

Health & recovery

The Newsletter About Integrative Manual Therapy

Issue 3

Pelvic Compression Reflex

An Integrative Manual Therapy Perspective of Low Back Pain

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Low back pain is a condition that can affect most of us at some point in our lives. For most of us, this will be a temporary inconvenience. It may cause us severe pain at some point of our lives but usually is quite short lived. For some people, lower back pain is persistent and can affect them in debilitating ways that limit their lives. For these people, treatment can be frustrating. When a patient seeks care for a knee injury, most practitioners will evaluate them in a systematic way and determine the cause of

times findings on MRI do not correlate with a patient's symptoms. Treatment is many times trial and error.

One phenomenon that we found in the evaluation of patients with low back pain is what we term Pelvic Compression Reflex. To explain this particular problem first I need to let you know how we view the body from an Integrative Manual Therapy perspective. We view the body as self regulating and self healing; whenever we see a patient in pain or a physical structure causing pain, we view

this as the body trying to protect itself. This protection is based on a hierarchy of protection. For example, the body will protect an artery at a higher cost than say a joint or even a disk. When a person is having disk problems it may be the body's attempt to protect other structures.

For example: left sided lower back pain and disk protrusion on the left side could be the body's response to problems in the sigmoid colon or the femoral artery.

From an Integrative Manual Therapy perspective, treatment would have to be directed in a specific manner to these more primary areas to help the body heal the disk problem.



Ralph Havens, PT, OCS, IMT, C
Owner Mission Hills Physical Therapy

the problem for example a ligament, meniscus injury or arthritic changes in the knee. But, when a patient seeks care for low back pain, the exact cause can be elusive. Many

What does the Medical Literature say about **CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN?**

“This is true healing; its about getting to the root of the problem and helping the body fix itself.”

In 2005 a well respected peer reviewed journal, The Annals of Internal Medicine reviewed the medical literature regarding various types of treatments for low back pain. They reviewed the randomized controlled trials from numerous studies dating back to 1992 using scientific methods of analysis. They looked at Yoga, Acupuncture, massage therapy, spinal manipulation, and what they termed conventional treatments and conventional exercises. The conclusion was that “few treatments for back pain are supported by strong scientific evidence”. The Annals of Internal Medicine found that massage and yoga are effective at decreasing and

were limited in their design and stated the results were therefore “unclear”. The Annals of Internal Medicine also reported that individually designed programs were more effective than general programs or self-help books. The results from the yoga programs seemed to offer the best results, yet still only managed symptoms and did not fully alleviate the pain.

In this review, functional approaches and structural approaches were studied for their effectiveness. Functional approaches included the exercise and yoga type treatments; the structural approaches included spinal manipulation and massage therapies. From Integrative Manual Therapy viewpoint both approaches can be useful in the treatment of low back pain.

What we have found with Integrative Manual Therapy, which is a structural approach, is that specific hands on assessments enable us to locate structures in the back causing pain and the reason these structures are irritated or inflamed. Also, we can locate other areas in the body that are causing the lower back pain. With this data, knowing the structural cause or causes of the problem, we can direct specific hands-on treatment to help the person’s body to heal. This is true healing; its about getting to the root of the problem and helping the body fix itself.

managing symptoms of back pain. They concluded that spinal manipulation was superior to “sham” treatments but no more effective than “conventional treatment”. They concluded that acupuncture studies

Along with this structural approach, using exercise based therapies can be useful in re-training weak areas. We find a combined method using various exercise approaches given in an individualized manner to be most useful.



There are times when there is no problem picked up even with IMT diagnostics in the lower back joints, disks, muscles or ligaments. Even the sacroiliac joints are not showing up as problematic, yet the pelvic area continues to be “locked up”. In this case it could be due to a problem we call Pelvic Compression Reflex. In this case, the IMT practitioner could place a hand over the sacroiliac joints and assess where the body’s tension is pulling from in relation to the sacroiliac joints.

This would lead to an area which could be far removed from the lower back. It could be areas in the head, other parts of the spine or other systems of the body such as other organ systems. In this case, treatment directed to these far removed areas; areas influencing the lower back, have been shown to change range of motion and eliminate pain and solve more difficult cases.

