
The
Better Back
System

Everything You Need To
Know About
*Sciatica & Back Pain &
How To Stop It*

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

DISCLAIMER	8
FOREWORD	9
INTRODUCTION - THE PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL.....	14
Your Emotional State and Your Back	16
CHAPTER 1: HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL	19
Step 1.....	19
Step 2.....	19
Step 3.....	19
Step 4.....	19
Notes:	19
CHAPTER 2: USEFUL INFORMATION ON YOUR SPINE	20
FACTS vs MYTHS ABOUT BACK PAIN	20
Common Back Myths.....	20
TYPES & DESCRIPTIONS OF SCIATICA & BACK PAIN	21
Sciatica	21
Back Pain.....	22
Common Healthcare Terms Associated With Back Pain	22
BASIC BACK STRUCTURE DIAGRAMS.....	24
CHAPTER 3: DIAGNOSIS & RECOVERY PLAN.....	28
STEP BY STEP OVERVIEW.....	28
DETAILS ABOUT BACK PAIN DIAGNOSIS.....	31
Learning Your Medical History	31

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

Diagnostic Testing	33
Where To Go For Pain Relief.....	33
Osteopath	37
BACK SURGERY OVERVIEW	38
CHAPTER 4: CORE EXERCISES & DIET FOR BACK RELIEF	40
4.1 BETTER BACK SYSTEM DIET.....	41
Two Short Term Diet Actions You Can Take.....	42
Long Term Diet Action To Take.....	43
4.2 HOLD GOOD POSTURE & ELIMINATE BAD HABITS.....	43
4.3 CORE BETTER BACK SYSTEM EXERCISES	44
Core Exercises Group A	46
EFT	46
Exercise #1. Walking	47
Exercise #2. Back Pull Down	48
Exercise #3. Shoulder Stretch	53
Exercise #4. Chest Stretch.....	55
Exercise #5. Lower Back Stretch	57
Core Exercises Group B	58
Exercise #6. Pelvic Tilt	58
Exercise #7. Back Curl and Roll	60
Exercise #8. Alexander Technique for Spine Alignment.....	64
CHAPTER 5: ADDITIONAL BACK EXERCISES	66
Qigong Shoulder and Neck Stretch.....	66
Hamstring Stretches	69
One Leg Hamstring Stretch.....	70

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

Two Leg Hamstring Stretch	70
Yoga	72
SALUTE TO THE SUN:	72
CORPSE:	73
CAT STRETCH:	73
WIND-RELEASING POSE:	73
SAGE TWIST:	73
PALM TREE:	74
FISH POSE:	74
LOCUST:	74
BENDING FORWARD POSTURE:	74
Pilates	75
THE HUNDRED:	75
SPINE STRETCH FORWARD:	76
The ROLLUP:	76
The SAW:	76
SPINE TWIST:	77
BALLERINA ARMS:	77
Tai Chi	77
Stretching	78
HAMSTRING STRETCH:	78
LOWER BACK STRETCH:	78
MIDDLE BACK STRETCH:	79
UPPER BACK STRETCH:	79
Exercise Balls	79
BACK ARCH:	79
BACK FLOOR PRESS:	80
BALL SQUATS:	80
Strengthening	80
FRONT LYING CHEST LIFT:	80

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

DOUBLE KNEES TO CHEST:	80
PELVIC TILT:	81
STOMACH LEG LIFTS:	81
CURL UPS:	81
OBLIQUE CURL UPS:	81
Aerobic Exercise	81
CHAPTER 6: MANAGING BACK PAIN	83
Chronic Back Pain.....	83
What Can You Do About Your Back Pain?	84
Questions to Answer to Categorise Your Back Pain	84
Medications.....	85
Psychological Approaches	86
Splitting:.....	86
A Physical Approach	87
Lose Weight:	88
CHAPTER 7: STRATEGIES & TIPS FOR PREVENTING & HEALING BACK PAIN	
.....	89
Slow Down.....	89
Ice and Heat	90
Massage	90
Keep Moving	90
Change Your Routine.....	90
Pain Management.	91
Simple Practices To Manage and Prevent Back Pain	91
Standing.....	91
Sitting	91
Lifting	92

