

Fitness Focus-Lower Back Care (part 1)

Back Facts

Low back is one of the most common problems affecting mankind. It is estimated that 70-80% of the population will develop low back pain sometime in their lives. Approximately 90% of those will have repeated attacks. Although the causes of low back pain are not totally understood, some easily faults in our lifestyle contribute to the problem. Three well-known factors causing low back pain are:

- Poor sitting and standing posture
- High frequency of forward bending (with poor body mechanics)
- Sedentary lifestyle (leads to loss of flexibility of hamstrings & spine)

Fortunately, a majority of the causes can be **prevented**. The primary goal of lower back care is to **prevent** problems in the first place. “**Preventative medicine**” is simply identifying things that contribute to the problem and trying to do things to prevent it from happening in the first place or from reoccurring. Simply knowing how to perform daily living activities correctly can help **prevent** problems.

The anatomy of the back is very complex but a basic understanding of some of the structures will help you with your **preventative medicine** approach to lower back care.

SPINE

The spine is the main support system that keeps us upright and supports the weight of the body. The series of curves in the spine provide us with balance, shock absorption and flexibility. The inward curve in the lower part of the spine is called “lordosis.”

VERTEBRAE

The spine is made up of 24 vertebrae stacked on top of each other from the base of the skull to the tailbone. The vertebrae have two primary functions. First, they protect the spinal cord. Second, they provide a place for muscles to attach.

DISCS

Discs are located between each vertebra. The discs are made up of two parts. The inside of the disc is a jelly like substance. The outside holds it together with strong crisscrossing fibers. The discs provide separation between vertebrae. This separation allows greater flexibility of the spine and provides shock absorption.

Examine your own sitting and standing posture. Consider your own body mechanics when bending forward or lifting anything. Learning and practicing **preventative medicine** will help you avoid lower back problems.

Lesson Review

1. Using the statistics in this lesson, how many students at Lakeview will develop low back pain? How many will have repeated attacks? (current student population = 650)
2. What are the three well-known facts causing low back pain?
3. What is the primary goal of lower back care?
4. What do the series of curves in the spine provide us with?
5. What are the two functions of the vertebrae?
6. Describe the structure between the vertebrae.
7. Describe the “preventative medicine” you personally will use to avoid low back pain.