

DRS Therapy reduces back and leg pain

**By Dr. Brent Wells
Better Health Pain and
Wellness Centers**

Walking, running, swimming, working, biking, skating, skiing and playing with the kids.

When we're healthy, it's easy to take these things for granted.

But for the 15 percent of Americans suffering from low back pain, these simple activities can be next to impossible.

Low back pain is the leading cause of disability in men over 45 years of age and is the second most common reason

people miss work and visit their physician.

The lower back is the fulcrum of the body. Much of our physical activity causes pressure through concentrated weight on the lower back. Walking, carrying, lifting and bending all create physical "pull" on the spine by muscles and ligaments, exertion that can pull the spine out of alignment.

As we get older and reduce our physical activity, our bodies naturally become weaker, less flexible, less elastic and more prone to injury.

Low back pain is often caused by a "subluxation", a condition in which one or more vertebrae are out of position or "stuck" due to stiff muscles, wear, bulging discs, or even scar tissue.

Body can't always heal itself

Subluxation is related physically to the same process the body uses to mend a broken bone: the body naturally attempts to fuse adjacent spinal bones together, much like it would attempt to fuse a broken arm or leg bone.

Spinal discs act as spacers and shock absorbers. Discs, however, have very poor blood supply and are dependent on the circulation of joint fluids to bring in nutrients and expel waste. If the spinal joint loses its normal motion and its pumping action is impaired, the health of the disc degenerates.

Like a wet sponge, a healthy disc is flexible while an unhealthy disc is hard, stiff, and can crack easily.

Injury to the spine can cause a disc to bulge, herniate, or even worse, rupture. This can put extreme pressure on the spinal cord and nerves, and interfere with their function, resulting in neck pain, back pain, and numbness or tingling going down the arms or legs.

When unhealthy, the most common problems include:

- Herniated or bulging discs – These are caused when the material in the middle of a disc ruptures or pushes to one side, causing pain, pressure, pinched nerves and swelling.
- Disc degeneration – Healthy discs are flexible, like a moist sponge. However, injuries can cause small tears in the disc, causing the disc to lose fluid and wear thin. Ultimately, the vertebrae on either side of the disc begin to rub together, becoming rough, worn down – or even fused together.
- Vertebral fusion – When spinal damage goes uncorrected, and discs begin to degenerate, the body starts to deposit calcium on the surface of the vertebrae. This can result in complete fusion. One of the main goals is

to keep the spine healthy, or at least mobile, so fusion does not take place.

Unseen problems can develop over years

Because low back problems can occur gradually over time, muscles will often adapt to the supporting of the spine incorrectly. And while your body can function at less than optimal level for years without visible symptoms such as pain or stiffness, major problems can be forming.

Chiropractic care is currently the most widely practiced type of complimentary medicine.

Non-invasive and focused

on spinal health, chiropractic is often the effective alternative to spinal surgery.

Chiropractors are experts in the care of bones, nerves, muscles and connective tissues that make up about 60% of your body. Chiropractors locate, analyze, and treat problems with the spine. A 2002 study in SPINE Journal showed patients rated overall satisfaction with chiropractic care at 87%. (Annals of Internal Medicine, 2001)

Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers in Anchorage, Alaska, takes a multi-disciplinary approach to treating low back pain: chiropractic for alignment and correcting spinal position, physical therapy and massage for reducing muscle and ligament "pull" on the spine, and advanced technology, the DRS system, for low back.

The DRS or Decompression Reduction Stabilization system is a highly effective, non-surgical form of disc decompression therapy that has shown very positive results for the vast majority of patients. Approved by the FDA in the mid-1990s, DRS removes pressure from the discs and joints in the lower back, providing many benefits including:

- Decreased low back pain
- Decreased leg pain or numbness
- Improved daily function
- Improved range of motion
- Shrinkage of disc herniation
- Distraction of worn-out joints or discs
- Long-term results

Safe, painless treatments

In each 30-minute DRS session, the patient relaxes on the treatment bed while the decompression treatment occurs, monitored by a technician. DRS can target specific areas of the spine and the process is so safe, painless and relaxing that many patients actually fall asleep during treatment.

Patients who undergo DRS therapy can expect less low back pain and leg pain or numbness, improved range of motion in the low back, improved daily function, less incidences of back pain and dilatation, and a return to an active lifestyle.

Used in combination with chiropractic and physical therapy, these treatments allow patients to get back to every day life with significantly reduced pain.

And because chiropractic care is personal and designed specifically for the individual, treatment is available to all ages and physical conditions, from childhood to seniors, and for many conditions including:

- Ankle strains/sprains

- Arthritis
- Back pain
- Bursitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Degenerated disks
- Disc herniation, protrusion, bulges
- Fibromyalgia
- Headaches/migraines
- Hip/leg pain
- Joint pain
- Muscle imbalance/weakness
- Neck pain
- Post-surgery
- Posture problems
- Rotator cuff syndrome
- Sciatica
- Scoliosis

Dr. Brent Wells is a chiropractic physician and clinic director of Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers with two locations in Anchorage. Dr Wells has treated thousands of Alaskans for low back and neck

pain, and has introduced many advanced technologies to Alaska, including the DRS system.

The DRS system was first brought to Anchorage in 2000 by Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers. The DRS treatment protocol combines three effective low back pain therapies: DRS therapy, chiropractic, and rehabilitation in most cases.

The staff at Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers work together in a thorough integrated nonsurgical approach to treat your pain problems helping you to lead a life that's healthier and pain-free.

For more information contact Dr. Brent Wells at Better Health Pain and Wellness Centers, 258-5255 or 346-5255.

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