

HEALTHY IDEAS

by Richard Guyer, M.D.

Oh, your aching back!! You may need to see a specialist if your back is acting up. But there's often plenty you can do on your own to alleviate the discomfort.

Because most back pain is related to muscle strain, it's still a good idea to take anti-inflammatory medication like aspirin or ibuprofen, and get off your feet. If the pain persists after one to three days, then call the doctor.

Some other useful steps when your back balks:

• **STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING.** (Your back may leave you little choice, anyway.) If necessary, try a day or two of bed rest to relax bound-up muscles. But after two days, muscles will begin to atrophy, making recovery and strengthening more difficult.

When resting, completely unload the spine. Don't lie face down, because this still places some strain on your back. It's best to lie on your back with a pillow placed under the knees. Next best: on your side with a pillow between your knees.

• **MEDICATION:** Anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin and Tylenol, as well as ibuprofen (Advil, Nuprin and Medipren) are more effective if you begin taking them right after the injury. Also, never take medication on an empty stomach.

• **ICE, THEN HEAT.** Both help alleviate the local pain that comes from muscle and ligament strain. Heat increases the blood flow to the deep tissues; ice acts as a local anesthetic. Both extreme heat or cold can hurt the skin if applied directly for more than five minutes at a time.

Ice slows swelling and inflammation. After 48 hours, however, ice has lost its effect. Using heat thereafter is thought to aid the healing process by increasing circulation and relaxing muscle spasms.

• **MASSAGE:** Gentle massage may provide some temporary relief by stretching out tight muscles and ligaments. But while massage is OK for a sore back, don't use it on newly injured limbs. If there is bruising, you could dislodge a blood clot, which could result in an embolism, or blood vessel breakage.

• **EXERCISE:** Numerous studies maintain that exercise is more effective for treating simple back pain than passive methods such as rest and drugs. For one thing, exercise narrows the source of pain to a smaller area. It accelerates healing and can help prevent the injury from recurring. Take it easy, though-- you don't want to make the injury worse.

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WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT

NAME _____

WEEK

OF: _____

SUNDAY:

___ 8 GLASSES OF WATER

___ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT

___ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS

BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

MONDAY:

_____ 8 GLASSES OF WATER
_____ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT
_____ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS
BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

TUESDAY:

_____ 8 GLASSES OF WATER
_____ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT
_____ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS
BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

WEDNESDAY:

_____ 8 GLASSES OF WATER
_____ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT
_____ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS
BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

THURSDAY:

_____ 8 GLASSES OF WATER
_____ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT
_____ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS
BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

FRIDAY:

___ 8 GLASSES OF WATER

___ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT

___ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS

BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

SATURDAY:

___ 8 GLASSES OF WATER

___ 2-3 PIECES OF WHOLE FRUIT

___ 45 MIN. OF AEROBIC WALKING OR DANCE AEROBICS

BREAKFAST: _____

LUNCH: _____

DINNER: _____

☞ Choose one day each week to weigh and measure yourself. You should also make sure that you are using the same scales every time and to weigh at the same hour of the day to get an accurate comparison of your weight loss.

☞ Do not get discouraged if you do not see immediate results. It takes two to three weeks for your body metabolism to adjust to this new routine. **DON'T GIVE UP!!!!**

☞ You should not "cheat" during the first two weeks of this program to get your body adjusted properly. After the second week, you may choose two meals a week for your "cheat meals" when you are out with other people or may not find a convenient food source.

☞ **DO NOT SKIP MEALS!!!!** You will actually do your body more harm as your body begins to burn muscle tissue instead of fat. Your muscle tissue is needed in order to burn off fat---don't run it away!!!!

☞ Use good judgement in your food selection. Avoid any fried foods and any foods with high fat content (cheese, sour cream, butter, fatty oils and dressings). Cut down your food portions and eat greater portions of raw vegetables or fruits.

☞ When doing aerobic walking, it is most beneficial to walk in the morning when your metabolism level can stay up during meal times. Make sure that you are walking at a fast enough pace to get your heart rate up over 140 bpm's and keep it consistent for at least 45 minutes. You should do your aerobic activities five days a week.

WEEKLY STATISTIC CHART:

WEIGHT _____

BUST _____ "

WAIST _____ "

HIPS _____ "

THIGHS _____ "