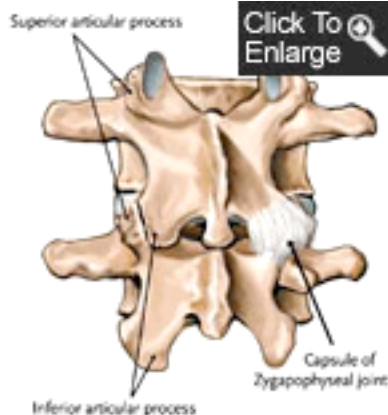


Facet Syndrome

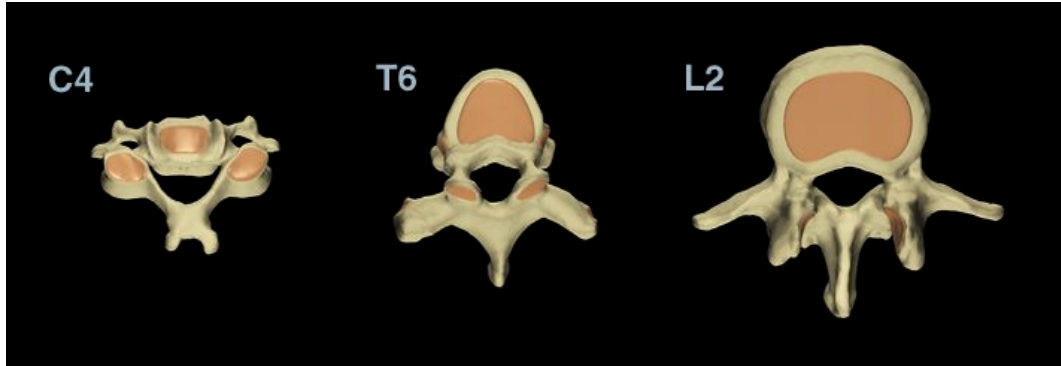
Living on Earth means that we are never able to escape the influence of gravity. Being upright (bipedal) requires that the gravitational forces be transferred through the low back and pelvis to the two legs. How effective we are at transferring this load over a lifetime dictates how well we can stand at ease, move at will and react when necessary as we age, in other words how well we function. Dysfunction implies that the individual has lost the ability to resist gravity while standing, sitting, lifting etc. Transferring loads effectively, whether the load is merely our body weight or the addition of extra loads (groceries, children, tool boxes etc), requires proper function of the bones, joints, muscles and nerves. Collectively, all of these systems must be working together to produce smooth effortless movement.

When we are unable to transfer weight and or force effectively injuries occur. One common syndrome seen in the spine is caused by compression. Compression forces the bones and the joints of the spine together. The joints in the back of the spine are called



facet joints. Like most joints in our body the two bones that make up the joint are lined with a type of cartilage called articular cartilage. This type of cartilage is glass like and allows the bones to slide across each other with out damage. There is another type of cartilage that acts like a cushion between the two bones this is called fibro cartilage. When we are unable to control the compression that comes as a result of our battle with gravity or additional loads we may carry the cushion like cartilage can be injured. When this tissue is squished between the two bones it becomes painful. Small nerves in the cartilage are activated and we are notified of the condition.

This condition can be very painful and disabling. Any and usually all movements are difficult and painful. This can come on suddenly or after an activity.



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The good news is that it is not difficult to get a person out of pain. By mobilizing/adjusting the joint the cartilage is released and the healing begins. It is not usually an instant fix but within a few days you are feeling more mobile. It does take typically 48-72 hours to decrease the inflammation so that you feel significant relief.

The problem that caused the pain, the inability to control compressive forces is still there so it is easy to do a normal movement or be seated for a period of time and feel aggravation of the joint. Learning to control postures and normal loads placed on your spine will be very important. Otherwise you will have repeated irritations as well as damage done to the other type of cartilage (the glass like). Repeated uncontrolled or partially controlled compression will lead to arthritis of these joints.

As part of the treatment process we will instruct you on stretches or specific exercises to decrease the compressive forces on the spine and avoid further injuries in the future. So you can beat gravity and win this game. You can maintain your level of activities without further interruption.