

Fixing Back Pain

You may be reading this after trying physical therapy, chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, or even surgery. You might even be thinking that being in chronic pain is just the way things have to be. There *are* answers to your pain, though. But if these answers exist, why are you still struggling with these problems?

Because most interventions you've tried are designed to address only the site of pain, not the systemic factors creating your pain. For instance in the case of a bulging disc, most providers will focus only on that area or one or two vertebrae above or below it, and perhaps give the patient core strengthening exercises. But this doesn't explain *why* the bulging disc occurred in the first place. Discs don't just bulge on their own. There are forces acting on them that cause them to bulge. Resolving these forces can eliminate pain. Understanding how these forces arise and how to correct them will help prevent pain in the first place.

In the case of backs, one of the primary systems which creates pain involve the legs and pelvis. The pelvis is the foundation upon which the spine rests. Pelvic orientation therefore affects spinal orientation.

If the pelvis is tilted too far forward, then the spine must adjust by increasing the lumbar curve (Figure 1). If this increase in the lumbar curve is excessive, it creates stress to the tissues of the spine including disks, ligaments, bony articulations, and tendons because it changes *how* the spine moves.

The opposite can also occur when the pelvis is tilted too far backward, reducing the lumbar curve and stressing the tissues of the spine from the opposite direction.

The orientation of the pelvis while standing also affects spinal movement. This issue biases the spine to either flex too much or too little during bending or lifting activities, stressing tissues. Over time, vulnerabilities are established in these tissues which, when exposed to repeated stresses, cause pain or disk deformities--such as disk bulges or herniations.

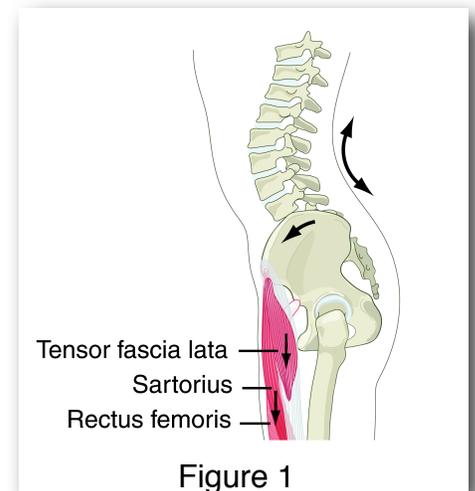


Figure 1

Testing Your Back Pain

To understand your pain, try this simple test. Lie down on your back on the floor or bed. Keep your legs straight and stay there for 30 seconds, feeling whether your back seems to be more or less irritated in this position. Now bend your knees so your feet are resting a little closer to your bottom. Stay here for 30 seconds. Now hug your knees to your chest and stay there for 30 seconds.

Did you notice your back felt better in one of these positions? Which position? If your back felt better in one position, then it must feel worse in another. Which one? Why do you think changing whether your knees were bent or straight affected your spine? Because what you just did was change the shape of the curve of your spine. This lessened stress to your spine and therefore it felt better. Wouldn't you be happy if your spine could feel like that all the time? It can! You just need to understand the how's and why's about this.

I mentioned earlier that the pelvis has a large impact on the spine. This little test you just did, changed the orientation of the pelvis, which then changed the shape and stress acting on your spine. So if we can understand why your pelvis is doing this then we can fix it, and therefore your spine.

Clues to what your pelvis is doing and why can be found in how you:

- sleep,
- stand up,
- bend over,
- drive your car,
- sit at your desk,
- do just about everything!

Because no matter what you are doing, your pelvis and legs are moving with you, creating forces acting on your spine. *The reason you don't know this is happening is because these movements have become your habits and therefore feel natural to you--even though they are causing your pain.*

I help people by showing them how their current habits are causing pain and learning how to correct them. I also give them specific exercises to correct the tissues that have adapted to these habits and prevent them from moving better. Sounds simple right?

This information can also be found in my book, *Fixing You: Back Pain*

(www.FixingYou.net).

You can reach me at (303) 477-4212 or email Rick@RickOlderman.com if you'd like an appointment or to ask a question.