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

Exercise.....	93
Sleeping	93
Other Tips	93
Controlled Breathing	94
Rest.....	94
Over The Counter (OTC) Medicines	94
Miscellaneous Tips	95
CHAPTER 8: CAUSES OF BACK PAIN	96
DEGENERATIVE DISK DISEASE	96
PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES.....	97
SYSTEMIC DISEASE	97
FACET SYNDROME	98
SPINAL STENOSIS	98
HERNIATED DISK	99
SPONDYLOLISTHESIS.....	100
SPONDYLOARTHROPATHY	101
NATURAL SUPPLEMENT TREATMENTS.....	102
Vitamins and Minerals	103
Herbs	103
Muscle Relaxants	104
KAVA (or KAVA KAVA):	104
BLACK HAW:	104
VALERIAN ROOT:	104
WILD YAM (Dioscorea Villosa):.....	104
JAMAICA DOGWOOD:	104
Anti-inflammatories	105
BROMELAIN:	105
BOSWELLIN:	105
CURCUMIN:	105

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

ST. JOHN'S WORT:	106
Pain Relief.....	106
WHITE WILLOW BARK:	106
DEVIL'S CLAW:	106
Homeopathy	106
PHYSICAL TREATMENTS	107
Chiropractic Therapy	108
Acupuncture.....	111
Physical Therapy.....	113
Massage Therapy	115
Water Therapy	117
SURGICAL TREATMENT.....	119
Disc Surgery.....	119
Spine Stabilization.....	121
Creating Additional Space.....	121
An Improved Process	121
MEDICATIONS AND INJECTIONS.....	122
Injections	124
APPENDIX A EFT.....	127
APPENDIX B OTHER RESOURCES	131

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

Disclaimer

The author of this book is not a qualified medical doctor and the approaches described and opinions presented may not concur with prevailing, mainstream medical opinion.

The exercises, dietary suggestions and other advice regarding health issues described are not suitable for everyone. In certain situations, they could cause you to injure yourself.

You should not try to diagnose yourself, or begin any exercise routine, dietary program or attempt to treat yourself without consulting a qualified medical practitioner.

The author does not provide any guarantees that the approaches outlined will work, or that you will produce a particular outcome or benefits for yourself. The information herein is provided "as is" and without warranties of any kind either express or implied.

The author/ seller/distributor accepts no liability for any loss or injury arising from the adoption of any of the practices described in this book.

Furthermore, under no circumstances, including, but not limited to, negligence, shall the seller/distributor of this information be liable for any special or consequential damages that result from the use of, or the inability to use, the information presented here.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About [Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It](#)

FOREWORD

Note: We recommend you understand the overall context of what we recommend and how your back works, but if you just want to get on with it you can go straight to the exercises [here](#)

If you suffer from sciatica and/or back pain you are not alone! More than 70 percent of the population experiences some sort of back pain at one time or another in their lives – including me!

I started visiting a chiropractor around 1990, after a few years of a stiff back and what I thought were 'hamstring problems' from playing soccer. The chiropractor examined me and took X-rays. These showed that I had some degeneration of the disks in my lower back and neck areas - hence the pain and stiffness. It wasn't a huge problem in the scheme of things, but there were clear signs of wear and tear. I then started visiting the chiropractor regularly and each visit definitely helped. However, a common problem was that if I did anything outside a narrow range of 'safe' activities, my back pain quickly came back.

Now, I admit that part of my problem was that I wasn't prepared to give up the things I loved doing.

But who is and why should we have to - life is too short, right?

Neither did I consider myself to be at an age where I should have to take it easy, or play it safe. So quite often, depending on what I was doing, it took only a few days, or sometimes just a few hours after an adjustment, before my back would go 'out' again and the pain and discomfort came back.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

After a while it became clear to me that, although the chiropractor was helping my back, I had to do more for myself. So I embarked on a mission to find out how my back worked, what I could do to strengthen it and a program of exercise and nutrition.

What I wanted was to be able to do what I considered normal things - kick a soccer ball, go for a run, fool around with my kids, dig a hole – without worrying whether it would put my back out.

Two key points:

1. “Who wants to spend their life worrying about their back?”

My answer is “Not me that's for sure!”

2. “Who cares what the treatment is, as long as it works”.

Some people swear by chiropractors, others say they're all charlatans, some recommend osteopaths, another group prefers physical therapists, some more go to Naturopaths, others take favourite supplements, some say “do Yoga or Pilates”, some assert surgery finally fixed their problem, others regret the day they ever went near a surgeon.

The point is to find what works for you.

I'm not at all interested in arguing about who is right or wrong, which is the “best” treatment and so on, because backs are very complex structures and everybody is different. What works for one person might not for another.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

Some people have an X-ray taken for their back and the medical opinion is they shouldn't even be able to walk, yet all they feel is the occasional twinge. Other people spend weeks in agony (this is my own experience) but the X-ray looks entirely normal for their age.