Locating the cause of lower back pain has in the past been frustrating. However with Integrative Manual Therapy approach, the cause of the lower back pain can not only be found, but with specific hands on manual therapy techniques can be fully corrected. The important thing is to find the primary cause of your back pain and help your body heal.

Ralph Havens, PT, OCS, IMT, C

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Tips and Tricks

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR SAFE LIFTING:

When lifting objects, back injuries can be avoided if you:

1. Keep a wide base of support.

Spread your feet apart with one foot slightly ahead of the other to make yourself more stable.

2. Keep the object close to you.

The farther the object is from you the more pressure there is on your low back.



3. Bend your knees and hips.

To pick up or set down objects you need to get your hands down to that level. Don't bend over at the waist, bend your hips and knees.

4. Maintain your low back curve.

This is the key! Lock in the spine so that you maintain that slightly inward curve in your low back.

5. Do not twist or bend sideways.

Face the object you are picking up or working on. If you must turn to change your direction, pivot on your feet.



6. Push rather than pull.

Pushing is easier for your back. Brace your hands on the object, lock your natural curve in your spine and slightly bend your knees. This will give you lots of pushing power—safely!

7. Use a step stool.



If you must reach over shoulder level, use a step stool to get up closer to the object to avoid more strain on the low back. It's not the weight of the object but the position of your back that causes injuries.

8. Get help.

If the object is too heavy or the size or shape is too awkward, ask for help or use some equipment designed to assist you.

FAQ

- Frequently Asked Questions About Back Pain -

Why are back problems so hard to get rid of?

Back injuries don't usually happen "overnight". They are an accumulation of aggravations and abuses from lifetime habits that add up over the years. So if you keep doing things the same way you will continually aggravate and damage your back regardless of how good the treatment is. Bad habits can also prevent you from recovering.

What are the most damaging "habits" we can do to our backs?

The two most harmful things you can do to your back are bending and twisting. These motions not only cause irreparable damage to the muscles, ligaments, joints and the discs in your back but they also put your back in a weakened position. Unfortunately most people will bend over from the waist or twist their spine and then try to lift things. By doing so, you put your back in a weakened position and then ask it to do heavy work and then wonder why it hurts.

How do you avoid bending and twisting?

You can avoid bending by locking your spine into position (with slight natural inward curve in the low back) and then bending with your hips and knees. This is the position the weight-lifters use to lift heavy weights. They use it because it is the safest and strongest position for their backs. You can avoid the twisting by making sure you are facing your task. In other words, have your shoulders and hips facing the same direction. If you need to change directions, pivot on your feet. Shoes are cheaper to replace than your back!

I work as a grocery store clerk and have to stand at the cash register for long periods of time. This makes my back ache a lot by the end of the day. What can I do?

Find a small box or a low step stool to place your foot on. This will allow one leg to bend at the hip and knee and will reduce the strain on your low back. You can change feet as frequently as you like. Try different heights and see what is the most comfortable for you.

Do you need to see a Physical Therapist for your Back Pain? Take this simple test...

YES	NO	
[]	[]	I wake up in the morning with pain in my back.
[]	[]	I get pain in my back when I walk.
[]	[]	I can not bend over easily without pain.
[]	[]	My neck goes out at least twice a year.
[]	[]	I get a sharp pain from my low back down the back of my leg.
[]	[]	Exercising is too painful for my back.
[]	[]	I do not do any exercises for my back during the day.
[]	[]	I have to sit at a desk all day and my chair makes my back ache.
[]	[]	I am overweight and can not easily bend over to grab something.
[]	[]	My back surgery has gotten rid of most of my pain but I still can't do my job yet.
[]	[]	My back hurts everytime I lift one of my legs.
[]	[]	My back keeps me awake at night.

Results:

If you have answered yes to any of these you should be checked out by your physician and/or physical therapist.



