

Back Pain?

We can help!

Do you have back or neck pain? Read this...

What's the best exercise for my back? This is a question that I get asked on a regular basis whether at work, at a party, running with my friends or even the grocery store. Simple enough question but unfortunately it does not come with a simple answer.

As physiotherapists we prescribe exercise to improve mobility, improve strength, correct muscle imbalances, restore function, and to reduce pain - to name a few. Exercise prescription is a major tool in our tool box. We would literally have thousands of exercises in our heads that we use at one time or another. With some back, neck and extremity joint problems the right exercise can have a very quick impact on pain. Conversely the wrong exercise can make things significantly

worse. At the Human Performance Centre we use the **McKenzie** approach. I am a certified **MDT (McKenzie Mechanical Diagnosis and Treatment)** therapist, Trish is preparing for her certification exam and Sarah is on her third level of McKenzie course training.

The McKenzie system of management of spinal and musculoskeletal disorders was developed by the late New Zealand physiotherapist **Robin McKenzie** in the 1960's. It is taught, researched and practiced by physiotherapists, chiropractors and physicians around the world. I always tell my patients that if you were assessed by a McKenzie Certified therapist in Canada, Asia or the US they would all follow the same process to determine your particular problem and make appropriate recommendations. The essence of the system is to teach the patients to treat their own mechanical musculoskeletal problems through education and a symptom specific exercise program. Treatment is based on a partnership in

rehabilitation between patient and therapist.

Benefits of the McKenzie system:

- **Prompt outcome assessment:** It is usually possible to predict treatment benefits within 1-2 visits.
- **Good accuracy of assessment data:** Published peer review studies have demonstrated that assessment conclusions compare favorably with the findings from CT scans and MRI.
- **The promotion of patient self reliance:** Patients are informed about the cause of their pain and given specific information to manage their symptoms. This reduces their dependence upon care-providers over the long term and gives them the tools to take responsibility for their own health.
- **Efficient use of medical services:** Encouraging active patient participation reduces the number of treatment visits required. Typically, a short number of therapy sessions are required over a period of a few weeks.

• **Recommendations are provided as to ongoing management:** The initial assessment determines the patient's appropriateness for this kind of intervention. Should mechanical therapy not be indicated, the assessment provides information on what further kinds of intervention or investigation may be appropriate.

As you can see, handing out exercises to help fix your back problem in the produce aisle is not as easy as it seems. It would be like a mechanic helping you change a tire when the problem is a broken strut. Need help in determining the right exercise(s) to fix your problem?... contact us.

Questions?

For more information on the McKenzie approach, including research literature, click on www.mckenziemdt.org.



*Earle Burrows, BSc. (Bio), BSc. PT., Cert. MTD
CEO of the Human Performance Centre with 20
years experience in his field of expertise .*



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749 River Valley Drive
humanperformancecentre.ca