Personally, I got fed up with wondering, "If I do this, is it going to put my back out and leave me uncomfortable and maybe in pain again?" As I struggled and muddled along with back problems, sometimes I'd get tired of worrying about whether doing what I wanted would put my back 'out', so I'd say to myself, "stuff this I'll do it anyway!"

So I'd enjoy myself at the time, but often, soon afterwards the sciatica and back pain would start up and I'd end up stiff and sore again.

Eventually, after much trial and error, I discovered how to stop my back from annoying me all the time. I also learnt that back pain relief starts with 2 things:

1. Understanding basic principles about your back: what causes pain, how it's diagnosed, what treatments are available, how to manage the pain and
2. Understanding how to strengthen the muscles that support and interact with your back so it's less likely to get strained and hurt etc.

**So the Better Back System is a compilation of what works
for most people most of the time.**

As we learn more and find new things that work, we add them to the system. As I mentioned above, I don't really care what the treatment or exercise is as long as it works.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

The caveat on that statement is that I work from the position that 'natural' treatments are generally the best. I need to make it clear that if you want to take the latest and greatest pharmaceutical, this is not the program for you.

My personal view is that your body is an amazing, self-healing system if you give it a decent chance, which means

- a good, mostly natural diet, i.e. not processed / additive laden / junk food and prescription drugs
- moderate exercise and rest,
- eliminating bad habits (posture, repetitive, bad movements)

Important Note: As mentioned in the disclaimer, the contents here are not presented from a medical viewpoint, or by a medical practitioner, and any and all health care planning should be made under the guidance of your own medical and health practitioners. The content within only presents an overview of back pain relief research for educational purposes and does not replace medical advice from a professional physician.

Having said that, I have visited a doctor twice for my back problems over a period of more than 18 years and neither time did they find anything or offer any advice apart from suggesting an anti-inflammatory or "waiting for it to heal".

I use a chiropractor, exercise and diet to manage my back, so I know it works for me. It is also what the other books, manuals and programs that we recommend promote.

For me it's obvious. If you have a poor diet so your body cannot operate properly and you don't exercise to strengthen the muscles supporting your back, any cure is only likely to be temporary, because the dysfunctions and

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About [Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It](#)

weaknesses that allowed your problem to emerge in the first place will still be there.

Bottom line: If you want to build a strong and healthy back, it's up to you to take responsibility for it.

What we have found as we have researched and produced a variety of health- and wellness books, is that a singular truth has emerged across them all.

This truth is that simple, regular, natural practices are usually the best, starting with exercise and diet. Our perspective is that the best thing you can do for yourself and your back is to create yourself the situation where your body is able to do the best job it can of looking after itself. This also includes your mental and emotional state, because fundamentally these drive your physical health.

Look at drugs and surgery as your backup (a last resort you hopefully won't need) if other methods aren't working for you, not your first choice as soon as anything goes wrong.

In cases where it's useful, we have shown and contrasted the "medical" and "alternative" viewpoints and approaches to an issue separately.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About [Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It](#)

INTRODUCTION - THE PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

As you would expect from its title, this manual is about your back, sciatica and back pain and the steps you can take to build a strong and healthy back. Our recommended approach is based on building up the strength and flexibility of your back in conjunction with a program of simple, natural health practices.

What Has Worked For Me

The information in this book is designed to provide you with a broad understanding of the issues surrounding back pain and treatment. However, let me be very clear at this point about what has worked for me.

This has been chiropractic treatment combined with healthy diet, general exercise, plus a specific back exercise and strengthening routine. Honestly the thought of back surgery scares me to death and I stay away from prescription medicines, I use an average of maybe 1 prescription per year.

As I said earlier, some people think Chiropractic care is a waste of time. My view is like everything else in life, you need to apply your own judgement. There are good and bad Chiropractors like there are good and bad practitioners in every other field.

Things To Watch Out For

Talking from personal experience, definitely there are Chiropractic practices (and Physiotherapists) who basically use an "assembly line" approach and take little time to assess the circumstances of individual patients.

Bang, bang, bang – a few minutes of adjustments and you're out on the street again. There's no time to go into a discussion of your condition, or what exercises you might do to strengthen your back and reduce the need for adjustment.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

It looks like they just want to churn you through the practice as often as possible. Just the same way "Big Pharma" wants you to take as many prescription drugs as possible.