Featured Therapists



Cathie Wegrzyn, PT, Danielle Emhof, MPT, and Ralph Havens, PT, OCS, IMT, C recently completed advanced seminars and training at CenterIMT in Bloomfield, Connecticut. Cathie completed a seminar in assessing and treating Hypovascularized Sites and advanced training in Cardiac Rehabilitation; Danielle completed

an advanced seminar on Gluten Sensitivity and the treatment of Allergies; Ralph completed advanced seminars in Cardiac Rehabilitation and the treatment of Cranial Base problems. With the training in these advanced skills, we are excited in being able to help more patients with chronic conditions. In addition, Ralph has been awarded a certification in Integrative Manual Therapy in August, 2007, which culminated 7 years of advanced courses and training in IMT. More information on Integrative Manual Therapy can be found at www.centerIMT.com.

SUCCESSSES

What patients are saying . . .

I was referred to Mission Hills Physical Therapy to rehab my right foot. It has since gotten much better. But, I also had several other complains: numbness in my arms when I sleep, arthritis pain at the base of my thumbs, pain in my upper mid back and tightness and pain my lower back and pain in my left foot. I am happy to say that all of these problems have improved with treatment and one is gone completely.

K.B.

At the end of the treatment program, I feel much greater flexibility and range of motion in my hip. There is also less incidents of pain and it's less severe each time.

On the whole, my entire body feels better and more relaxed. I believe the no wheat/gluten/sugar diet has been helpful and will try to continue it as much as possible. I've also been



introduced to new types of food and more natural, healthful choices.

The exercises have been excellent, and I plan to continue them as well.

M.B.



When I started Physical Therapy 2 weeks ago I had heel pain that stopped me in my tracks. Besides taking pain relievers, my pain management consisted primarily of staying off my feet most of the time. Not too practical. Now, after even a short period of treatment, I no longer

need any pain relievers and am almost back to my full routine.

Everyone at Mission Hills Physical Therapy is so helpful and caring. I can't thank you enough!

C.L.B.



I came in with excruciating pain in my lower legs from running injuries. I couldn't sit for more than 5 minutes with legs bent. I couldn't walk down the stairs without letting out "ouches".

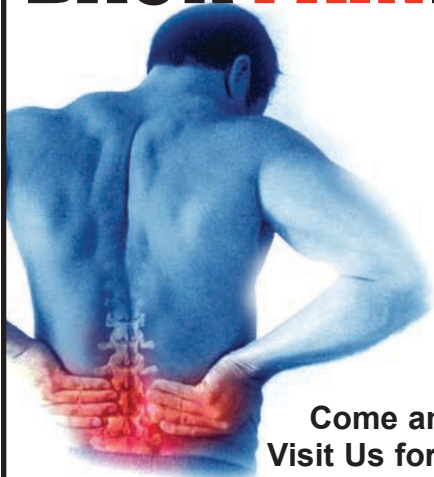
After weeks of therapy, I can

honestly say that I'm cured! Thanks to Kanoe, Sally and Ralph.

Thank you for your contribution towards better health for me.

G.G.

Tired of having **BACK PAIN?**



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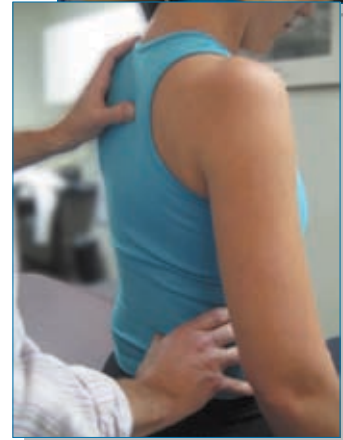
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A physical therapist owned practice located in the heart of San Diego; we specialize in Integrative Manual Therapy™. Our approach is to work with the individual as a whole. We look at underlying causes that hold physical conditions in place then treat those so the patient's condition is cleared and their health restored.

Each patient receives an objective examination in order to determine the nature of their problem, including structural causes, areas of dysfunction and any predisposing activities or events.

Treatment will consist of gentle, specific, hands-on techniques. You may be given specific exercises or movements to do at home so you have control over your symptoms and can learn how to work specifically on your problem.



We can help you recover and achieve Whole Body Health.

Call us today for a free consultation at

(619) 543-1470

www.missionhillsppt.com

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In this Issue

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