



Brendan M. Murray

D.C., D.A.C.B.S.P.

Dawn Yoshioka

D.C., C.S.C.S., Certified A.R.T.

2825 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 101
Santa Monica, CA 90404

(310) 998-5800 phone

(310) 998-5811 fax

Exercise Information

When exercise doesn't work

All too often, patients are referred for physical therapy and the patients return to the doctor stating they stopped the therapy because it hurt their backs or they just weren't getting adequate low back pain relief for their efforts. Here are a few reasons a physical therapy program may not alleviate back pain:

- *The program prescribed does not include active exercise.* This occurs when a patient's physical therapy program includes very little muscle training and focuses more on the use of hot packs, cold packs and electric stimulation therapy. While hot/cold packs and deep tissue massage can often provide pain relief, they are only a passive form of treatment. In the initial phase of care this is good, but to achieve lasting, long term relief of a patient's condition requires that you are moved into an active phase of care. Some form of an active exercise program to rehabilitate the injured area.
- *Patients do the exercises incorrectly.* Patients may not have a thorough understanding of how their exercises should be performed to bring about the desired benefits. If this is the case, then the patient may benefit from a more thorough explanation of the exercise by the doctor and/or therapist and guidance to correct possible errors in exercise. It is beneficial for the patient to schedule one on one session with the therapist so they better understand how to better do the exercise, and know when they are doing the exercises incorrectly. By working with a rehabilitation specialist you will reach your goals faster.
- *Patients don't stick to the prescribed exercise program.* Therapy is not likely to alleviate pain if patients do not perform the recommended exercises. Continued exercise once the pain begins to resolve is important. It is common once the pain

decreases patients stop doing the exercises. It takes a minimum of 6-8 weeks of exercise so that once you stop the condition will not reoccur.

- *Patients don't keep up with exercise long term.* It is best for patients to continue with the prescribed exercises and/or a self directed exercise program following the initial course of treatment. Typically, it is recommended that the patient maintain the basic core and dynamic stabilization exercises and may transition into a more extensive exercise program including low impact aerobic exercise and specific weight-lifting exercises. Since most peoples lifestyles are sedentary, due to the amount of time we spend behind a desk or at a computer, some form of low impact exercise has been shown in studies to extend the quality of life.

Following the above suggestions will allow patients to successfully treat their low back conditions with a specific designed rehabilitation program.