Whatever specialist you're consulting with make sure you get a clear view of:

1. How long will the treatment continue for?
2. How specifically will it help my back – short and long term?
3. What do I need to do to minimise my time under treatment?
4. What's the view of this practitioner towards back strengthening exercises?
5. Which exercises will work best with this treatment?

What We Recommend

I've had an interest in natural health and wellbeing for a long time - basically I've been a walking test bed for a variety of ideas and practices over a period of more than 20 years. Yoga, Meditation, Vegetarianism, Tai Chi, The Fit for Life diet, Tibetan Rites, Qi Gong, EFT - I've tried a ton of different things!

The best exercises I have found are described in this manual. After years of managing my back whilst maintaining a high level of physical activity and capability – including yoga and stretching every day, cycling, swimming, gym, walking, surfing etc - these exercises are what have made the biggest improvement to my back.

They have also helped me to achieve flexibility including a loosening around my neck, which had been prone to chronic stiffness for a long time.

My wife Rita, whose main exercise is walking, also found the exercises have made a difference for her in releasing her shoulders and improving her posture.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About *Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It*

I have tried all of the recommended exercises myself and I can confirm their usefulness based on my own practical experience.

You can find the [Better Back Exercises](#) in the manual [here](#), but make sure you read the preceding chapters 1-3 first.

Your Emotional State and Your Back

This subject has its own section in the introduction because it is an important topic that really deserves a book of its own (and many have been written), but I'll attempt to cover it briefly.

Most sciatica and back pain programs, including this one, focus primarily on the physical aspects of your back – posture, eliminating bad habits, stretching, strengthening your core muscles and so on.

However, most health practitioners, even in the mainstream, now accept that your body has an active energy field¹. The debate these days is more about the precise nature of the field and exactly how it affects your health and wellbeing, rather than whether it exists or not.

As a quick digression, energy is the underlying field from which matter is created (ref. Einstein's work, quantum physics etc) i.e. energy is the ultimate source of your physical body.

In the case of humans, this energy is generally accepted to have an emotional and a spiritual component. However, as mentioned before, what counts is

¹ Some people call this an aura. Your aura can be captured into a picture using a technique called Kirlian photography. Also, some people are able to directly perceive other people's auras unaided.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About [Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It](#)

“whatever works” for your back, so I don’t intend to start a debate on these points. It’s sufficient to realize the energy exists and that it’s an underlying driver behind your physical characteristics and condition.

[A key point to understand then is that an accumulation of negative energy \(e.g. from stress, anger, upset, chronic worry etc\) ultimately impacts you physically.](#)

The purpose of all energy based therapies – Reiki, Yoga and Qigong, “spiritual healing” and so on is to remove negative energy and/or improve the energy flows around your body.

In the cases of Yoga and Qigong, the main purpose is to regulate and “smooth” the energy flow, in the cases of Reiki and “spiritual healing” to remove the negative energy from your body.

What does this have to do with my back?

Consider that your spine is a major transmission and storage area for this energy². Moreover, any energy imbalances present in your body are likely to affect your spine, because it’s such a complex and sensitive organ. In other words, symptoms of a bad back will appear – stiffness, pain and so on.

As these back problems are energy based, physical treatment will have variable results. Ultimately, you may have to deal with the underlying emotional / spiritual issues to remove your physical symptoms.

² Interestingly, the spine has a similar structure to a capacitor, which is used to store electrical energy.

The *Better Back* System

Everything You Need To Know About [Sciatica & Back Pain & How To Stop It](#)

As mentioned above, this is the mechanism behind the various energy and spiritual healing practices. They remove the negative energy and once this is done, the associated physical problems also disappear because the negative energy is no longer interfering with your body's normal function.

One of the most straightforward, energy treatment modalities is EFT, which is described in full detail at www.emofree.com. Many of the resources at the EFT site are available at no charge, including a lengthy manual. An overview on how you can get started using EFT right away is included here in Appendix A.

There are some amazing case studies, where people with apparently incurable and/or untreatable conditions have experienced radical improvement from using EFT.

Importantly, EFT can easily be self-administered – in other words you do not need to visit a specialist to use it (although you may well achieve quicker and/or better results by working with an experienced EFT practitioner).

Summary

Overall then, the purpose of this manual is to help you to identify and understand the causes of your sciatica and back pain and to help you learn exercises and practices that will give you a good chance of stopping your back problems and help build a strong and healthy back – naturally.

Your job is to find what works for you - take what you need and leave what you don't.

“Whatever works for you is just what you need”

Good luck.