by accidents are often very difficult to diagnose and require highly specialized treatment.

FDA approved program

The advanced technology component of Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers' treatment program includes the FDA-approved DRS system for low back and MCU for neck pain.

DRS is a highly effective mechanical system that safely and effectively treats low back pain by removing pressure from the discs, joints and nerves in the low back.

This unique system can concentrate pressure on specific vertebrae and the patient is not required to hold-on or participate physically as with other mechanical systems. Patients can maintain their regular work schedules and daily activities during treatment without any recovery period.

Patients often report considerable relief following treatment, with most experiencing 50-60% reduction in pain following the first two weeks of treatment. Painless, relaxing and effective, the procedure is also cost effective, much less than the cost of surgery which often exceeds \$30,000.

Improved quality of life

The MCU (multi cervical unit) allows patients with whiplash, degenerative disc disease or neck pain caused by virtually any type of neck condition to improve their quality of life.

The only system of its kind in Alaska, the MCU consists of a weight stack, computer and multi-axis head attachment that measures strength, flexibility and pain levels of the patient.

The computer creates a personalized workout program for each patient, which the patient follows with the guidance of the observing therapist or chiropractor.

Patients with long-term pain and immobility are now experiencing far less pain and far better flexibility in their necks through MCU treatments.

But advanced treatment is only part of the solution to back and neck pain. Patients must participate through activity and for that purpose Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers teach each patient how to exercise correctly, stretch regularly and utilize good ergonomics to prevent low back pain, injury or discomfort due to undue stress so common in today's workplaces.

Chronic pain reoccurrence is reduced

Prevention and maintenance are key. Patients agree that adding simple muscle-building and stretching exercises reduce the occurrence of chronic pain issues from overworking their bodies.

And finally, Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers incorporate physical therapy into the treatment plan to help patients regain strength, posture and mobility in injured areas. Physical therapy takes place both in the clinic and home as the patient is trained in simple exercises that will help keep them limber.

Common conditions treated through chiropractic, physical therapy and advanced technology:

• Low Back pain

- Neck pain
- Herniated discs
- Degenerative disc disease
- Arthritis Facet Syndrome
- Sciatica (numbness/pain in extremities)
- Whiplash
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Shoulder, elbow and wrist pain,
- Hip knee and ankle pain
- Scoliosis
- Bursitis
- Headaches
- Sports injuries
- Work injuries
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Post-surgical rehabilitation

For more information contact Dr. Brent Wells, Chiropractic Physician and Clinic Director of Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers with two locations in Anchorage.

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